

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
Finance and Administrative Services Committee

June 5, 2007

Committee Member Dan McShane called the meeting to order at 11:15 a.m. in the Council Chambers, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, Washington.

Present:

Sam Crawford

Absent:

L. Ward Nelson

Also Present:

Seth Fleetwood

Barbara Brenner

Carl Weimer

COUNCIL "CONSENT AGENDA" ITEM

1. **REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND ELAKAH EXPEDITIONS LLC TO PROVIDE PUBLIC KAYAK CLASSES AND PROGRAM ACTIVITIES DURING 2007 (AB2007-251)**

Crawford moved to recommend approval to the full Council.

Motion carried unanimously.

2. **REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO AWARD CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT TO LOW BIDDER WILDER CONSTRUCTION CO. FOR CRP #907013, WELCOME BRIDGE #332 REHABILITATION - PLANING AND REPAVING, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$58,645 (AB2007-252)**

Crawford moved to recommend approval to the full Council.

Motion carried unanimously.

Addendum:

3. **REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE OWNERS OF TORRE CAFFE' TO MANAGE AND OPERATE THE RESTAURANT/DELI ON THE 2ND FLOOR OF THE COURTHOUSE (AB2007-256)**

McShane moved to recommend approval to the full Council.

Motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

1. **BELLINGHAM-WHATCOM COUNTY COMMISSION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ANNUAL REPORT PRESENTED BY SUE PARROTT, COMMISSION**

1 **DIRECTOR, AND REGINA DELAHUNT, WHATCOM COUNTY HEALTH**
2 **DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR (AB2007-250)**
3

4 Regina Delahunt, Health Department Director and Commission Against Domestic
5 Violence Chair, submitted the Commission's annual report. This past year, they did audits
6 on different City and County departments. The domestic violence issue is so complex that
7 they need a coordinated response. That's much of the purpose of the Commission and its
8 safety audits. The Commission anticipates receiving a new grant from the City of
9 Bellingham for domestic violence system advocacy and to include the small cities. Last
10 year, they focused on outreach to the small cities. She discussed participation with the
11 small cities. They will continue their outreach this year to the broader community.
12

13 Sue Parrott, Bellingham Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence
14 Director, submitted the Domestic Violence in Whatcom County 2000-2005 report (*on file*).
15 Today she will discuss activities that are focused on the criminal justice system, as driven
16 by their grants. There are other areas where they can focus, such as in health care,
17 schools, and with employers. If they hear from the community that emphasis needs to be
18 in other areas, they can make that shift.
19

20 They've done quite a bit of law enforcement training on domestic violence. The
21 Sheriff's Office has created a special domestic violence unit, with new equipment to collect
22 better evidence.
23

24 Regarding the domestic violence report, they don't see much of a trend in any
25 direction. Most indices are fairly stable. The County parallels the rest of the state in its
26 statistics. About 14 percent of reported offenses are related to domestic violence. A
27 significant number of domestic violence misdemeanor charges are dismissed. They've
28 chosen to track repeat offenders who have been charged, regardless of the outcome of the
29 case. Page 14 of the report summarizes the number of offenses with which repeat
30 offenders are charged, and the nature of their charges.
31

32 McShane asked the nature of the charges against first time offenders. Parrott stated
33 she doesn't know. Of the misdemeanor charges that came from the City and County
34 Prosecutor's offices, about one-third were order violations and the other two-thirds were
35 assault and other charges.
36

37 McShane stated there seems to be a dramatic drop in the number of repeat
38 offenders between the second and third offenses. Parrott stated that's correct.
39

40 Brenner stated offenses and arrests are not the same. She believes people are
41 innocent until proven guilty. She is not comfortable with the language. The term "offense"
42 is misleading. Rather, use the term "arrest." People aren't offenders until they're found
43 guilty.
44

45 Crawford stated the criminal justice system has language standards. He thinks the
46 Commission is following those standards.
47

48 Parrott stated she will see if they are using the same language standards.
49

50 McShane stated it's appropriate to look at people who have not yet been convicted,
51 but who have been charged. There is good evidence that a big problem is charges versus
52 convictions, which is part of what the Commission is about. There are trends that show up

1 when looking at charges versus convictions, which would be misleading if they just look at
2 convictions.

3
4 Crawford stated it appears that there is about a 20 percent recidivism rate. He
5 asked if that is typical. Parrott stated this report is only on the misdemeanor category.
6 They don't know about people who cross over to felonies. The recidivism rate may be
7 higher.

8
9 Brenner asked why they are considered misdemeanor rather than felony. Parrott
10 stated it is according to the law. She described the different offenses.

11
12 Crawford stated they may be seeing the ability of the system to file more cases that
13 wouldn't otherwise have been filed. He asked if the numbers can reflect a stronger system
14 of law enforcement. Parrott stated they could.

15
16 The report includes data on who are in domestic violence perpetrator treatment.
17 There seems to be a trend to increasing participation in treatment, which is good. She
18 doesn't know why it's a trend. The charges aren't increasing to account for more people
19 being charged.

