

**RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS
SKAGIT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Thursday, November 15, 1990

The Skagit County Board of Commissioners met in an emergency session on Thursday, November 15, 1990, to discuss emergency relief for flood victims and long-term funding for flood repairs.

Mike Woodmansee, Budget/Finance Director, enumerated the issues to be discussed as follows:

- What programs and processes has/will Governor Gardner's disaster declaration put into motion?
- What additional programs and processes will a presidential disaster declaration put into motion, and what are the steps for receiving that declaration?
- What resources are available presently and in future?

Mark Spahr, Public Works Director, added that he wished to present a resolution also, which deals with disposal of flood debris.

Tom Sheahan, Emergency Management Director, reported that the initial declaration of an emergency disaster situation by the Board of County Commissioners put in motion the first steps of the relief process. With this declaration, the County pledged resources to fight the flood, making the County eligible for State resources.

Bill Bennett of the State Department of Community Development's Division of Emergency Management expounded on the importance of the governor's disaster declaration. He stated that it authorizes the expenditure of State funds to review private and public losses. This damage assessment will aide the governor in deciding whether to request a presidential disaster declaration. Mr. Bennett was not able to give a threshold at which the governor would request the declaration. Mr. Bennett stated that two teams will review and assess damages; one team, led by Ben Dew, will assess private home damage, and one led by Terry Simmonds will assess public and business damage.

Mr. Sheahan listed agencies who are also performing damage assessments that will be made available to the Emergency Management Department to make their estimate of damages. He stated that any assessments will be limited due to the fact that many areas are still under water.

Mr. Sheahan discussed road repairs and the probability of FEMA's funding assistance.

Mr. Bennett stated that the DCD's damage assessment teams will consist of representatives from the County's Department of Emergency Management, the Small Business Administration, FEMA and the DCD.

A representative from the U.S. Department of Agriculture stated that his agency will be helping to repair minor damage, such as manure ponds, smaller dikes, and structures that the Army Corps of Engineers does not deal with. He stated that they will be utilizing two programs available through the USDA; one which allows improvements to fields, such as the removal of debris and filling of holes, and one which allows structure repairs, such as small dikes and rip-rapped banks. He stated that a preliminary team will arrive today to begin looking at potential needs.

A representative of the Agriculture Stabilization Conservation Service (ASCS), a branch of the USDA, stated that some programs will depend upon the federal disaster declaration. She was not optimistic about the availability of private loans through USDA programs.

The USDA representative stated that the amount of project funds that will be allotted to Skagit County are uncertain because of the delay in passing the federal budget.

EMERGENCY PROCEEDINGS
Thursday, November 15, 1990
Page #2

The ASCS representative stated that once the funding is secured, it could be made available within a week. She stated that once this happens, farmers must make application to either project at the USDA's Riverview Office location in Mount Vernon.

Mr. Sheahan stated that a Disaster Assistance Council consisting of charitable agencies is the only real help for individual property repair, although last year for the first time the Department of Natural Resources brought in work release inmates from Indian Ridge to help with flood clean up. A levy imposed by the County is also a way to fund clean up. Mr. Sheahan stated that the Red Cross's role in the disaster is to provide food and shelter to those effected. They are not involved in clean up efforts.

The USDA representative answered questions regarding crop damage assessment. He stated that, barring the ability to physically inspect farmlands due to the continued presence of flood waters, the USDA uses the yield from the previous year to estimate the present crop damage, later following up with physical assessments. He stated that agricultural business damage can be reported by calling 336-2257, and the ASCS can be accessed by calling 336-5144.

The ASCS representative wished to remind everyone that individuals should not proceed with cleaning up the debris on their property before the USDA has completed its review.

Bob Scofield, Skagit County's Hearing Examiner and a reservist for the FEMA disaster assistance team, gave information on FEMA's role in disaster management. He stated that if the president issues a federal disaster declaration, it will occur within 24 hours of his having received the governor's recommendation. FEMA will then set up at least two offices in the effected area. One office will be a disaster field office, which will serve as a headquarters for the FEMA operations. At least one disaster assistance center will be set up, the purpose of which will be to provide one office where individuals may apply for assistance from any agency. Municipal assistance will be handled out of the field office, where the Army Corps of Engineers will maintain an office. So, Mr. Scofield said, if preliminary damage assessments can be completed by this weekend and submitted to the governor, it is possible that the president's intentions may be known by the first of next week. Mr. Scofield stated that the threshold by which the president makes a determination on the disaster declaration is largely political, and will depend on an assessment of need. Mr. Scofield felt that the County's chance of receiving the presidential declaration is very good. He stated that FEMA funds are free of federal budget constraints.

Discussion ensued on the repair of unstable areas of the Fir Island Dike which, although not breached, are still of questionable strength.

