

RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS
SKAGIT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Monday, April 23, 1984

- 9:30 a.m. Resolution - Appointment of twelve members to the Skagit County Tourism Task Force.
- 10:00 a.m. Executive Session - Litigation.
- 11:00 a.m. Bid Opening - 1984-85 County Legal Printing.
- 1:30 p.m. Discussion - 1984 Forest Tax Law Changes - Ruth Wylie, Treasurer and Paul Mahoney, Assessor.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

EVENING AGENDA

Hearing Rooms B and C, County Administration Building

- 7:00 p.m.
1. Board of Health, Dr. J. K. Neils, Health Officer:
 - a. Sewage disposal system problems at Similk Beach - Courses of action.
 - b. Update on septage handling practices in Skagit County.
 2. Discussion - Distribution of Skagit County Taxes - Paul Mahoney, Skagit County Assessor.
 3. Discussion - Puget Power's Rate Increase Request currently before the Utilities and Transportation Commission and update on Skagit County's role as intervenor in the hearings - Tom Moser, Prosecuting Attorney.

The Board of County Commissioners met in regular session on the above noted date. Commissioners Norris and Rohrer were present. Commissioner Mansfield was absent.

RESOLUTION - APPOINTMENT OF TWELVE MEMBERS TO THE SKAGIT COUNTY TOURISM TASK FORCE.

Chairman Norris stated that a resolution appointing twelve members to the Skagit County Tourism Task Force had been prepared. He explained that three members were appointed from each Commissioner District representing the private sector and the remaining three members were appointed at large representing the public sector. The Task Force will be working with the Economic Development Association of Skagit County (EDASC), and EDASC will report to the Board of Commissioners.

Jerry Digerness, of the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce and one of the members to be appointed, stressed coordination among the groups to achieve the greatest tourism promotion in Skagit County.

Commissioner Rohrer motioned to adopt the resolution appointing twelve members to the Skagit County Tourism Task Force. Chairman Norris seconded the motion. The motion was carried and so ordered. (Resolution #10037)

The Board also approved for signature individual letters to the twelve members.

BID OPENING - 1984-85 COUNTY LEGAL PRINTING.

Megan Cheney, on behalf of Jerry McInturff, Skagit County Auditor and Ex-Officio Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners, read the Revised Notice of Call for Bids and Specifications for County Legal Printing, as published in the Skagit Valley Herald on April 6 and April 13, 1984.

The following bids were received:

1. The Skagit Argus
413 Gates Street, P.O. Box 739
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Bid: \$3.80 per column inch for first and subsequent insertions.

2. Skagit Valley Herald
1000 E. College Way, P.O. Box 578
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Bid: \$3.90 per column inch for first and subsequent insertions.

3. Concrete Herald
P.O. Box 407
Concrete, WA 98237

Bid: \$2.52 per column inch for first and subsequent insertions.

Chairman Norris stated that he would like to have time to review the bids with the entire Board.

Dan Berentson, Publisher of The Skagit Argus, pointed out the enclosures he had submitted with his bid, which provided a rate and column width comparison between the Skagit Valley Herald and The Skagit Argus. He pointed out that if the Skagit Valley Herald were to match the bid of \$3.80 submitted by The Skagit Argus, they would have to submit a bid of \$2.56.

Bob Aguilar, of the Skagit Valley Herald, stated that their newspaper is audited by auditors out of Chicago, and Skagit County has been their major market for many years.

Mr. Berentson stated that The Skagit Argus has a paid circulation of 4,500.

Mr. Aguilar stated that the Skagit Valley Herald has a paid circulation in excess of 15,000 in Skagit County.