20
21 McShane asked how treatment is paid for. Parrott stated most providers have sliding
22 fee scales. Individuals have to pay for their own treatment. There is a concern about that,
23 and there is discussion about finding funding for those who absolutely can't afford
24 treatment.

25
26 Delahunt stated they don't have the same kinds of resources for domestic violence
27 treatment as they have for substance abuse treatment. They need those resources for
28 domestic violence treatment.

29
30 McShane stated District Court judges have said they've had to make difficult
31 decisions regarding an offender's options when the offender can't afford to pay for
32 treatment.

33
34 Crawford asked the costs. Parrott stated evaluations are \$150. Group sessions are
35 approximately \$25 per session. The cost could be \$1,000 to \$1,500 per year.

36
37 Brenner asked for data on the recidivism rate for individuals who have completed
38 treatment. Parrott stated they don't have that data. The State may begin tracking that
39 information. Most people who re-offend do so within the first three or four months of the
40 first offense. The most effective treatment takes place soon.

41
42 Crawford stated it seems like there would be a cost benefit to having a treatment
43 program for people.

44
45 Parrott stated there is information from other areas of the country about treatment
46 outcomes. However, every treatment program is different, and it's difficult to compare
47 them. An expert would say there is enough of an impact to make treatment programs
48 worthwhile.

49
50 Delahunt stated they will gather national information on best practices and
51 associated outcomes.

52

1 McShane stated there is a fundamental question of putting money directly into the
2 system versus doing preventative measures. Success may save money, and also saves a
3 certain number of people from getting beat up. There is a financial component to this.
4 Every budget cycle, the County Council and Executive are asked for more money from the
5 jail. They must keep jail alternatives in mind. People must be accountable, but have
6 alternatives available. It's worth considering.
7

8 Brenner asked if there is any treatment available to people who do go to jail. Parrott
9 stated there isn't. Some communities do that. It's a good idea.
10

11 Parrott stated the audit report is in the Council packet. There were a number of
12 recommendations for the County Prosecutor's Office and District Court Probation. Those
13 departments will report their progress to the Commission every three months for awhile.
14 She described the audit process and findings.
15

16 Brenner asked if there is a bridge between the criminal justice system and the
17 victim, in terms of training victims how to avoid being in these situations. Parrott stated
18 community-based agencies have such support groups. Staff in the Prosecutor's Office are
19 to let victims know about community resources. In addition, there are issues with the
20 victim and the defendant's family both using the same in-custody viewing room. There
21 have been conflicts, and they are looking into creating separate rooms.
22

23 Delahunt asked the committee to be open when listening to any resource requests
24 that arise from the audits.
25

26 Crawford stated the departments should remind the councilmembers that such
27 requests are related to domestic violence issues.
28

29 *(Clerk's Note: End of tape one, side A.)*
30

31 Crawford asked if domestic violence is generally spousal, or includes circumstances
32 when teenagers assault their parents. Parrott stated the information does not include
33 juvenile court. The law enforcement offenses would include anything that meets the
34 statutory definition of domestic violence.
35

36 Crawford asked if there is such a thing as proactive domestic violence prevention.
37 Parrott stated there is, in terms of education and teaching people how to be in a healthy
38 relationship, respect one's partners, and teach children and young adults. There are
39 curricula, and work is being done in prevention. Ultimately, it has to be part of the solution.
40 The Commission hasn't been much involved in prevention, other than helping the Meridian
41 School District develop a policy.
42

43 McShane stated the Commission's activities are grant-driven. Delahunt stated that's
44 correct. There are other areas where the Commission could get involved, but the funding
45 isn't there.
46

47 McShane asked if the Commission has follow up meetings with the three
48 departments audited. Parrott stated the departments will make reports to the Commission.
49 The Commission has no authority. It is a recommending body. Previous audits of law
50 enforcement were taken very seriously. She hopes that will continue.
51

52 McShane stated there seems to be facilities issues. Parrott stated there are.
53

1 McShane asked if the Council will receive a report on how the County departments
2 are responding to the audit recommendations. That would be worthwhile. Parrott stated
3 they can do that.

4
5 Delahunt stated representatives from those departments can come forward, also.

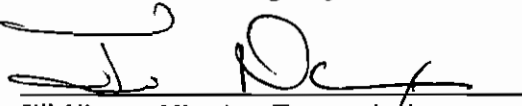
6
7 McShane stated working on domestic violence is a Council commitment, and the
8 Council must follow through on recommendations also, in terms of budget and resource
9 needs. The more the Council knows, the better-able it is to respond to help implement
10 recommendations. The more often the Commission checks in, the better. He would like a
11 follow-up discussion before the end of the year with the Committee of the Whole that
12 includes representatives of the Prosecutor's Office and District Court Probation.

13
14
15 **OTHER BUSINESS**

16
17 There was no other business.

18
19
20 **ADJOURN**


21
22 The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

23
24
25 
26 Jill Nixon, Minutes Transcription

27
28
29 ATTEST

30
31
32
33
34
35 
Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON


Sam Crawford, Committee Chair