

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

MONDAY

2:00 P.M.

DECEMBER 7, 2009

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

Others: Julie Kjorsvik, Clerk of the Board; Judy Pless, Budget & Finance Manager; Cindy Adams, Administrative Assistant; Todd Davis, Noxious Weed Director; Steve Panattoni; Patrol Sergeant; Tip Hudson, Extension Agent; Kirk Holmes, Public Works/Interim Community Development Services Director; Amber Simon, Business Manager; Lisa Lawrence, Assistant Director; Christine Luvera, District Court Administrator; Brenda Larsen, Fire Marshal; Joseph Whalen, Human Resource Director; Mandy Weed, Administrative Assistant; Kay Kresge, Accountant; Deanna Panattoni, Treasurer; Jerry Pettit, Auditor; Sue Higginbotham; Administrative Assistant; Clayton Myers, Undersheriff; Kim Dawson, Administrative Assistant; Bob Gubser, Commander; Joyce Julsrud, Clerk; Terri Mohan, Accounting Tech; Cathy Bambrick, Public Health Administrator; Jim Goeben, Application Development Manager; Michael Carpenter, Facilities Maintenance Director; William Holmes, Probation Services Director; Matt Anderson, Fairgrounds Program Director; Robin Rapp, Administrative Assistant and 4 members of the public.

PUBLIC HEARING

2010 BUDGET

COMMISSIONERS

At approximately 2:00 p.m. Chairman Crankovich opened a public hearing to consider the proposed 2010 County budget in the total amount of \$71,123,470.00.

JUDY PLESS, BUDGET & FINANCE MANAGER explained that the budget hearing had been advertised at \$71,123,470.00, and it was now \$68,114,470.00, due to a decrease of \$5,400,000.00 for the General Levy; a \$1,000,000.00 levy shift from the County Road to the General Levy; \$3,630,000.00 for the County Road Levy plus \$85,000.00 for County Road Diversion levy, which includes an increase for new construction only, and the increases were due to state assessed utilities estimated at \$0.00. She said the bottom line is that the County is still \$128,439.00 out of balance after reductions had been made by County departments.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL mentioned there had been a meeting last week regarding the potential of significant savings of approximately \$70,000.00 on the costs of legal advertising and they directed

Information Services to make the project a priority. **KIRK HOLMES, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS/INTERIM COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES** recommended to not consider those dollars right now because it's in the early stages of investigation. **CHAIRMAN CRANKOVICH** explained how the County has previously been publishing things that have an effect on the Upper County in the Upper County Tribune, although it may not be legally required. **MR. HOLMES** noted they have not included Code Enforcement revenues in the budget and they are anticipating seeing a measurable increase in revenue.

CHAIRMAN CRANKOVICH said he had received information from two departments whose employees were committed to volunteering a combined total of 63 furlough days. **JUDY PLESS, BUDGET & FINANCE MANAGER** felt there may be many more employees who would be interested in volunteering furlough days, but they were waiting to hear from their Unions. **COMMISSIONER JEWELL** noted the option for furlough days was in addition to a County wide wage freeze. **CHAIRMAN CRANKOVICH** said a volunteer furlough is a "volunteer choice" from the individual employee, and should have no bearing on their Union contract. He believes it's outside of the Union contracts and the proposal of voluntary furloughs was not being mandated.

MARSHA WEYAND, ASSESSOR said she had previously provided the Board a spreadsheet of revenues. The summary included figures going back from 2002 with new construction and utilities. She said 2.67% of the budget is from new construction, which is a significant drop from what they have been seeing in the past few years. **CHAIRMAN CRANKOVICH** noted the national unemployment rate was currently around 10% and along with issues such as a dramatic decline in construction; high foreclosure rates; people not paying their property taxes; a well moratorium placed by the Department of Ecology in the Upper County; over 600 parcels were challenged to the Board of Equalization; EMS and school levies failing, it is a reflection on everyone trying to scramble for dollars. He did not believe it was a time to increase property taxes and referenced a letter the Board sent out a letter in the summer regarding the upcoming budget session, stating there would be no tax increase. **COMMISSIONER JEWELL** said even if the Board were to consider a tax increase, the funds would be applied to levy shift first, which would make no impact on the decisions of a wage freeze or other ways of making cuts. He felt the Board may be facing the same situation again next year, and they will be looking at a one-million dollar hole in the beginning of 2010. He said the Board had put a solution on table which would have everyone making a sacrifice to maintain jobs, provided the funding comes in as budgeted, and felt it was a good option. **CHAIRMAN CRANKOVICH** thought the County was not in as bad of shape as most counties. He also noted the CPI was at negative

two (2). **COMMISSIONER JEWELL** said the Board has gone through the budget, line by line.

