

**BOARD OF MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' PROCEEDINGS**  
**SPECIAL MEETING – 2008 BUDGET HEARING**  
**December 3, 2007**

1. Call to Order – The Chairperson called the special meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
2. Roll Call - Present: Cmmr. Dist. 1 – Lynda Ring Erickson; Cmmr. Dist. 3 – Ross Gallagher. Cmmr. Dist. 2 – Tim Sheldon was absent.
3. Public hearing – 2008 budget.

Ione Siegler, Budget & Finance Director, presented the 2008 preliminary budget information. The 2008 Current Expense Levy and the 2008 Road Levy are 1% greater than the 2007 levies. The 2008 Preliminary Budget(s) do not include wage increases (Cost-of-Living Allowances (COLAs)) for non-union and union employees. Most of the union contracts are settled for 2008 and those contracts include a COLA tied to a specific CPI (Consumer Price Index). The actual 2008 salary schedules were not available when the Preliminary Budget was published. It is estimated that the increases will range from 2.5% to 3.3%. Those COLAs will be budgeted in 2008 when the approved 2008 Salary Schedules are available.

Elected Officials received a 3% salary increase with the exception of the District Court and Superior Court Judges. The State Salary Commission sets their salaries.

Ms. Siegler noted that our biggest challenge is that County revenue is currently “flat” and not increasing at the same rate as the cost of County services.

During the 2008 Budget Process each county department carefully analyzed their expenditures and the services they provide and made adjustments as appropriate to their original 2008 Budget Requests.

The goal of Mason County during the 2008 Budget Process has been to offer the taxpayers of Mason County the best possible package of services considering our expected revenue.

Sheriff Salisbury presented a letter from the Washington State Patrol that talks about transitioning the responsibility for traffic collision investigations on county roads to county law enforcement agencies effective July 1, 2008. He stressed this will have a major impact to his office. He appreciates the work that has been done by the Commissioners and acknowledged it is difficult budget time but they do need additional staff.

Cmmr. Ring Erickson noted that two officers have been added at the end of 2007 for traffic and two additional positions will be added in 2008.

Bob Huxford, Olympia, current GIS tech for Assessor’s office, expressed concern that the GIS position in the Assessor’s office not funded in 2008. He feels that in accordance with the RCW’s, the Assessor’s office is required to maintain records. By eliminating this position it leaves no one to maintain maps in the Assessor’s office. His position works with GIS in Public Works and he asked the position be funded.

Judge Victoria Meadows, Mason County District Court, thanked the Board for funding the second public defender position in 2007. She requested the Board reconsider the 5% cut to the District Court budget. She noted that with a 2.5% budget cut, District Court could function properly. There have been discussions about District Court Probation and they have submitted a proposed budget based upon revenue received during 2007. This would reduce the District Court Probation by one half. While this does not fully meet the needs of District Court, she stated it is better than no District Court Probation. She requested the Board fund this proposal in 2008. Judge Meadows also pointed out that the Administrative Office of the Courts has recognized Mason County District Court is at a one and one half Judicial position needs and at some time in the future, she will need to address the additional Judicial needs.

Cmmr. Ring Erickson noted that if there is increased revenue for District Court Probation, it will be used to expand those probation services.

**BOARD OF MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' PROCEEDINGS  
DECEMBER 3, 2007 - PAGE 2**

Jeff McHargue thanked the Board for making public safety a priority and noted it has come a long way, but has a long ways to go.

Ray Jenne, Mason County resident and Civil Service member, agreed with Mr. McHargue that public safety has come a long ways but still has a long ways to go. He is concerned with cuts in the Sheriff's office with regards to clerks, and cuts in the jail. He noted they are facing salary negotiations. He then addressed Civil Service Commission cuts and stated they have started to update the Civil Service rules and must finish the task. They are using Thurston County as a model. He noted the hiring process has become more difficult. He also expressed concern with cuts in District Court Probation and noted that GIS is important because it affects the dispatch system. He pointed out that the State Patrol pulling out on accident investigation will impact all staff, including clerical. He feels courtroom security is another area of concern and the liability it puts on the county.

Denny Temple commended Board for working with the Sheriff's office. He too agreed it has come a long ways, a long ways to go. He asked the Board to focus on giving resources to the Sheriff's office to do their job. He believes public safety is #1 with the citizens. He also has concerns with the State Patrol transitioning out.

Cmmr. Gallagher stated that criminal justice is #1 with Mason County.

Sheriff Salisbury noted that State Patrol staff intended to attend today's hearing but were called out to Grays Harbor due to the storm.

Cmmr. Ring Erickson thanked everyone for attending. She believes that working with all the departments will deliver a good package of services to the citizens and for employees. She gave credit to the elected officials for their cooperation and asked that they please continue to work with the Board.

Cmmr. Gallagher thanked the elected officials and department directors for their cooperation. He again noted that criminal justice is a priority. He noted that he and Ione Siegler have spent countless hours going through the budget and he appreciates the input.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
MASON COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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Lynda Ring Erickson, Chair

ATTEST:

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Tim Sheldon, Commissioner

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Rebecca S. Rogers, Clerk of the Board

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Ross Gallagher, Commissioner