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WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
Finance and Administrative Services Committee

October 13, 2009

Committee Chair Sam Crawford called the meeting to order at 11:08 a.m. in the Council Chambers, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, Washington.

Present: Sam Crawford and L. Ward Nelson.
Absent: Bob Kelly.
Also Present: Seth Fleetwood, Laurie Caskey-Schreiber, Barbara Brenner and Carl Weimer.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

1. UPDATE FROM THE NORTHWEST ECONOMIC COUNCIL - "120 DAY ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT AND KEY FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES" (AB2009-017)

Bruce MacCormack, Northwest Economic Council (NEC) Chairman, stated that at the previous presentation to the Finance Committee, he took seriously the councilmembers comments and concerns. He read from a presentation (*on file*). They have focused on three areas, Associate Development Organization (ADO) responsibilities, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) responsibilities, and developing three accelerator programs. They are working together with many other agencies and economic institutions to develop harmonious, cooperative, and coordinated activities.

Discussion included adding tribal and private sector representation to the board of directors; finding qualified and trained personnel; developing new boards to focus on specific programs, and; the success of the NEC in the past four months; matching worker training and experience with available jobs, and; defining restrictive regulatory practices.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

1. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE, ACTING ON BEHALF OF THE WHATCOM COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL ZONE DISTRICT, TO ENTER INTO A JOINT FUNDING AGREEMENT WITH THE U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY FOR ANNUAL OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE COUNTY'S STREAM GAGE NETWORK IN THE AMOUNT OF \$72,380 (FCZD SHARE IS \$58,820) (AB2009-388) (COUNCIL ACTING AS THE WHATCOM COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL ZONE DISTRICT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS)

Nelson moved to recommend approval to the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Crawford and Nelson (2)
Nays: None (0)
Absent: Kelly (1)

1 **COUNCIL "CONSENT AGENDA" ITEMS**

- 2
3 1. **RESOLUTION TO SET HEARING AND NOTICE OF HEARING OF THE SALE OF**
4 **COUNTY TAX TITLE PROPERTY BY NEGOTIATION – REQUEST #TR2009-03**
5 **(AB2009-389)**

6
7 *Crawford moved* to recommend approval to the full Council.

8
9 The motion carried by the following vote:

10 **Ayes:** Crawford and Nelson (2)

11 **Nays:** None (0)

12 **Absent:** Kelly (1)

13
14 *(Clerk's Note: Discussion continued after Consent Agenda item four.)*

- 15
16 2. **RESOLUTION TO SET HEARING AND NOTICE OF HEARING OF THE SALE OF**
17 **COUNTY TAX TITLE PROPERTY BY NEGOTIATION – REQUEST #TR2009-04**
18 **(AB2009-390)**

19
20 *Nelson moved* to recommend approval to the full Council.

21
22 The motion carried by the following vote:

23 **Ayes:** Crawford and Nelson (2)

24 **Nays:** None (0)

25 **Absent:** Kelly (1)

26
27 *(Clerk's Note: Discussion continued after Consent Agenda item four.)*

- 28
29 3. **RESOLUTION TO SET HEARING AND NOTICE OF HEARING OF THE SALE OF**
30 **COUNTY TAX TITLE PROPERTY BY PUBLIC AUCTION – REQUEST #TR2009-05**
31 **(AB2009-391)**

32
33 *Crawford moved* to recommend approval to the full Council.

34
35 The motion carried by the following vote:

36 **Ayes:** Crawford and Nelson (2)

37 **Nays:** None (0)

38 **Absent:** Kelly (1)

- 39
40
41 4. **REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE TO AWARD BID**
42 **#09-71 AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH LOW BIDDER, RTB**
43 **ELECTRICAL AND POWER, FOR SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF A**
44 **GENERATOR AT CENTRAL SHOP, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$175,925.16 (AB2009-**
45 **392)**

46
47 *Nelson moved* to recommend approval to the full Council.

