

**COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES
KITITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
COMMISSIONERS AUDITORIUM
SPECIAL MEETING**

FRIDAY

8:30 A.M.

MARCH 13, 2009

Board members present: Chairman Alan Crankovich; Vice-Chairman Paul Jewell; Commissioner Mark McClain.

Others: Julie Kjorsvik, Clerk of the Board; Patti Johnson, Solid Waste Director; Tip Hudson, Extension Agent; Todd Davis, Noxious Weed Director; Dan Davis, Interim Chief Building Official; Linda Childs, Upper District Court Administrator; Deanna Panattoni, Treasurer; Marsha Weyand, Assessor; Joseph Whalen, Human Resources Director; Cindy Adams, Assessors Administrative Assistant; Michael Carpenter, Director of Building Facilities; Matt Anderson, Fairgrounds Program Director; Jerry Pettit, Auditor; Sue Higginbotham; Auditor Administrative Assistant III; Cathy Bambrick, Public Health Administrator; Duke Senter, Director of Information Services; Mandy Weed, CDS Administrative Assistant II; Kathy Jurgens, Finance System Manager; Brenda Larsen, Fire Marshal; Judy Young, Treasurers Administrative Assistant II; Gene Dana, Sheriff; Clayton Myers, Undersheriff; Joyce Julsrud, Clerk; Kirk Holmes, Public Works Director/Interim Community Development Services Director; Christine Luvera, Lower District Court Administrator; Greg Zempel, Prosecutor; District Court Judge Thomas Haven; Sarah Keith, Clerk's Administrative Assistant III and William Holmes, Probation Services Director.

Commissioner Crankovich explained that when dealing with the County budget, if the Board were to do nothing, do too much or even just the right amount, they will still more than likely be criticized. He said the Board of County Commissioners spent over two hours on Thursday afternoon going over the budget in detail. He said they have been trying to increase communications between departments when dealing with the possible impacts to the County budget and those seem to have been fairly effective.

Judge Haven asked if there was a way to calculate how much it has been costing the County to defend the GMA lawsuits and if it's worth losing employees over, instead of just settling the lawsuits. Chairman Crankovich said unless the County goes with

the suggestions from non-elected, environmental groups, there will be no settling and they will continue to defend their actions. Commissioner McClain said they are trying to work on the compliance issues and each time CTED comes back not in favor and so it continues to be ongoing. Sheriff Dana asked if there were reserve funds available to use. Commissioner McClain said they are most concerned with what will happen in 2010 as a result of this year, stating that revenues are not coming in as projected in some areas. He said at this point, he is not in favor of dipping into the reserves yet, and it needs to be available for next year. He noted the Board was going to make a commitment to looking at the budget in depth, at least monthly, and make smaller corrections if needed, rather than larger cuts later.

Commissioner McClain said there was approximately \$2.65 million in a shortfall and from the previous meeting when departments cut their budgets combined with potential revenue increases, it went down to 1.9 million. He said the Board had looked at various ways to address that shortfall including a reduction in hours and furlough days. Some of the options included taking mandatory furlough days at the end of year; cutting employee's hours from 40 to 36 hours a week; as well as calculating other options including moving functions to other departments.

Commissioner Jewell explained that the Board is trying to be responsible by attacking the problems now, before they become an actual crisis when it would result in deeper cuts.

The Board indicated that at this time, it was not their intention in cutting the benefit level if hours were reduced. Commissioner McClain said if there was a reduction in hours from 40 to 36 hours a week, it would be an approximately \$360 per month, per employee, less in their paycheck and realized that not many employees could afford that type of cut. Judge Haven felt the County would be at risk going from 40 to 36 hours a week, stating that employees currently work hard all of the time, and making them try to get the same amount of work accomplished in 4 less hours a week would not be a good thing.

Joyce Julsrud suggested implementing a wage freeze and maybe job sharing.

Some other suggestions being considered by the Board was moving the Master Gardener program from Cooperative Extension to the Solid Waste Department; Human Resources not filling a position in their office that has been vacated; contributions to City

libraries and senior centers; eliminating all overtime (not including the Sheriff's Department).

Chairman Crankovich felt everyone needed to look at their departments "mandated services" versus "expectations" for the public and felt they should only be performing the absolute necessities at this point.

Commissioner Jewell said he was trying to take a more cautious approach because the Board is responsible for the tax payer's money. Chairman Crankovich said there are no historical trends available on the current economic situation, with the exception of the depression, and he would rather error on side of caution. He noted he would be happy if this situation resulted in proving him to be wrong.

Judge Haven suggested eliminating overtime and raising the comp. time banks. Jerry Pettit said regardless of how it's done, it is still a liability to the county and has to be paid out.

Kirk Holmes proposed a 4 day 10 hour work week and to close down offices on the other day. Clayton Myers said by closing down for one day a week it may be worth the effort by saving on the expense of utilities. A question was raised if the courts are required to be open all five days of the week?

Brenda Larsen spoke of other entities which have made adjustments to their work weeks and have resulted in energy costs and a significant savings on fuel. Jerry Pettit suggested on waiting to make decisions until next month until more information was available on the effects to the Unions and with the other multi-million dollar projects that may be coming up from the federal stimulus money.

It was suggested taking some money from the reserves to make it a smaller gap.

William Holmes suggested having employees take a survey on their preference relating to individual furloughs over a reduction in hours.

The group decided to make budget an agenda topic from now until the end of the year on the Management Team agenda. Duke Senter said they have information regarding mandated services for departments from when they did their business continuity research. Greg Zempel did not believe that information identifies the core services that government is to provide by law, and may only show what their department feels is a service.

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He said although he supports libraries, they are not a core statement of county government. He opposed putting a survey out on CAMAS to employees, but rather the Management Team should be talking to their employees to get feedback and making sure they are giving them the correct information. Chairman Crankovich agreed not having a survey on CAMAS, stating that if the results are not implemented by the county, it has the potential to create a lot more problems.

At approximately 10:55 a.m. the Management Team was excused. The Board set another special meeting for further budget discussions to be held on Thursday March 19, 2009 at 7:00 a.m. in the Commissioners Auditorium.

The Board met with County Auditor, Jerry Pettit and continued discussing various options relating to ways of reducing the County budget. They asked Mr. Pettit to make sure the budget amendments that were submitted by the various departments during the Wednesday meeting with the County departments were updated as soon as possible.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

CLERK OF THE BOARD

**KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

Julie A. Kjorsvik

Alan Crankovich, Chairman