

**RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS
SKAGIT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2010**

The Skagit County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, October 19, 2010, with Commissioners Sharon D. Dillon, Ron Wesen, and Kenneth A. Dahlstedt present.

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Dillon called the proceedings to order at 8:00 a.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chair Dillon led the gallery in the salute to the flag.

III. AGENDA:

a) 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Skagit County Public Works - Henry Hash, Director:

- 1) Issuance of Board Decision (following Public Hearing of September 14, 2010): Resolution Regarding the Abolishment of and the Distribution of Assets of the Britt Slough Sub-Flood Control Zone

Henry Hash, Public Works Director, introduced Dan Berentson, Natural Resources Division Manager for Public Works. Mr. Berentson explained that a Public Hearing was held on September 19, 2010 regarding the abolishment of the Britt Slough Sub-Flood Control Zone. After public comment, Public Works was requested to create a work plan and communicate with the City of Mount Vernon about a possible interlocal agreement to share electrical and maintenance costs.

Jan Flagan, Surface Water Section Manager, discussed the work plan which begins with securing maintenance easements from the owners that border the Slough. Ms. Flagan stated that letters have been written to property owners discussing options for maintenance access. A community meeting is scheduled for October 26, 2010 to answer residents' questions. The next item includes mowing twice a year, which was added to the work plan. The third item is to identify how to manage beaver dams. A current beaver dam problem on the outlet side of the pump station was inspected with the property owner and a consultant and it was concluded that there was no apparent dam. Beavers will also build dams in culverts along the slough. They will be managed on a case-by-case basis. Regarding pump motor availability, there is a spare pump motor located in storage at the County Road Shop. The current assets of the Zone include a fund balance of \$54,151.00. Physical assets include the pump, pump station, outlet tide gates and culverts. The remaining Sub-Flood Control Zone funds will be placed into a separate job code in the County Drainage Utility and used for flood drainage issues in the Britt Slough area only. Once these are expended, future funds will come from the Drainage Utility. Public Works has committed to hold future annual meetings each February. Additional neighborhood meetings can be held in advance of any future projects. In case of other maintenance work needed, such as fallen tree removal, the public can contact the Drainage Utility by calling Dianne Crane at Public Works.

Commissioner Dahlstedt commented that it was important to have local volunteers watching for problems. He stated that people who live in the area are the first to see what is going on, and they help the County do a better job.

Commissioner Wesen noted his appreciation of the volunteers, and the tour a couple of months ago. Regarding the dike, and the potential beaver dam, he asked what was the cause of the buildup? Ms. Flagan commented that they were not sure of the cause of the flow obstruction. They are looking into different management options, including a different outflow route or lighter gates, and will have a consultant review it if a need is determined.

Commissioner Dahlstedt commented that the tide gate systems have worked well, and that lighter gates might allow better movement of water at less expense.

Chair Dillon agreed that consolidation of the districts is the best use of funds and that revenues that came from the district will only be used in the district.

Dave Towne, the current chair of the Britt Slough Sub-Flood Control Zone Advisory Committee was invited to comment. He thanked Mr. Hash for taking the opportunity to tour the area. The Committee was not told that an observation was taking place, but he was glad to hear that whatever was blocking, possibly sediment buildup, is no longer there. If a consultant becomes involved, he suggested that they also look at salmon restoration along with drainage improvement. Mr. Towne is pleased that this work is proceeding, although he would appreciate more notice of meetings like this, and would like to have more input on the work plan and other concerns. He displayed a map that showed pipes and ditches on Britt Slough that are not currently identified as easements. He feels that property owners should be consulted and have these improvements incorporated as easements. A blue area represents a pipe from Blackburn Road leading to a catch basin that is then piped out. Another area shows the City's outfall area in the Slough. He recommended that any Interlocal Agreement with the City of Mount Vernon refer to this area, the type of pipe on it, and whether any maintenance is performed in cooperation with the City. He stated that it is currently silted in and does not operate properly. He thanked Ms. Flagan for creating easements, and hopes his information can help in creating further easements. He has spoken with the Skagit County Treasurer, and agrees with her recommendation that January 1 be the cut-off date, for tax purposes.

