

BOARD OF MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' PROCEEDINGS

DECEMBER 1, 2003

1. Call to Order - Chairperson Herb Baze called the special meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. to consider public comments on the 2004 Mason County budget.
2. Pledge of Allegiance - None
3. Roll Call - Present: Herb Baze, Cmmr. Dist. 1; Wesley E. Johnson, Cmmr. Dist. 2; Jayni L. Kamin, Cmmr. Dist. 3
4. Approval of Minutes – None
5. Board's Calendar – None
6. Correspondence and Organizational Business
6.1 Correspondence - None
7. Open Forum for Citizen Input (5 minutes per person, 15 minutes time limit) - None
8. Adoption of Agenda - N/A
9. Public Hearings and Items Set for a Certain Time
Ione Siegler, Budget & Finance Director, explained the public hearing is to consider testimony on the 2004 Mason County budget. The budget does not contain wage and benefit increases, except for the Board of County Commissioners. Their salaries are set by resolution and that could not be changed. The union negotiations are in process and there has been no resolution for any salary increase from non-union or other elected officials. Within the Current Expense Fund there are approximately 5.5 positions being eliminated (Assessor's office, Auditor's office, PBX Operator position, 6 month position in parks, Convention Center/Fair maintenance foreman position, Treasurer's office cashier supervisor/tax foreclosure part-time position.

Mike Rutter, Facilities & Grounds, spoke concerning the capital improvement projects for 2004 to be funded from the REET 1 funds. He stated the REET is real estate excise tax in the amount of 1/4 %. REET I projects: a new roof on Building 9; concrete work; Parks (2003-2009 project list of parks projects include Sandhill irrigation project). It was noted the REET I & REET II are dedicated funding for capital improvement projects.

Gary Yando, Utilities & Waste Management, mentioned that a couple of projects planned for 2004: upgrade of the Rustlewood Treatment Facility which will include the treatment plant and possible I & I work. Also, they hope to be under contract for the Beard's Cove well #5 and reservoir work. They are in the process of bringing a consultant on board for the Belfair sewer sometime in the month of January or February 2004 to look at design of the \$1.3 million plans and specifications for the Belfair UGA for a system from Belfair to Allyn and from Belfair to State Park. The Rustlewood project they plan to apply for grants and loans over the next few months to begin an engineering report and plans and specifications.

It was noted the sewer and water systems as well as the landfill are self-supporting from user funds, grants or loans.

Ione Siegler, Budget & Finance Director, stated the projected beginning fund balance for the Current Expense Fund was in the amount of \$2,990,869.00 and the projected ending fund balance at this time is \$2,464,925.00. The budget would make an assumption of using approximately \$500,000 of the beginning cash on hand in 2004 to meet expenses of that year. The wage and benefit increases are not included in the budget at this time and it is likely that the ending fund balance would decrease when these increases are adopted.

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Ms. Siegler noted the County lost the MVET funds and the 1% cap was put on property tax as well as sales tax equalization. They have lost over \$2 million in revenue which would have been increasing with the rate of inflation. These losses have severely impacted the county's revenue.

Ms. Siegler explained that there were four counties and cities in Washington State that did not collect sales tax. The state had funded sales tax equalization from MVET funds. When the MVET was repealed the County lost that revenue in addition to the licensing money. A lot of the smaller rural counties got hit harder.

Theresa Ehrich, Auditor/Financial Services Department Chief Accountant, asked that the Board reflect the Auditor's Accounting Department as Financial Services in the 2004 budget as they have used this term for the past three years. She asked the rationale for the increase in the Public Health Services carry over in the fund balance from \$300,000 to \$600,000. She anticipated it would be going back to the Current Expense Fund.

Budget & Finance Director Ione Siegler explained they reduced the carry over this year. The County Administrator, Public Health Services Director and Budget & Finance Director met and came up with a long-range plan for the cash carry over for the Public Health Services Fund. They did pay the budgeted amount. Sometimes they receive money in advance and will need it in the following year. They gave only what was budgeted. They reduced the subsidy from Current Expense Fund to Health Services Fund in 2004 and discussed the likelihood of reducing it again in 2005 to help the Current Expense Fund through 2005.

Shirley Bartolat, Auditor's Office, explained that she has been employed with the County for 25 years and was recently informed that her position was being eliminated in 2004. She asked the County to reconsider elimination of her position.

The Board explained that they do not eliminate positions. They deal with the budget. The staffing level is made by the Auditor. When they present the budget to the elected officials they present dollar amounts.

Cyndi Miller, Sheriff's Department/Accountant, noted that revenue of \$53,040 Squaxin Tribal entitlement is listed. They have not received money for a number of years. The list of positions being eliminated was read. She noted that the position of deputy sheriff in Emergency Management was not listed. There is an administrator and the Sheriff who are heading that department. When the position was eliminated from Emergency Management it should have been put back to the police operations.

Budget Director Ione Siegler noted that the budget presented by the Sheriff's office, the position of deputy in Emergency Management was not listed. There is another deputy position listed in the patrol. The overall effect is the same.

Sheriff Whybark noted there was a reorganization in the Department of Emergency Management and that position was originally Director. The position became a deputy when the Sheriff took over Emergency Management. In the reorganization they did away with the Director's job. The deputy which was listed went back to the police operations.

Cmmr. Johnson noted that when the dollars are short adjustments have to be made. Difficult decisions have to be made.

The Board closed the public input and will consider this item at the December 2, 2003 meeting.

12. Administration - None

13. Adjournment - The meeting adjourned at 9:29 a.m.

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BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MASON COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Herb Baze, Chairperson

ATTEST:

Wesley E. Johnson, Commissioner

Rebecca S. Rogers, Clerk of the Board

Jayni L. Kamin, Commissioner