WAYNE JOHNSON, TEAMSTERS STAFF REPRESENTATIVE explained that although a couple of the contract's are open, he would have a difficult time asking for the Deputies to take a wage freeze, especially in light of what happened to those officers recently killed in the line of duty in Lakewood. He said those employees put their life on line every day, and felt their salaries were behind the average anyways when it went to contract. **COMMISSIONER JEWELL** said although he understands what Mr. Johnson was trying to say, the bottom line is, there is no money available. **CHAIRMAN CRANKOVICH** explained how he had had supported law enforcement ever since he took office, but takes exception to Mr. Johnson's remarks stating the Commissioners decision to not approve the allowed increase in taxes, that instead they were making the budget balanced on the backs of the employees. He said he could not ask property owners to pay more taxes in order for Sheriff's Deputies to get an increase in their salaries. He said the Board was asking consideration for a wage freeze across the board and although he wishes he could make some type of guarantee for next year, he cannot. He said their request for volunteer furloughs was not being asked of deputies. **CHAIRMAN CRANKOVICH** said the 1% increase in property tax would not make a dent in the amount they need to come up with, and it would only be around \$54,000. **COMMISSIONER JEWELL** said they would be able to get the budget balanced by having a wage freeze, sharing personnel between departments, removing travel, and reducing the Public Health's contribution, etc. **COMMISSIONER McCLAIN** asked the Unions when they could get back to the Board with their support/non-support of a wage freeze, since they need to adopt the budget by the end of the week. **MR. BOXFORD** said he would need to take it to a vote of the Union and will try and get information back to the Board by Thursday. **MR. JOHNSON** said he would try to get back to the Board by Thursday as well. **COMMISSIONER JEWELL** felt the proposal was an opportunity to maintain the current employment levels. **CLAYTON MYERS, UNDERSHERIFF** explained that staff in each of their departments has given up furlough days. **JOYCE JULSRUD, CLERK** asked if the Board was going to fund the Ellensburg Public Library, and her employees felt they didn't want to donate furlough days, if the County was going to continuing funding libraries first. **COMMISSIONER JEWELL** said the funding for libraries was still in the budget, and although the County has been paying for the citizen's share of usage, it is not a fair share. He said the County citizens get a lot of investment on what is actually paid out, and it is a very small portion. **WILLIAM HOLMES, PROBATION SERVICES DIRECTOR** asked if the bargaining units do not go along with a wage freeze, where would the funding come from. **COMMISSIONER JEWELL** said the Board would then be forced to make some very difficult decisions. **MS. WEYAND** said she got the feeling from the employees in her office that they would

rather do furloughs instead of having a wage freeze. **GREG ZEMPEL, PROSECUTOR** asked how many County residents are actually utilizing library services, and what are we buying and what's being covered for \$125,000.00? He felt library services were beneficial, but were we really targeting people who need assistance or is it simple accounting to open it up to everyone. **MS. PLESS** reviewed the figures for each library and statistics on their usage. **COMMISSIONER JEWELL** explained that during difficult economic times, the number of usage for libraries go up for assistance with resumes, computers, entertainment, etc. He said he would not support cutting the library program at this time.

COMMISSIONER McCLAIN moved to continue the public hearing to Thursday December 10, 2009 at 1:30 p.m. in the Commissioners Auditorium. **COMMISSIONER JEWELL** seconded. Motion carried 3-0. The record would remain open.

CLERK OF THE BOARD

**KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

Julie A. Kjorsvik

Alan Crankovich, Chairman