Commissioner Wesen clarified some issues about ditches, pipes, and responsibilities for maintenance that lie with property owners.

Mr. Towne said that the county road crew had recommended using open ditches along roads to avoid problems with crushed pipe. Mr. Towne added that since the Sub-Flood Control Zone had been in place, they have mowed the ditches meticulously. Previous work may have been done with a drag line, or backhoe.

Commissioner Wesen reminded the public that if there is a drainage maintenance issue, call Public Works. If work is not done, then call the Commissioners.

Dan Berentson asked how many letters had been sent to property owners. Dianne

Crane estimated about thirty-five.

Chair Dillon hopes that people will attend the community meeting on October 26th, that we will get easement information, that the public will be informed about the work plan, and the County will receive their comments.

Commissioner Dahlstedt requested that Public Works have all the changes to the taxes completed by the end of the year in order to make less work for the Treasurer.

Ms. Flagan is working with Treasurer to prepare a resolution that closes the funds at the end of this year for all of the Sub-Flood Control Zones. The one exception is the Sedro-Woolley zone, which will close at the end of 2011.

Mr. Berentson added that assessment changes should be made by the end of October. There was additional discussion on fund issues, and the need for a Public Hearing as legal procedure for any rate adjustment.

The Commissioners discussed the need to follow up on easements and notify the Advisory Committee of any meetings.

A motion was made by Commissioner Dahlstedt to approve the resolution to abolish and distribute the assets of the Britt Slough Sub-Flood Control Zone. **(Resolution No. R20100355)** Commissioner Wesen seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

2) Miscellaneous

There were no additional miscellaneous items for Public Works to discuss. Chair Dillon recessed the proceedings at 8:32 a.m.

- b) 9:00 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. Presentation by the Washington State University Cooperative Extension Center on "Non-Traditional Outreach - Making a Difference in the Community"

Chair Dillon reconvened the proceedings at 9:00 a.m.

Ned Zaugg, Director of Washington State University Co-Operative Extension Programs in Skagit County, presented information to the Commissioners regarding Non-Traditional Outreach Methods.

To summarize the Co-Operative Extension Program, there are five main areas: Youth Development, Family and Consumer Services, Leadership Development, Agriculture, and Natural Resources/Environmental Stewardship. The Research and Extension Center has been a great collaborative venture with Skagit County for over 90 years. Their guiding principles are: to advance knowledge, to promote economic well-being and quality of life by fostering inquiry, learning and application of research.

Cooperative Extension's Issue-based Programming focuses on outcomes and

impacts. The current non-traditional outreach includes the areas of: Community Economic Development, Nutrition Education, Parenting and Youth Development through 4-H, Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry, and Water and Environmental Quality. They have developed partnerships with others in the county and around the state. One of the programs program specifically noted today is the radio program on gangs (in Spanish).

Director Zaugg introduced Don McMoran, who presented information on Agriculture and Natural Resources, specifically on Latino Ag Education outreach. After noting the decrease in Young Farmer participation at the breakfasts, WSU saw a need for Latino outreach, and pursued private and USDA funding. This resulted in hiring Sarita Shaffer, who is presenting today. Ms. Shaffer is a fluent translator, with an extensive agricultural background, and has worked with organizations all over the world. She provides a tremendous ability to connect with Latino folks in the agricultural industry in Skagit County.

Sarita Shaffer presented information on her outreach program. She apologized that no workers could be here today; many work two or three jobs. The Latino/Hispanic Community is an important and growing sector, comprising an estimated 25% of Skagit County's population and about 85% of the County's agricultural population. Her strategies include: a regular radio interview program on KSVR; features on Una Vision (a Latino Network for the Northwest Region); Spanish-language fliers and posters; presentations to Latino organizations; and partnerships with the Latino business development center, and Latino farmworker housing authorities. The most important outreach strategy at this time is word of mouth. "Cumplimos con nuestra palabra," "We Keep Our Word".