Chairman Norris thanked Mr. Berentson and Mr. Aguilar for their bids. The award of bid will be announced at a later date.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Duane Kline, Budget and Finance Director, presented the following items:

1. Commissioner Rohrer motioned to approve Warrants #1749 through #1920 in the amount of \$407,740.17. Chairman Norris seconded the motion. The motion was carried and so ordered. (C-19)
2. The Board reviewed the following Petitions for Property Tax Refund:
 - a. John Lorentzen, 4605 Highway 20, Concrete, Washington 98237, in the amount of \$245.94 for a senior citizen exemption. (Petition #4613)
 - b. James L. Tinsley, 927 Alexander, Sedro Woolley, Washington 98284, in the amount of \$89.51 for a senior citizen exemption. (Petition #44597)

Commissioner Rohrer motioned to approve the above listed Petitions for Property Tax Refund, as recommended by the Assessor and the Treasurer. Chairman Norris seconded the motion. The motion was carried and so ordered.

3. Commissioner Rohrer motioned to approve the Record of the Proceedings for Tuesday, April 10, 1984. Chairman Norris seconded the motion. The motion was carried and so ordered.

4. The Board approved for signature the following letters informing these agencies that they were to receive Federal Revenue Sharing funds, as requested:
 - a. Mr. Mark Jewel, Director of Skagitron.
 - b. Mr. Lynn Smith, Executive Director of New Leaf, Inc.
 - c. Mrs. Joan Martin, Director of SPARC Developmental Center.
 - d. Mr. Rob Martin, Director of Chinook Enterprises.
 - e. Reverend Hugh Barnes, President of Skagit Counseling & Psychiatric Services.
5. Duane Kline initiated a discussion regarding refinishing tables that are used by the public, in order to preserve them. Mr. Kline suggested meeting with the Public Works Department regarding this.

Chairman Norris made the suggestion to Mr. Kline that he obtain estimates for refinishing the tables. Commissioner Rohrer concurred.

DISCUSSION - 1984 FOREST TAX LAW CHANGES - Ruth Wylie, Treasurer and Paul Mahoney, Assessor.

Mrs. Wylie and Mr. Mahoney reviewed a letter from the Washington State Department of Revenue regarding the forest tax law changes.

Mr. Mahoney pointed out that each county is authorized to enact a 4.0 percent excise tax on timber harvested from private land. This tax must be enacted by local ordinance on or before October 1, 1984.

Mrs. Wylie stated that the Department of Revenue will be sending a sample ordinance, and will be working with them to implement this change.

Mr. Mahoney described the new distribution system by which on a quarterly basis the State Treasurer will distribute all county tax revenue back to the county of origin after deducting the county's proportionate share of administrative costs. He stated that with Scott Paper shut down, this method will be a disadvantage to Skagit County for a while.

Mrs. Wylie stated that the taxes will be collected at the State level, not the County level.

Chairman Norris stated that at this time the County receives 25 percent of timber profit off federal lands. There is a proposal, however, to reevaluate this and remove 75 percent of the 25 percent the County would receive.

Discussion continued regarding at what rate public lands and logging lands were assessed.

Mrs. Wylie noted that the Board will be contacted by the Department of Revenue regarding the next step to be taken to enact the 4.0 percent county excise tax.

Mr. Mahoney pointed out that the County does not have any reforestation lands, so the third forest tax law change would not affect the County.

The Board thanked Mrs. Wylie and Mr. Mahoney for being present.

EVENING AGENDA

Hearing Rooms B and C, County Administration Building

Commissioners Norris and Rohrer were present. Commissioner Mansfield was absent.

1. BOARD OF HEALTH, Dr. J. K. Neils, Health Officer:

a. Sewage disposal system problems at Similk Beach - Courses of action.

John Thayer, of the Health Department, reviewed the memo he had presented to the Board of Health. He stated that the list of major incidents concerning Sewer District #3 had recently been updated to show efforts from 1977 to date. Mr. Thayer noted that in 1977, Skagit County adopted the County Services Act as a beginning to assist problem sewage areas.

Bob Schofield, Planning Department Director, clarified that the County Services Act was adopted to allow the County to legally aid sewage districts.

Tom Karsh, Environmental Health Specialist III, stated that the Permit Center attempted to contact the commissioners from Sewer District #3, however not one was present at this meeting. Mr. French, a former Sewer District #3 commissioner, was present, but said he had been away from the commission too long to provide any input.