Don Nelson, County Flood Control Section Manager, and Ernie Soler from the Army Corps of Engineers reported that the emergency status under which the Corps has been operating will end tomorrow or the next day, as the emergency status for the Corps depends upon whether the Skagit River is at flood stage or below. With the river dropping below 28 feet, the emergency status must end. While an emergency status exists, the Corps provides assistance of 100%. After the emergency ends and the restoration begins, the Corps' assistance drops to 80% in PL-99 funds, with the County being expected to make up the additional 20%. In order to receive these PL-99 funds, the County must submit a letter requesting them and promising to provide their 20% share. The funds can be used for levy repair, dike repair and landing road construction. Ernie Soler stated that the Samish River Dike breach is not eligible for Corps funds, as it is not part of a diking district; however, the USDA or FEMA may fund its repair.

Mr. Nelson stated that FCAP funds may be available to fund part of the County's share, and he will be pursuing those.

EMERGENCY PROCEEDINGS
Thursday, November 15, 1990
Page #3

Ernie Soler explained how the Corps' assistance works, that there is no time limit on restorations, but that there is a 90 day application period timeline.

Mr. Scofield explained that FEMA pays 75% on the county's expenses for flood repair, but that the County must document its expenses in some way. Ernie Soler also agreed that the Corps requires documentation. He stated that road repair can begin now, as long as photographic documentation of conditions is made.

Mr. Woodmansee clarified that an individual without flood insurance can apply for a \$20,000 grant or a Small Business Administration low interest loan. All of these applications can be made through the FEMA disaster assistance center.

All representatives agreed that it would be helpful to call on State Congressmen, Representatives and other elected officials who would be in a position to lobby for Skagit County's aid.

At this point, the discussion ended and Mr. Spahr presented a resolution to the Board which dealt with the free disposal of household items destroyed by the flood. Conditions of the resolution were:

- 1) the waiver only applies to household wastes taken to Inman Landfill, where the wastes will be kept apart from the general wastes and later separated for disposal.
- 2) the waiver will continue for two weeks following the recession of flood waters.
- 3) the waiver will not apply to commercial wastes, auto parts, appliances or hazardous wastes.
- 4) putrescibles will be required to be separated from other inert wastes.
- 5) those accessing the free disposal will be required to sign a form declaring that the wastes are the product of flood damage.

The Board discussed condition #2 with Mr. Spahr. Commissioner Vaux's suggestion was to continue the free disposal until December 31, and review the decision again then. Finally it was agreed to adopt Chairman Wylie's suggestion to continue the program for two months following the recession of the flood waters, and to review the policy after that.

The Board discussed condition #4 with Mr. Spahr. It was decided to require that all putrescibles be placed in a separate container from the inert wastes.

Commissioner Vaux requested that the staff contact Whatcom and Snohomish Counties to determine how they are handling flood wastes.

In order to implement the resolution as soon as possible, Commissioner Vaux motioned to adopt a resolution waiving the solid waste disposal fees at Inman Landfill for those who bring in flood damaged debris, a special resolution to be signed at a later date. Commissioner Rohrer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Spahr also indicated that he wishes to discuss with the Board at a later date the issue of establishing a revenue source to start a comprehensive drainage program for the County.

The Board then spoke with Dave Hough, Senior Planner, about the Planning Department's role in rebuilding of flood damaged structures. Mr. Hough stated that discussions have been held with FEMA regarding the flood-proofing of structures, assistance with rebuilding flood damaged structures, and assistance with estimating personal loss.

EMERGENCY PROCEEDINGS
Thursday, November 15, 1990
Page #4

Mr. Hough stated that the Planning Department is recommending that permit fees be waived for those making flood repairs or rebuilding flood damaged structures. They are also recommending that flood reconstruction permits be given first priority in the department.

The Board discussed flood reconstruction with Mr. Hough, who stated that if an existing, non-conforming structure suffers greater than 50% damage, it must be repaired to meet the current code. Mr. Hough also stated that if homes located in the floodway, i.e., Hamilton, Cape Horn and Shangri La, incur greater than 50% damage, they cannot be replaced; however, FEMA has a buy out program for those who do have current flood insurance.

Mr. Hough discussed the possibility of holding a seminar to educate flooding victims on their options for repairing and rebuilding. He stated the department's intention to issue a news release that would explain the Planning Department's plans to the public.

Commissioner Vaux motioned to allow fee waivers to flooding victims who apply for building or sewage permits at the County Planning Department. Commissioner Rohrer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT:

At this point, Commissioner Vaux motioned to adjourn the emergency proceedings. Commissioner Rohrer seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON





Ruth Wylie, Chairman

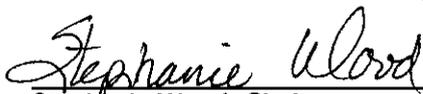


W. W. Vaux, Commissioner



Dave Rohrer, Commissioner

ATTEST:



Stephanie Wood, Clerk
Skagit County Board of Commissioners