A new development was the Cultivating Success dual language course, whose graduates had the opportunity to participate in Viva Farms (described in a former Cooperative Extension presentation). This was a very successful first season for all six farms, reaching new wholesale markets here and in Seattle (hospitals and restaurants), and making contributions to food banks. Other new professional development opportunities for Latinos include: a bilingual pesticide safety program; participation in the Washington Tilth Producers Conference; the Western Washington Potato Workshop; Taste-Washington, an opportunity for local schools to taste produce from local farms; GAPS training (now available bi-lingually); increased activity in Skagit County's Festival of Family Farms Tour; and Small Farms Team Walks. She is also working with the Washington State Department of Agriculture on facilitating organic certifications. She thanked the Commissioners for access to the County Motor Pool, and for providing office space.

Doug Karr, Pest Control Specialist, described this summer's Skagit County Pest Management Program. This protects the County's \$17,220,000 tree fruit and small berry industry. Mr. Karr worked with home owners in the field, and with people coming to the office with insects and questions. Master Gardener volunteers provided additional support and answers. Education was the biggest part of the job, encouraging home owners to trim or remove trees, remove dropped fruit, and take measures to reduce apple maggot larvae. Identification of the Spotted Wing Drosophila was critical to the berry industry. There is funding through the Washington Raspberry Commission to monitor drosophila, which may become epidemic on the West Coast. He thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to work with the public this year, and emphasized that public education

is vital to the program.

Commissioner Dahlstedt suggested that if an educational video was available, it could be broadcast on Skagit 21. Director Zaugg concurred that it would be an excellent idea to develop a video.

Director Zaugg continued with information on the Beach Watcher Program. Their new coordinator is Brian Stafki, who is training Beach Watchers today. This is research-based training by professionals for volunteers. 73 volunteers have received training. They are required give back at least 100 hours of community service. The total hours for this year were 2,900, with a value in savings to the County of \$58,540. Over 19,000 hours have been contributed since 2005. Several outreach and monitoring programs were described. People who want to participate in the Beach Watcher Program should call Cooperative Extension at (360) 428-4270, Ext. 223 (Brian Stafki).

Maryann Holbrook, (replacing retiree Bill Dwinelle) continued with information on the Family and Consumer Sciences Program. This includes the "Transitions" program, working cooperatively with the Mount Vernon School District's students, ages eighteen to twenty-one, to improve their living skills as low-budget consumers. Other programs include: Ideas for Living; Germ City demonstrations, and Queso Fresco education.

William Freitas gave information on the bilingual Youth Development Programs, and Latino outreach. WSU's Esta Contigo radio program on KSVR 91.7 radio produces weekly programs in Skagit County for the Latino community, with host Estella Aburto. Of note is the new program series on Gangs. Mr. Freitas' Youth Leadership Projects took Latino teens to the WSU campus, where many had their first experience on a university campus. A bilingual 4-H Club is held at Madison Elementary School. While parents are learning "English as a Second Language" their children attend 4-H.

Jose L. Garcia-Pabon, Ph.D., from Washington State University, travels statewide, and has helped develop outreach to the Latino community in Skagit County. Dr. Garcia-Pabon has spoken on the Esta Contigo radio programs, and is especially focused on gangs and community partnerships. He holds workshops for teachers, educators, and community leaders. He and Diana Morelli (from the Economic Development Association of Skagit County) have also worked on Latino small business and economic development.

Commissioner Wesen thanked all the presenters. All the volunteer groups offer opportunities for Skagit County citizens to be the best that they can be. Good work is being done, and if the Commissioners can help, he asked to let them know.

Commissioner Dahlstedt noted that in today's workforce, people may change careers five or six times in their life. Cooperative Extension helps by providing rapid re-training in response to new economic situations. The Research Center keeps farmers alerted to new diseases and pests. WSU has been a critical partner and a benefit to Skagit County in many areas. Commissioner Dahlstedt suggested that they work with our communications people to make videos and information available to the public.