Chairman Norris stated that the County should once again try to contact the commissioners to see if they are at all interested in pursuing a solution. He pointed out that if the residents aren't interested, the County shouldn't try to force something on them. The next meeting for discussion of the matter is scheduled for May 14, 1984.

b. Update on septage handling practices in Skagit County.

John Thayer, of the Health Department, reviewed the memo he presented to the Board of Health. He stated that Skagit County provides the major septage and chemical toilet waste disposal site in the County at its site on Butler Hill. However, considering the feasibility of

cutting back on the use of the Butler Hill site, the County has been looking for a municipality in Skagit County that would take the septage.

Mr. Thayer reported that recently they have met with representatives of the Cities of Burlington, Mount Vernon, and LaConner. The City of Burlington seemed very receptive to the idea, and was willing to have an engineering study completed at Skagit County's expense. The City of Mount Vernon was also receptive, but had several concerns including the problem of odor. Most recently, Ken Willis, of the Health Department, and Gene Sampley, of the Public Works Department, met with representatives of the Town of La Conner. The Town of La Conner was very anxious to work something out, as their treatment plant is running at half capacity. La Conner has also had experience with handling septage from the Thousand Trails development, and was interested in trying Skagit County's septage on a temporary experimental basis.

Ken Willis stated that they are looking at trying to phase out Butler Hill Pit altogether. However, since this would most likely take several years, it would be advisable that some interim improvements be made to the Butler Hill site also.

Chairman Norris stated that he would like to see this project progress to the point of finding a municipality that would fill the County's need.

Mr. Willis also pointed out that Burlington and La Conner are in need of help with sludge, and this is something the County could assist with.

Chairman Norris asked that this item be placed on every Board of Health agenda to be updated.

John Garner stated that the Butler Hill site is not acceptable, and it is time to find another site.

Commissioner Rohrer motioned to adjourn the Board of Health. Chairman Norris seconded the motion. The motion was carried and so ordered.

2. DISCUSSION - DISTRIBUTION OF SKAGIT COUNTY TAXES - Paul Mahoney, Skagit County Assessor.

Mr. Mahoney distributed two charts and explained how the County's tax dollars are dispersed. He noted that the largest share of tax dollars goes to schools.

Merideth Baker Phaffl asked if it was feasible that Skagit County would someday have their own library. Mr. Mahoney explained that this was dependent upon what money is available during the year the library is

proposed. Libraries are grouped with fire districts because they are junior taxing districts. He concluded that as of right now, there is money to form a library district with additional taxes.

Tope Ryan, of Clear Lake, asked what the Ports do with their portion of the tax collected. Mr. Mahoney suggested that Mr. Ryan contact the Port Commissioners for an answer to that question. He noted that two port districts cover Skagit County. Mr. Ryan said he thought the Ports were supposed to make money, not spend additional money.

On a related matter, Mr. Mahoney reported that the Washington State Department of Revenue valued the 1982 Skagit County personal property assessment ratio at 91.3 percent of true value. Mr. Mahoney disagreed with this and appealed it to the State of Washington Board of Tax Appeals, who ordered the ratio to be adjusted to 93.7 percent.

Zell Young, Mount Vernon, stated that he was present at the Ovenell Road/Port of Skagit County south access road discussion. He asked why the Port doesn't pay for the improvements to be made to the Ovenell Road.

Chairman Norris stated that some improvements are necessary on Ovenell Road even without the Port's south access road. The County would like to coordinate their improvement with the Port's construction if at all possible. He pointed out that all of the money is coming out of the same pocket.

3. DISCUSSION - PUGET POWER'S RATE INCREASE REQUEST CURRENTLY BEFORE THE UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION AND UPDATE ON SKAGIT COUNTY'S ROLE AS INTERVENOR IN THE HEARINGS - Tom Moser, Prosecuting Attorney.

