

**RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS
SKAGIT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Tuesday, April 17, 2001**

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	<u>Public Works Department – Chal Martin, Director.</u> 1) Discussion and Possible Action – Notice of Intent to Obtain Telephone/Written Quotations for Screened and Crushed Gravel. 2) Miscellaneous.
10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Public Comment Period.
11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Presentation – County Customer Service Program.
11:30 a.m. – Noon.	Executive Session – Personnel, Litigation and Land Acquisition.
1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Work Session – Drinking Water Program – Joint Plan of Operation.
5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Tulip Town Preview (15002 Bradshaw Road, Mount Vernon).

The Skagit County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, April 17, 2001, with Commissioners Ted W. Anderson, Don Munks, and Kenneth A. Dahlstedt present.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT – Chal Martin, Director.

1. Discussion and Possible Action – Notice of Intent to Obtain Telephone/Written Quotations for Screened and Crushed Gravel.

Chal Martin, Director, requested Board approval after the fact for the purchase of crushed gravel material out of a pit owned by 3DH Aggregates located in the eastern part of Skagit County. He explained that while performing regular maintenance during the month of March, the previously authorized amount of \$20,000 was exceeded. Based upon the advice provided by the County Auditor's Office, the Department is now requesting that the Board sign an additional Notice of Intent (NOI) to cover the additional gravel purchased from 3DH Aggregate. This additional authorization would allow the Department to proceed with the payment of outstanding invoices currently owed to 3DH Aggregates. Mr. Martin assured the Board that the path taken was the most economical use of County funds, but that it did not follow correct internal procedures.

Danny Weinberg, Auditor's Office, stated that the Auditor's position on these types of things is that the Department must follow the State RCW's. The State RCW's have mandated certain things such as every purchase must have a formal bid process, unless certain minimum threshold amounts have been established by resolutions and policies. As Skagit County's upmost threshold is \$25,000, then the Department is required to go to a formal bid for the materials needed. Mr. Weinberg explained that there are certain exceptions such as emergencies and sole source vendors. He reported that the Auditor's Office determined that proper procedures had not been followed, and advised the Department that the proper paperwork would be needed.

Chairman Anderson stated that this explanation indicated that the County has made a full disclosure of the improprieties and needed to make sure the internal process was amended so that this would not happen again.

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Mr. Martin asked the Board to sign an additional NOI form, or to put this information in a Resolution to memorialize the events as explained.

Mr. Weinberg suggested that an NOI is not appropriate because it would have no meaning.

Mr. Martin replied that the Department would prepare a Resolution for the Board's consideration under next week's Consent Agenda.

A lengthy discussion followed regarding the bid list procedures that are followed by the Public Works Department.

2. Miscellaneous.

- A. Mr. Martin indicated that, at the Board's request, the Department had investigated the purchase of a full-size van for the Board's use rather than a regular passenger vehicle.

Steve Flude, Assistant County Engineer, reviewed the different vehicles that would be available.

Chairman Anderson explained that the reasoning behind this request is that the Board often makes site visits that involve members of the Public Works or Parks Departments, and the Commissioners' car is not large enough to accommodate 6-8 people. Consequently, it is often necessary to take two vehicles, and the group discussions and input is lost.

Commissioner Munks concurred with Chairman Anderson's comments and the need to accommodate 5 or more individuals at one time when making site visits.

After a brief discussion, it was decided that the 9-seat configuration in a Ford Econoline Van would be the best solution.

- B. Mr. Martin next requested direction from the Board for the West Bow Hill Road Project. The Department recommended proceeding with chip seal maintenance on the roadway this summer. He reviewed that the comments received from the general public were presented to the Board last week.

Following a discussion on the possibility of increasing shoulder width where possible, the Board agreed that proceeding with chip seal maintenance would be the best for all concerned.

- C. Mr. Martin reviewed with the Board a letter recently received from the Guemes Ferry Advisory Committee. He reviewed the plans for the Anacortes City Park that is being designed and discussed, noting that it is difficult to determine how much parking will be available to the patrons of the ferry.

Chairman Anderson reported that Commissioner Munks has been developing a good relationship with the City to work on some things that will be mutually beneficial in this area.

Mr. Martin stated that when the City gets ready to proceed with their project, that would be the time to discuss the County's involvement and potential utilization of areas for parking.

Commissioner Munks advised that he has a meeting scheduled with the City this Friday, wherein a representative from the Ferry Committee and City Parks & Recreation will be present. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the possible access around private property and through the marina. There might also be a change in where employees may park, such as a designated ferry worker parking area.

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A discussion ensued on the pertinent ADA requirements and the difficulties to be overcome, together with the problems of multiple-owners of the marina.

Mr. Flude indicated that he is still working on the process for the "historical" building located on the site. He detailed the requirements for the 3 month process involved, noting that the County has proposed several methods of mitigation.

Chairman Anderson reiterated that everyone involved has concerns and wants to see this parking lot developed. However, the timing is not right to hold everything at bay for every single issue. He encouraged the Department to continue communicating openly with all involved.

D. Mike Cawrse of the Surface Water Management Division, reviewed the specifics of a contract that the Board signed last week which continues the work of the Marine Resource Committee, for the purpose of accomplishing a shoreline survey focusing on March's Point. Letters will be sent out to property owners notifying them of the survey, and encouraging their participation. Participation is not required.