Chair Dillon thanked Cooperative Extension for their presentation and the

opportunity to learn about all the different programs that cover Skagit County from Concrete to Puget Sound. She stated that we need to cultivate our young farmers and agricultural programs.

Chair Dillon recessed the proceedings at 9:44 a.m.

- c) 9:45 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. Discussion/Possible Action: Resolution for the Issuance and Sale of Bonds for the Transfer Station Project

Chair Dillon reconvened the proceedings at 9:50 a.m.

Trisha Logue, Budget & Finance Director, introduced Susan Musselman from SDM Advisors and who is the County's financial advisor, and Cynthia Weed, from K&L Gates, and who is the County's bond counselor. Ms. Logue stated that when the President signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, there was a special provision in it that allowed counties and cities to issue taxable, instead of tax-exempt, bonds with an interest subsidy in the form a payment from the federal government. The County was the direct recipient of an allocation of 5.276 million dollars. We have asked for an additional allocation; the Washington State Department of Commerce is coordinating that process and will be in contact with us. The project that these bonds will be issued for is the new Transfer Station Facility on Ovenell Road in Burlington. The process has passed the Governance Board which includes all municipalities as well as Skagit County government. A Resolution before the Commissioners today is requesting permission to issue the bonds.

Susan Musselman, SDM Advisors, stated that this is a unique opportunity for Recovery Zone Bonds to be made available to the County, and also for the Department of Commerce process to allow additional allocations on a first-come, first-served basis. Skagit County was first to submit a request. Ms. Musselman stated that a conference call with Moody's Investor Services was held last week, and she expects to hear about the bond rating this week. All disclosure documentation is ready, and everything is prepared to move forward when the construction bids are opened and the Recovery Zone allocation is made.

A chart showing interest rates over the last three years depicts the significant disruption in 2008, reflected in an increase in municipal borrowing and a decrease in treasury rates. Ms. Musselman stated that the markets are more "normalized" now. Taxable and tax exempt bonds do not track with each other. These Recovery Zone bonds are sold in the taxable bond market. The stated interest rate will be higher, but they will receive a 45% federal interest subsidy. The bonds will be sold to the Treasury (taxable) bond market rather than the traditional municipal market. A chart showing recent perspective on interest rates shows them, at one time, nearing zero. Ms. Musselman stated that we are at a point of historic low interest rates and expect very good results because of the Recovery Zone subsidy.

Cynthia Weed is a partner at K&L Gates, formerly Preston, Gates and Ellis, and the firm has been the County's bond counsel for a number of years. The current Resolution is the action item for the County's sale of up to \$10 million in bonds. If the cost of the project is lower when the bids come in, the amount can be adjusted. The bonds are expected to be sold by competitive sale after the final determination of the Recovery Zone allocation. They may sold as one series of recovery zone bonds

and then a second series of traditional tax-exempt bonds. Ms. Weed stated that this is a spectacular time to be in the market selling bonds. The bonds are limited tax general obligation bonds which the County pledges to repay. With a source of revenue to fund repayment, low interest rates are expected. The Resolution delegates to the Administrator and the Budget and Finance Director the authority to set the sale date, set the final principal amount of the bond, and accept the lowest bid. After the sale, there will be a report to the Board. This Resolution is the only action needed and it is lengthy because it includes Securities and Exchange Commission and IRS regulations, but it is fairly straightforward, authorizing the borrowing of money which Skagit County promises to repay.

Ms. Logue stated that in the past, they have not asked the Board of Commissioners to delegate authority to other persons. However, in this case, because Board would be out of town during a critical time, the decision was made to delegate authority in order to achieve the best market rate.

Commissioner Dahlstedt commented that the County has done well to maintain its credit worthiness by being efficient and balancing budgets, and he thanked the staff and the consultants for their work. He also stated that we have been careful to bring partners together on this project, and that all of our citizens will benefit from an environmentally sound and efficient method of handling waste. Now is the time to build, when construction costs are low and interest rates are good.