Mr. Moser stated that Puget Power has asked the Utilities and Transportation Commission for a rate increase for the Coal Strip Plant in Montana and the Skagit/Hanford Plant, which began in Skagit County, and then moved to Hanford, where it was abandoned. He noted that there is now a stipulation among the parties (including Skagit County) that would allow for an equal percent increase among all the classes of users. The Attorney General believes this will amount to an increase of approximately 18.5 percent for all classes, including residential.

Mr. Moser noted that Puget spent \$1.7 million on community relations. He pointed out that in the past, Puget claimed there would be a tremendous shortage of power in the 1980's, and now in 1984 we have a surplus of power. In conclusion, Mr. Moser stated that Skagit County should be opposed to the rate increase. He stated that the Navy, consumer groups, etc., are all opposed. Puget Power is the only entity who is in favor of the increase.

Chairman Norris opened the discussion to those in attendance.

Jim Klaunder, San Juan County Commissioner, stated that he attended a meeting of the NRC in 1979 to raise the question of the suitability of a

nuclear plant in Skagit County. He now supports the County's intervention and encouraged the Board to take a stand of opposition.

John Smith, of Hamilton, stated that Skagit County said "no" five years ago, and should not be forced to pay for any part of a nuclear power plant. The stockholders should pay for it because they were never guaranteed an increase in their stocks. Private industry must be responsible for their own actions.

Debbie Aldrich, of Bow, stated that she was in favor of the County's intervention against the rate increase. She grew up in Maryland and saw the economic and social effects of a nuclear power plant.

Patricia Pernick, of Bow, stated that she can't understand how bondholders can dump the cost of a bad investment on the rate payers. The bondholders should be held responsible.

Tope Ryan, of Clear Lake, thanked the County officials for intervening in this matter. He stated that he has spent eleven years trying to convince Puget Power that Skagit County doesn't want anything to do with a nuclear power plant.

Helen Day, of 122 North 4th, Mount Vernon, stated that in 1977 a study showed that Skagit Valley was the wrong location for a nuclear power plant, but they tried to put it here anyway. We should not have to pay for something that was wrong in the first place.

Harry E. Roller, of Mount Vernon, distributed copies of his opinion of the rate increase. He felt that the Utilities and Transportation Commission should be eliminated and replaced with a consumer oriented body.

Herb Hancock stated he was opposed to Puget's rate increase request, and supported the County's opposition.

Zell Young, of Mount Vernon, sited the Pebble Springs Plant in Oregon, as a failed nuclear power plant that was paid for by the rate payers. He stated that he felt the UTC is directed toward utilities, not consumers. He pointed out that only the stockholders have a vote in the way it is run.

Tom Moser stated that the UTC is being asked to conduct public hearings in Skagit County in June.

Chairman Norris stated that in view of the fact that the Supreme Court doesn't think the costs are chargeable, he feels the County should change its position from neutral to opposed. He stated that he would like to give Commissioner Mansfield an opportunity to respond.

Commissioner Rohrer stated that he had received a large amount of input from the people on this issue, and he is opposed to the rate payers

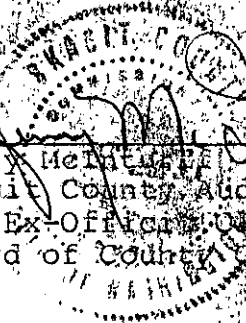

paying for abandoned nuclear power plants. He supports Mr. Moser's move for a dismissal of the issue at the UTC Board.

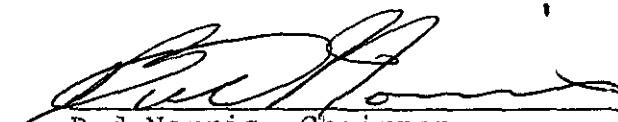
ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Rohrer motioned to adjourn the proceedings. Chairman Norris seconded the motion. The motion was carried and so ordered.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON

ATTEST:



Jerry Mansfield
Skagit County Auditor
and Ex-Officio Clerk of the
Board of County Commissioners


Bud Norris, Chairman

Jerry Mansfield, Commissioner


Dave Rohrer, Commissioner