

**BOARD OF MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**BUDGET WORKSHOP MINUTES**  
**Monday, October 19, 2009**  
**Commission Chambers**  
**411 North Fifth Street, Shelton WA 98584**

1:00 P.M                      Central Operations – Diane Zoren/Dawn Twiddy  
   Commissioners

Commissioners Sheldon, Ring Erickson and Gallagher in attendance with Diane Zoren and Dawn Twiddy presenting information on Central Operations.

Diane Zoren stated Central Operations provides clerical support for Commissioners, Human Resources, Facilities & Grounds and Budget & Finance. Staff clerks several meetings including the Commissioners meetings, Board of Health, Law Enforcement Officers & Fire Fighters Disability Board (LEOFF), Lodging Tax Advisory Committee, Criminal Justice Working Team and the Housing Authority. The budget has been reduced by 24% with the main reductions being the elimination of the director position and reducing the remaining staff to .8 FTE.

Dawn Twiddy reviewed the Commissioner's budget.

Public – Why is Central Operations a separate department from the Commissioners?

Cmmr. Sheldon answered Central Operations provides coverage for the PBX which serves all departments and provides clerical support to other offices besides the Commissioners.

Brenda Hirschi stated staff has always been responsive but her questions are for the Commissioners. She asked when her questions from the workshops will be discussed?

Ms. Twiddy pointed out there will continue to be 2010 budget workshops from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. on Mondays.

Cmmr. Gallagher noted that the budget is the most important thing we do as Commissioners.

Brenda Hirschi asked if the Board will post another budget with the changes.

Cmmr. Ring Erickson suggested reducing the Employee Appreciation Fund down to \$500, a savings of \$1,000. This fund covers retirement plaques and the Years of Service Awards. She also asked about the Accrued Leave Fund.

Ms. Twiddy stated it covers sick and vacation leave payouts, deputy banked holiday pay and VEBA.

There was further discussion on the Accrued Leave Fund. It likely will need additional funding in 2010. Employees can accrue up to 400 hours of vacation leave and 1,200 hours of sick leave (15 years to vest) that is paid when they leave service.

Brenda Hirschi asked if there are internal controls to prevent supplemental budget requests.

Cmmr. Sheldon stated the Directors are responsible.

Brenda Hirschi asked if there are consequences.

Cmmr. Sheldon stated the Directors are held accountable.

Brenda Hirschi asked about the Department of Community Development and does it not have to self-sustain?

Cmmr. Ring Erickson stated long range planning and the fire marshal are funded out of Current Expense. Cmmr. Sheldon stated the county did not make changes quick enough. Community Development is continuing to drain money from the organization.

Cmmr. Gallagher pointed out DCD still needs staff to function and serve the public. As an “enterprise fund” it failed.

Brenda Hirschi asked if the Risk Pool, WSAC and WACO and Hood Canal Coordinating Council are essential.

It was explained the Risk Pool provides the County’s insurance. WSAC and WACO provide lobbying efforts that help bring in revenue to the County. HCCC consists of several counties and is an important organization for the canal.

Public - asked where do things stand on the Budget & Finance position? Why hire someone when we have other budget people in the county?

Cmmr. Gallagher stated they need a forecaster.

Public – Treasurer and Auditor have been trying to provide forecasting.

Cmmr. Ring Erickson stated we have capacity in-house to cover the forecasting for the county.

Cmmr. Sheldon stated forecasting would include the amount needed in the unemployment fund. He noted revenue is down 15% from last year.

There was discussion about the request for proposals for budget & finance. There is no plan, at this time, to hire anyone.

Al Brotche asked if the county is willing to look into a grant position for grant management.

Cmmr. Ring Erickson stated that is worth looking into. It is important to have someone tracking that all the grant money is received that is budgeted.

1:45 P.M. Human Resources – TJ Martin  
Commissioners Sheldon, Ring Erickson and Gallagher were in attendance.

TJ Martin provided a brief overview of the Human Resources. Department. It is an internal-support provider that is not grant or revenue-generating entity within the County and relies upon Current Expense for funding.

He discussed basis for Professional Services line item of \$10,000 to cover Deputy Sheriff Interest Arbitration in the early part of next year. (In prior years, the amount requested has been in excess of \$20,000). Currently, many of the legal services needed are taken care of in-house, without a need for outside counsel.

Mr. Martin discussed the basis for the unemployment options provided to the Commissioners regarding the 2010 budget. The option (\$1,899) under discussion, based upon the Commissioners' suggestions back in July and August, is the 'most conservative' among the options. The amount may decided to be lower, but is up to the Commissioners' determination.

There was a discussion about current status of the various collective bargaining agreements within the County as well as the status of the Deputy Sheriff Interest Arbitration matter.

Mr. Martin fielded general questions about the department.

2:30 P.M. Coroner – Wes Stockwell  
Commissioners Sheldon, Ring Erickson and Gallagher were in attendance.

Wes Stockwell gave a brief overview of the Coroner's office. He doesn't go to every death, only deaths due to unnatural course. (Suicide, homicide, accident, unknown). They also respond to any death that is non-attended. He has jurisdiction only within the county.

The Coroner's office rents space at McComb Funeral home.

The Coroner is typically not a doctor if the population is over 40,000 but under 250,000. A Medical Examiner (M.E.) is needed if the population is over. He currently has two part-time staff. One staff member is studying to be a medical legal investigator.

Cmmr. Sheldon pointed out the Fire Marshal gets \$1,000 for wearing a pager (Union position).

Coroner Stockwell discussed non-emergency deaths. The Coroner goes to about 150 to 200 deaths with the total count of actual deaths at about 400, natural and unnatural.

Al Brotche stated he believes the salary should be the same as other Directors.

Cmmr. Ring Erickson agrees with that recommendation.

Coroner Stockwell stated the cost of autopsies has gone up. The fee rate is \$4,000 per month for the doctor regardless of the number of autopsies. The Coroner pays for the funeral if there are any unclaimed bodies.

Undersheriff Barrett asked if there is a plan to use a forensic lab.

Coroner Stockwell stated it is cheaper to contract with private lab. He noted there are no county issued cell phones for himself or for the two deputies.

The budget workshop was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Zoren, Assistant to the Commissioners

BOARD OF MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Tim Sheldon  
Chair

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Ross Gallagher  
Commissioner

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Lynda Ring Erickson  
Commissioner