Commissioner Wesen had a question about the length of the term.

Ms. Logue answered that it would be twenty years. The first three years will repay interest only, because of existing debt that will be paid off in 2013. We are eligible for \$10 million of bonds, but are only seeking to cover the cost of construction. The use of the Transfer Station revenue will help to pay the bonds back through tipping fees.

Chair Dillon was optimistic that, financially, this is a good time to be moving forward on this project. Tipping rates should stay stable. The new Transfer Station will be a safer place for employees, and more efficient for the citizens and contractors that use it. She thanked all who have been involved.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wesen to approve the resolution for the issuance and sale of bonds for the Transfer Station project. (**Resolution No. R20100356**) Commissioner Dahlstedt seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

Chair Dillon recessed the proceedings at 10:08 a.m.

d) 11:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. Public Comment Period

Chair Dillon reconvened the proceedings at 11:33 a.m.

Seeing no public comment forthcoming, the Commissioners went on to comment on

other issues.

Commissioner Wesen noted that ballots were mailed out this past week, and reminded voters to participate in the election.

Commissioner Dahlstedt reiterated that we need to support our local businesses in Skagit County and make sure that whenever possible, purchases are made within the County. All local entities like emergency responders rely on revenue from local sales tax. It keeps our citizens employed, and local businesses also support local charities. If we want to do the right thing, we should do it ourselves, and buy as much as we can locally. Commissioner Dahlstedt also urged citizens to help your neighbors in need by contributing to the United Way Campaign. He stated that 85% of the funds collected goes directly to Skagit County's local charities.

Chair Dillon reminded everyone that this is Flood Awareness Week in Skagit County. She also stated that supporters of Skagit County Boys and Girls Clubs are encouraged to attend a fund-raiser this Saturday night at St Joseph Center in Mount Vernon.

Chair Dillon recessed the proceedings at 11:38 a.m.

- e) 11:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Proclamation: October 19 through 24, 2010 as Adult Literacy Week in Skagit County

Chair Dillon reconvened the proceedings at 11:45 a.m.

Melanie Koin of Skagit County Community Action Agency, and Kathy Kuba, from Skagit Valley College were present for the proclamation in celebration of Adult Literacy Week in Washington State and Adult Literacy Programs in Skagit County. They thanked the commissioners for this opportunity.

Ms. Kuba introduced Rosie Hernandez from the Opportunities Industrialization Center, Brian Humphries from Work Source, Judy Sebert and Ellen Short Schez, Family Literacy Program Evaluators from Mason County, various Teachers and Tutors, a Volunteer In Service to America who is organizing the GED program, Rachel Mal from Volunteer Literacy, Susan Sanderson who is a volunteer for improving English language skills in the county, and students from an English class in Burlington.

Last year "Cultivating Student Success, Stories of Learners" was presented to the Commissioners which has been published as a book. This year the presentation focuses on people who have graduated from college and who are now working. The presentation is titled "Better Skills, Better Jobs, Building a Stronger Skagit Valley". She shared stories of several people who improved their adult literacy skills.

Commissioner Dahlstedt offered his congratulations to everyone. He stated that he serves on the Workforce Council, and noted that in our parents' generation, people spent thirty to forty years at one career. Now it is predicted that people may go through five or six jobs in their

lifetime. For those taking literacy courses, this puts extra work and responsibilities on top of their normal daily lives and he respects those who make the extra effort and set a good example for their children. Skagit County's partners: Skagit County Community Action Agency and Skagit Valley College, are reaching out with these programs, and it speaks well for our community.

Chair Dillon stated that the stories shared today were wonderful. Community partnerships like these provide different venues for learning. She congratulated the participants and stated that they were making a better life for themselves and for their families as well.

Commissioner Wesen thanked the volunteers, teachers, leaders, and all the different groups that help. Children need to learn how to read by the third grade so that they can go forward with their education. He stated that the decision made by adults to learn to read will be beneficial for the rest of your lives.

Commissioner Wesen read a Proclamation declaring October 17th through October 23rd, 2010, as Adult Literacy Week in Skagit County, and he urged all citizens to join in this special observance.