E. Ric Boge, Natural Resources Project Manager, presented a draft to the Board of a public outreach brochure that is to be mailed to landowners whose parcels might be included in the buffer program. He stated that the proposed brochure is filled with information and is reader friendly. He indicated that it was quite a challenge to condense the information into something easily understood. Mr. Boge reported that there would also be a letter from the Board enclosed, together with a small survey card to send back to the County, answering a few simple questions.

Mr. Martin emphasized the desire to eliminate confusion and to move forward should monies become available to do so.

Mr. Boge asked the Board to review the information presented and to get back to him if they had any comments or suggestions for changes.

F. Chairman Anderson presented a Certificate of Good Practice to Steve Flude, Assistant County Engineer, from the County Road Administration Board (CRAB). He explained that this action by CRAB assures the distribution to the County of the State's monthly gas tax allotment.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD.

There were no citizens present for the Public Comment Period.

PRESENTATION – COUNTY CUSTOMER SERVICE PROGRAM.

Al Jongsma, Planning & Permit Center, reviewed the history of the County's Customer Service Program, which began in 1994 under the direction of then County Administrator, Bob Taylor. Most of the County's employees attended both customer service and leadership classes as developed by Duane Knapp, an expert in customer service. Later, it was decided to make this program more personal and to have County employees prepare and give the customer service training to new employees. Since 1995, a core group of employees has been accomplishing this training. He explained that the trainers have attended training seminars to become more familiar with their duties. It is stressed to each class that customers are not only those that come to our counters, but also our fellow employees.

Mr. Jongsma outlined the format for the training, listing such subjects as body language, listening skills, non-defensive communications, and the County's Mission Statement.

Tim DeVries, Planning & Permit Center Residential Plans Examiner, reviewed the particulars of the topics that are included in the customer service training. He explained that interaction is encouraged, as well as

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feedback and questions. He indicated that the trainers have exercises they run through, including such things as verbal exchanges, and physical activities. The purpose is to keep their "students" listening and their minds working, getting them to think about different situations. Mr. DeVries reported that the trainers do not give a speech or sermon, but just want employees to think in customer service items.

Mr. DeVries expressed that the trainers spend time defining "what is a customer." A customer is defined as someone who has a need that you think you can fill. It is stressed that customers are other employees as well as outside customers coming to the Department. He reviewed some specifics of customer relations intended to reduce uncertainty, and making the customer feel special and deserving of full attention. He encourages employees to "listen to listen" and not "listen to respond." He discussed the components of dealing with individuals, providing them a pleasant experience.

Cori Russell, Records Management, explained the importance of judging people as they come in to determine if they are confused or angry, and to treat them accordingly. She reported that it is important to interpret those feelings and to show that we are enthusiastic about our job and are competent. She briefly discussed the difficulties of non face-to-face communication, with over 2,000 phone calls per day coming in to the County. She stressed the need for County employees to transfer people to the proper department, and to know the resources that are available. She urged Departments to set up voicemail procedures that are applicable to the Department. She explained that the trainers do not dictate or tell employees what to do, but provide guidelines. Ms. Russell indicated that the customer service training provides new employees with a warm welcome, and makes them feel a part of the County team.

Gretchen Van Pelt, Victims Assistance Unit, stressed the need to remember that we all work for people, and need to diffuse situations early. She indicated that the trainers are strongly committed to this program. She stated that the program was first put together under Ric Boge's leadership, together with input from other counties, and from the employees being trained. She reviewed that the evaluations and comments oftentimes say that the Skagit County customer service training is the best training they have ever had. Ms. Van Pelt described the trainers as "para-professionals," who do the training from the heart, but have also been trained by others. She discussed the networking that results from the customer service training, in just knowing who to call elsewhere in the County to find a solution to a customer's inquiry. Ms. Van Pelt emphasized that customer service training and new employee orientation is vital to the people representing the County on a daily basis.

Chairman Anderson indicated that he is a big fan of the customer service program, and that the transferring of telephone calls is very effective to get to the appropriate person. It oftentimes shortens the loop and prevents redundancy.

Commissioner Dahlstedt stated that the most important asset is the County's people, and that needs to be conveyed as we hire employees. He stressed that the Board is committed to having a good relationship with all of the County's staff. He stated that the goal for he and Commissioner Munks has been to get around to see every department and employee, but that has been difficult these first few months in office. He asked that if the trainers hear of departments getting a little discouraged, to please let the Board know so that they can pay them a visit.

Ms. Van Pelt encouraged the Board to continue the small investment necessary to give the trainers the necessary tools to continue their work.

Commissioner Dahlstedt indicated that it is important for employees not to take things personally. Oftentimes, if an employees is patient and just listens, concerns can be addressed.

Mr. DeVries added that the customer service training includes a "difficult customer" section, advising employees how to diffuse volatile situations.

Commissioner Munks stressed the need to remember that the County is a service organization.

Chairman Anderson personally thanked the trainers and urged them to keep up the good work.

MISCELLANEOUS.

On behalf of the Planning & Permit Center, Staff presented Addendum No. 3 to a Personal Services Agreement with Kinko's, Inc. to provide copying services to the Department for calendar year 2001 in the total amount of \$20,000. Commissioner Munks moved to approve the Addendum as presented, and Commissioner Dahlstedt seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote. **(Contract No. 03888)**

ADJOURNMENT.

Chairman Anderson made a motion to adjourn the proceedings. Commissioner Munks seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

Ted W. Anderson, Chairman

Kenneth A. Dahlstedt, Commissioner

Don Munks, Commissioner

ATTEST:

Patti J. Chambers, Clerk of the Board
Skagit County Board of Commissioners