

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

**Wednesday, December 2, 1992:**

10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.            Open Session - Department Head Budget Discussion.

The Skagit County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on with Commissioners Robby Robinson, Ruth Wylie, and W. W. Vaux present.

**OPEN SESSION - DEPARTMENT HEAD BUDGET DISCUSSION.**

Gary Ramey and Claire Reiner from Common Ground were present to discuss the County's contribution to them for 1993. They expressed their gratitude for the \$36,000 that was being contributed by the County again, but were disappointed that an increased amount from 1992, was not approved. The main concern expressed was that without additional funding, the Dispute Resolution Center would not be implemented at the momentum desired. Ms. Reiner will be resigning as of the end of the year, leaving them without an attorney as their executive director. Also, a part-time employee resigned, due to the lack of funding to make the position full-time. It was felt that a contribution of \$45,000 would be necessary in order to maintain current staffing.

Mike Woodmansee, Budget/Finance Director, stated that Common Ground requested a contribution of \$76,000 from the County for 1993, an increase of \$40,000 from 1992. A letter was sent to Common Ground in October, 1992, informing them that it was unlikely that their request for \$76,000 would be approved, and that it would be more likely that the funding would be maintained at \$36,000 amount. He said it appeared that if their service was expanded, and the same percentage of fees as last year were collected, an additional \$20,000 could be raised. Also expressed was the budgetary cutbacks and a request was made for them to respond addressing fee issues and other possible financial support. The only response received was once again asking for the \$76,000 contribution.

Ms. Reiner stated that in order to solicit funding, they need money for training someone to mediate contract negotiations. She said that it is not Common Ground's goal to be solely supported by the County, but they have no funding for a person to do the necessary groundwork.

Commissioner Vaux stated that the Board believes in the Common Ground activities, but it is a budgetary issue that has to be addressed. The 1993 year will have less income than 1992, due to decreasing timber revenues. There are mandated services that the County must provide funding to that makes it necessary to maintain or reduce contributions to non-mandated services. He stated that Common Ground is not as strongly affected as some. Their funding is remaining the same as 1992, where others have been reduced or deleted.

It was expressed that Common Ground needs to seek funding from other sources aside from the County. When proposals are received by the County regarding how the County can benefit, and showing fees for service, etc., then there can be a reconsideration of funding.

Carolyn Milat, Health Department Director, expressed that she felt the Accountant position that was deleted was a pertinent position to retain. She expressed concern that the many duties that have been handled by the present Accountant would not be able to be delegated to other office staff due to their already heavy workloads. She felt that the responsibilities would need to be handled by positions more technical than clerical. She also expressed that the transition from having a full-time accounting position within the department to a consolidated position could be difficult. It would seem reasonable to retain the knowledgeable person during the transition period.

Mr. Woodmansee stated that the computerized financial system now in use will make it possible to consolidate the three accounting positions deleted from the budget, and provide a more efficient system of accounting, billing, cash management, internal auditing, grant accounting, budget management, purchasing, and more. The transition and implementation of the new system will occur over the course of 1993. Mr. Woodmansee felt it could be beneficial to retain the Health Department Accountant for 60 days to assist with the transition period.

Commissioner Wylie said that the theory behind the consolidated accountant position was to better use the sophisticated computer system that the County now has for providing updated information to all departments directly, which will in turn serve the public more efficiently. There is a possibility that the Accountant position will need assistants, but it will be a cost savings over having three Accountant positions.

The option of retaining the Health Department Accountant for a specified time during the transition period would be reviewed.

Jon Aarstad, Parks, Recreation, and Fair Director, expressed concern over the reclassification of the Parks Office Supervisor position to that of Staff Assistant I. He felt that the reduction of this position will strongly impact the department. He did not feel that the Staff Assistant I position would be able to take on the responsibilities that the Office Supervisor was carrying. He said that he had previously reviewed the position with the County's Personnel Analyst and it was determined that the responsibilities carried by the position warranted a designation of Administrative Assistant, and not less than Office Assistant III. Mr. Aarstad expressed understanding of the Budget situation, but requested reconsideration of the position to higher than Staff Assistant I.

Another concern Mr. Aarstad had was regarding the computer system for budget preparation. There were difficulties in accessing the system, and felt that it was not "user friendly." He felt that the lower classification of the position in question would not be able to utilize the system.

Mr. Aarstad also expressed concern over the budgeted amount for summer interns. He hoped that he would continue to be allowed more interns than originally budgeted, as had occurred in the past.

The Board will review Mr. Aarstad's request regarding the Staff Assistant I position being upgraded. The decision regarding addition summer interns will be addressed at the appropriate time.

Barb Leander, Sheriff's Office Administrator, expressed appreciation for Mr. Woodmansee's work during the budget process. She voiced concern regarding cost of living increases in Sheriff's Department salaries, but also understood that the information would hinge on contract negotiations.

Mr. Woodmansee stated that funding for a 4% cost of living increase was being held in the Contingencies line item since a contract has not yet been negotiated. If the contract negotiations require more than a 4% cost of living increase, it will be dealt with at that time.

Ms. Leander stated that another concern was regarding a personnel request for a full-time cook position. There is an existing half-time cook position that was being requested to be expanded to full time. In the preliminary budget, the position was eliminated entirely. This would result in deleting an existing, necessary position.

Mr. Woodmansee stated that he would look into the cook position in question and get it straightened out.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Wylie motioned to adjourn the proceedings. Commissioner Vaux seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Robby Robinson, Chairman



Ruth Wylie, Commissioner



W. W. Vaux, Commissioner

ATTEST:



Connie Carter, Clerk  
Skagit County Board of Commissioners