Chair Dillon recessed the proceedings at 12:01 p.m.

- f) ***12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Skagit County Community Action Agency Luncheon for Adult Literacy Week (Commons Area, 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon)**
- g) **1:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Skagit County Public Works, Henry Hash, Director:**
 - 1) **Work Session: Discussion of Flood Awareness Week (October 18 through 22, 2010), with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

Chair Dillon reconvened the proceedings at 1:30 p.m.

Public Works Director Henry Hash opened the discussion of Flood Awareness Week, and introduced Dan Berentson, Public Works Natural Resources Division Manager. Mr. Berentson introduced Army Corps of Engineers Emergency Management employees Eric Winters and Cathie Desjardin, who have been here for flood fight activities for the past eight years. Mr. Berentson also introduced Tim DeVries, Skagit County's newly appointed Floodplain Manager, Mark Watkinson, Director of the Emergency Operations Center, and Cliff Butler, Division Manager for Roads.

Mr. Winters made note of the current flood preparation activities underway in Skagit County. Ms. Desjardin described how the Corps comes in to assist local communities during floods following their request for help. Dike Districts typically request technical assistance in advance, prior to direct flood assistance. Mr. Winters noted that sandbags are stockpiled in Seattle. Skagit County

should have sand ready.

Ms. Desjardin commented on this week's training programs which included the high school sand bagging competition. On Wednesday, Urban Search and Rescue volunteers will learn how to sandbag. She mentioned other preparations, including the Mount Vernon flood wall construction, Dike District 17 levee, a joint venture by Dike Districts 1 and 12 to widen the levee where the two districts meet along Memorial Highway, and the Fisher Slough Project.

A meeting today at Dike District 12 will discuss repairs still needed from the 2006 flood. Dike District 12 has worked with Corps Research and Development (from Vicksburg, Mississippi), where staff came out to test the effects of vegetation on levees.

Commissioner Wesen asked how far they are from the 2006 mitigation repairs being done. Mr. Winters stated that the repairs were postponed for environmental research.

Commissioner Dahlstedt thanked the Corps for regularly assisting each year. The Corps is a critical partner to the community in flood preparation. He stated that Skagit County is prepared, but that we hope there will not be a flood this year.

Chair Dillon mentioned that Chal Martin, Public Works Director for the City of Burlington, had joined the meeting. She has been impressed with past quick responses and the amount of resources that have been made available by the Corps. She opened the floor for any additional comments.

Dan Berentson reminded the public to look for the Flood Awareness insert in the Skagit Valley Herald newspaper this week. This is an annual publication that reminds citizens what to do in case of a flood.

Chair Dillon asked Tim DeVries, Planning and Development Services, to clarify his new position as Floodplain Manager. Mr. DeVries observed that Skagit County has an unusually large flood plain, growing development activity, and new regulations with mapping and biological assessments. It was apparent that Skagit County needed a central source for review of development activities within the flood plain, preservation of habitat, and avoidance of natural hazards. His position will review development in the flood plain, promote good flood plain management practices, and develop a long-term strategy for management.

Mark Watkinson, Director of Emergency Management, thanked the Corps for the times when they provided their resources on short notice. He thanked everyone for devoting this week to flood

preparedness.

Cliff Butler, Manager of Road Operations, also thanked the Corps for stepping in when our resources are overwhelmed by the river.

Chair Dillon recessed the proceedings at 1:50 p.m.

- h) 2:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Presentation: At Risk Intervention Specialists, Program Evaluation Results

Chair Dillon reconvened the proceedings at 2:00 p.m.

