

**RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS
SKAGIT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2003**

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Discussion/Possible Action – Adoption of the Final 2004 Budget
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Presentation – Government Excellence Award From the Microsoft Corporation

The Skagit County Board of Commissioners met in special session on Tuesday morning, December 2, 2003, with Commissioners Kenneth A. Dahlstedt, Ted W. Anderson and Don Munks present.

DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION – ADOPTION OF THE FINAL 2004 BUDGET.

The Board met for additional discussion regarding the adoption of the 2004 budget. County Administrator, Gary Rowe, prepared recommendations that would have a net decrease in the budget for the Board's consideration. They included some adjustments in allocations of funding for staff salaries, staffing changes, and a 10% increase in recreation fees.

Parks and Recreation Director, Bob Vaux, stated that improvements to the Swinomish Boat Launch will result in an increase of approximately \$20,000 for 2004. Mr. Vaux and Recreation Director, Dennis Lind, felt the increases in recreation fees would result in less participation.

Commissioner Anderson stated that he doesn't believe participation will decrease. Skagit County has one of the finest sports leagues in the State; however, in order to provide personnel for events and maintain these recreational programs, increases must be made.

Commissioner Munks stated that the County has to look ahead regarding draining from the reserves. He doesn't feel that the County can justify cuts in health and senior services in order for people to play sports. Choices need to be made between essential and non-essential services. If adjustments are made now, this will help to maintain our Parks programs.

Commissioner Dahlstedt said that other counties' fee structures enable them to be self-supporting. Partnerships with school districts are also an important factor.

Mr. Rowe proposed the elimination of the two Coordinators for the Skagit County Fair and replacement of those positions with one Fair Manager, who would be hired out of the Professional Services budget. He recommended the elimination of a full-time maintenance custodian, and replacement of that position with a part-time custodian. Mr. Rowe also recommended to eliminate the mail handler, and to fill that position with a Personal Services contract. In addition, he recommended elimination of the Customer Service Manager position in the Planning and Permit Center and the addition of an Associate Planner; however the Associate Planner position would not be filled unless there was an increase in Planning and Permit Center fees. The overall net reduction to the general fund based on the recommendations he has made would be \$300,000. This would still result in drawing \$700,000 from reserves to balance the 2004 budget.

Mr. Rowe said that the target number for staff reduction in 2004 is \$250,000. Every position that becomes open will be reviewed and discussed with department heads.

Commissioner Anderson asked if the Planning and Permit Center had considered outside contracts to accomplish the Associate Planner tasks. He wondered if this position should be delayed until after the Interim Director finishes his assessments.

Commissioner Munks stated that the Planning and Permit Center does need some additional staffing, but the Commissioners don't have a lot of choices.

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Commissioner Dahlstedt agreed that the Associate Planner position should be left in the budget, but that filling the position should be delayed until after the Interim Director makes his recommendations.

Commissioner Anderson stated that a review of Planning and Permit Center fees should be brought forward on a yearly basis as part of the budget process. Mr. Rowe said that he would direct the Department to bring the suggested fee increases to the Board for consideration separate from the budget process. He said based on the Board's direction today, the final budget figures will be presented for final adoption next week.

Mr. Rowe discussed and received direction from the Board regarding the Ag Advisory Board request for funding the Farmland Legacy position, the Health and Human Services request for additional funds for discretionary money, and American Red Cross funding.

The Board will be holding a public hearing for consideration of a 2% increase in the lodging tax. The anticipated increase in funding is expected to be approximately \$105,000. Finance Director, Brad Whaley, presented the recommended budget for the hotel motel tax funds. Commissioner Anderson moved to adopt the 2004 hotel/motel tax recommendation with a reduction in funding for area wide Chambers from \$35,000 to \$25,000 with \$10,000 in reserve; \$21,000 for the Historical Society; an increase in the Loggerodeo funding from \$4,500 to \$5,000; and \$2,000 for the Sedro-Woolley Museum, contingent upon the adoption of the additional 2% tax. Commissioner Munks seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Commissioner Munks stated that he would like to get more information on the Northwest Children's Theatre.

MISCELLANEOUS.

1. Vouchers audited and certified by the auditing officer as required by R.C.W. 42.24.080, and those expense reimbursement claims certified as required by R.C.W. 42.24.090, have been recorded on a listing, which has been made available to the Board.

As of this date, December 2, 2003, the Board by majority vote, did approve for payment those vouchers included in the above-mentioned list and further described as follows:

Warrants numbered 156984 through 157716 from Clearing Fund 696 in the total dollar amount of \$1,001,521.66 (Transmittal No. C-139-03); and

Warrants numbered 157717 through 157718 from Clearing Fund 696 in the total dollar amount of \$8178.35 (Transmittal No. C-140-03).

Following the special session, the Skagit County Commissioners met in regular session to receive a Government Excellence Award from the Microsoft Corporation.

ADJOURNMENT.

Commissioner Anderson made a motion to adjourn the proceedings. Commissioner Munks seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

Kenneth A. Dahlstedt, Chairman

Ted W. Anderson, Commissioner

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Don Munks, Commissioner

ATTEST:

JoAnne Giesbrecht, Clerk of the Board
Skagit County Board of Commissioners