48
49 The following people answered questions:

- 50
 - Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator.
 - Frank Abart, Public Works Department Director.
 - Mike Russell, Administrative Services Department.

1 Discussion included the purpose of the generator; how the generator operates; the
2 size of the Central Shop, and; the benefits of the generator.

3
4 The motion carried by the following vote:

5 **Ayes:** Crawford and Nelson (2)

6 **Nays:** None (0)

7 **Absent:** Kelly (1)

8
9 Fleetwood asked about **Consent Agenda items one (AB2009-389) and two**
10 **(AB2009-390)**, and how the negotiation process works.

11
12 Steve Oliver, Treasurer, answered questions.

13
14 Discussion included the Treasurer's authority to negotiate with potential buyers and
15 a description of the negotiation process.

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18 **SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

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20 **2. PRESENTATION ON FERRY DOCK/TIDELANDS LEASE STATUS WITH THE**
21 **LUMMI NATION (AB2009-387)**

22
23 Frank Abart, Public Works Department Director, submitted and read a presentation
24 (*on file*). He will pursue the five-year lease with the Lummi Nation over the next few
25 months.

26
27 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, answered questions. The County
28 administration desires a lease longer than five years, but the Lummi Tribe wants the County
29 out of there in five years.

30
31 Discussion included whether the Alaska ferry dock would work for the Whatcom
32 Chief; whether the Gooseberry Point dock and the Alaska ferry dock are the only docks in
33 Whatcom County that allow vehicle loading and unloading; another option for a passenger-
34 only ferry; how often the Alaska ferry uses the dock in Fairhaven; whether the County
35 administration will recommend option B now or work on that recommendation with the
36 County Council; greater risk from a longer ferry route; engaging the federal government
37 and an attorney in this negotiation; the County commitment to partnering with the Lummi
38 Nation on a variety of road projects; requesting financial assistance from the federal
39 government to remedy this dilemma; whether any option besides Fairhaven can be
40 implemented in five years; establishing a citizen committee of Lummi Island residents to
41 help the County work through options for rerouting the ferry; consulting with the Coast
42 Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and other organizations
43 on determining the viability of different routes; convening a meeting of the
44 Intergovernmental Tribal Relations Committee, and; convening an executive session of the
45 County Council.

46
47
48 **SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

49
50 **3. FINANCIAL PRESENTATION REGARDING THE MID-BIENNIUM 2009-2010**
51 **BUDGET REVIEW (AB2009-366A)**

1 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, submitted and described a handout on the
2 Whatcom County general fund cash balances (*on file*).
3

4 The following people answered questions:

- 5 • Brad Bennett, Administrative Services Department
 - 6 • Marianne Caldwell, Administrative Services Department
- 7

8 Discussion included closing certain funds and moving those funds to the general
9 fund; shedding \$5 million in cash reserves since 2008 to sustain operations; actual taxes
10 and other revenue being less than estimated by approximately \$3.4 million; how the budget
11 assumptions made in 2008 were incorrect; focusing on how to move forward instead of how
12 they go where they are now; using three measures to stabilize the budget: funds transfer to
13 the general fund, furloughs, and hiring freeze and attrition; projections for real estate excise
14 tax (REET) funds I and II and the conservation futures fund, and; continuing to be flexible
15 and willing to make sacrifices.
16

17
18 **OTHER BUSINESS**

19
20 Crawford stated they need to talk about funding for Superior Court in the future.
21

22 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated they are having difficulty keeping total
23 expenditures down in Superior Court. They are working daily with the Superior Court
24 judges and administrators. They are close to getting a balanced budget.
25

26
27 **ADJOURN**

28
29 The meeting adjourned at 1:09 p.m.
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Please contact the Council Office to obtain an
official, signed copy:
360-676-6690 or council@co.whatcom.wa.us

41
42 Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Sam Crawford, Committee Chair