Jennifer Kingsley, Community Services Director, thanked the Board for their support of the programs in her department. The programs have been strengthened through coordination and collaboration and critical services provided to vulnerable populations have continued. Over the past year, Ms. Kingsley has analyzed delivery, effectiveness, fiscal sustainability, and how this relates to the continuum of care. Two of the youth programs provide mental health assessments: the At-Risk Intervention Specialists (ARIS), and School-Based Mental Health (which is contracted with Catholic Community Services). There is an opportunity to better understand the mental health, behavior, and substance abuse needs of our youth, and further understand the outcomes and outputs of these programs and how they relate to the future. Ms. Kingsley stated that the objective is to integrate these two programs, and align them with current grant fund source opportunities. Programs are being evaluated and others were present to share information on the evaluation process.

Jocelyn Palmer-Perry, ARIS Coordinator, described the ARIS program. ARIS started twenty years ago as a joint effort between the school districts, County, law enforcement, and community agencies. Information presented to the Commissioners includes a chart of activities, and reports to superintendents on activities within each school district. There are five ARIS staff members servicing seven school districts with a total of 39 schools. Evaluation is done by a Risk and Protective Factor framework developed at the University of Washington to evaluate prevention and intervention programs for youth. The goal is to promote healthy behavior starting with healthy beliefs. ARIS addresses multiple issues, including community events, family-level activities, and social enrichment activities. Work is also performed with individuals on drug use, teen pregnancy, and other issues. Ms. Palmer-Perry introduced Wendy Rowe, Ph.D.

Doctor Wendy Rowe, Consultant, has evaluated prevention and intervention programs across the United States and Canada. She is an Associate Professor at Royal Roads University in Victoria, B.C. She has worked with Skagit programs over the past twenty years, including ten with the ARIS program. She described a study in 2000 by Dr. Donna Schram, evaluating youth over a three-year period. This led to a later follow-up study in 2002, and other studies. Since it was difficult to track data on students, a system was set up to collect data, evaluate behavior, and discover whether there were changes in behavior over a period of time. This information has been used to improve the ARIS program. ARIS improves behaviors, more significantly with females than males. A new assessment tool will allow more accurate measurement of risk and protective factors. A stakeholder

survey is planned, which will look at both ARIS and School-Based Mental Health programs, to see if different populations are served, or if there is an overlap.

Commissioner Dahlstedt commented that the program has been strongly supported by the schools. Resources are becoming more limited, so there is a need to know where are they most effective. Partnerships have sustained many good programs. He stated that property tax increases do not keep up with the need. Analysis of all County programs is important. Commissioner Dahlstedt stated that he appreciates Dr. Rowe's involvement over the years.

Dr. Rowe stated that youth are moving outside the school system with severe problems. One job of ARIS to get them re-engaged in school.

Ms. Kingsley described that these are difficult fiscal times, especially related to mental health issues, substance abuse, and intervention. The .01% sales tax funds for substance abuse and mental health funds are contracting programs with the schools. There are two programs in the department (ARIS and School-Based Mental Health) where there is a need to look for crossovers in order to insure that delivery is effective, and that we are not duplicating services. The allocations committee supports hiring a consultant to help transform and integrate the programs that are effective for our community.

Commissioner Wesen looked at the referrals from schools, and asked why there was a dramatic change. Ms. Palmer-Perry answered that ARIS referrals vary because school districts have varied needs. For example, the Concrete School District has difficulty accessing services and so they get more attention from ARIS.

Chair Dillon noted that ARIS is an important program in the Concrete School District, and the Commissioners believe in the benefits of the program, which has been life-saving for many individuals and families.

Commissioner Dahlstedt asked what state-level funding was available. Ms. Palmer-Perry noted that they had just met with Ron Hertel, staff from OSPI who oversees the Readiness To Learn program, which provides funding to ARIS, and also will be meeting with Dave Quall. At this point, they do not know about funding possibilities from the next legislative session.

Chair Dillon recessed the proceedings at 2:30 p.m.

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Dillon recessed the proceedings at 2:35 p.m. and stated that next week there will be a change in schedule, with most viewing events on Monday due to the Departmental Budget Sessions.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Sharon D. Dillon, Chair

Ron Wesen, Commissioner

Kenneth A. Dahlstedt, Commissioner

ATTEST:

Linda Hammons, Clerk of the Board
Skagit County Board of Commissioners