

**COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES
KITTTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
KITTTITAS COUNTY EVENT CENTER/FAIRGROUNDS
TEANAWAY HALL-HOME ARTS BUILDING
SPECIAL MEETING**

WEDNESDAY

6:00 P.M.

JULY 25, 2007

Board members present: Chairman Alan Crankovich; Vice-Chairman David Bowen; Commissioner Mark McClain.

Others: Mandy Robinson, Deputy Clerk of the Board; Gene Dana, Sheriff; Jerry Pettit, County Auditor; William Holmes, Probation Services Director; Clayton Myers, Undersheriff; Mike Johnston, Daily Record Reporter; and sixteen members of the public.

PUBLIC HEARING

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

COMMISSIONERS

At approximately 6:00 p.m. **CHAIRMAN CRANKOVICH** opened a continued public hearing from July 24, 2007 to consider a request from the Citizens Advisory Committee's recommendation that the Board of County Commissioners place a ballot proposition on the November 6, 2007 General Election, to increase the County sales tax by three tenths of 1% as authorized by RCW 82.14.450 to fund Kittitas County and the incorporated cities of Kittitas County's criminal justice purposes.

CATHERINE CLERF, CHAIR of the Citizen's Advisory Committee introduced herself and gave a brief overview and history of how they came up with the recommendations of the Committee and how they have worked to compile the information being presented today. Ms. Clerf indicated that the only way the Committee would support this proposition is if there was a sunset clause. She indicated she would be available to answer any questions the Commissioners may have, and thanked them for the opportunity to produce the proposal before the Commissioners today.

THOSE PRESENT & TESTIFYING: **DICK SHELLEY** expressed his concerns with the limit of law enforcement in the Upper County, and felt currently the law enforcement that is there are generally all alone and come in to contact with very dangerous situations. He felt it would be lifting a huge target off the county's back to get multiple officers on shift at all times. He indicated that the response time can leave officers in jeopardy for long periods of time and that becomes a huge liability to the County. **FENELLE MILLER** expressed her concern over why outside and or additional funds had yet to be sought for this issue. **CAPTAIN ROSS GREEN** reviewed Ellensburg's

Police Department coverage and what they intended on doing with the additional funds if the measure was put on the ballot for citizen approval. He indicated that those funds would go to providing two patrol officers, two anti-crime and drug officers, one school supervisor and two and a half animal keepers. He expressed the importance in increasing staff, and indicated that in the past, crime use to go down when Central Students left, however that isn't the case any longer. He spoke in support of having a sunset clause and felt it was extremely important to leave the control in the voters hands. **DETECTIVE MIKE COPPIN** indicated that Kittitas County has the 5th worst in crime out of thirty nine counties. He reviewed crimes from 2005 stating that 1,249 crimes took place in 2005 but that is just the actual reported crimes. He indicated that the Police Department has become a reactive department not a proactive department and that is a negative direction to go. **WILLIAM HOLMES** stated to the Commissioners that he was honored with the opportunity to be interviewed by the Citizens Advisory Committee. He felt it was important for the Commissioners to take the time to review the report and really familiarize themselves with it. He expressed his thanks to the committee. **TOM CHINI** indicated that he generally supports taxes for law enforcement but felt it was crucial for the report to be specific to lonely law enforcement. He expressed his concern regarding the amount of monies provided each year and felt it would be beneficial to be the same about every time for all law enforcement. **HUGH SPALL** explained that he was a member of the committee and indicated that if we shorted the general fund expenditures this could be funded without a tax increase. He indicated that this will be a dedicated tax source no matter what and that's why the recommendation has presented as is. He explained that without the sunset clause the committee wouldn't have made the recommendations that are before the Board of County Commissioners to increase taxes for "Boots on the Street". **UNDERSHERIFF CLAY MYERS** indicated his support of the Committee's report but wanted to know if a minor recommendation could be considered. He indicated that the Sheriff's office would like to have the potential of having in there transport unit some tweaking done so that they would have an actual transport officer to do the transporting instead of pulling someone off the street's to do transporting. He indicated that this would also offer consistency of the position. He also explained that consideration to amend the language of the courthouse security position would allow for a fulltime position that would be under their supervision, instead of going through the private firm that is currently being used. He expressed his support of the report and agreed this money if approved, needs to be put towards "Boots on the Street". He indicated a dedicated detective & street crime unit would allow the Sheriff's department to focus on "hot topic crimes".

THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL PUBLIC REQUESTING TO TESTIFY, THE PUBLIC PORTION OF THE HEARING WAS CLOSED.

COMMISSIONER BOWEN answered questions regarding the percents of funding that has been figured out to go to the Law & Justice positions. He indicated that right now all counties are struggling and budgets are tight. He expressed his appreciation to the committee for taking on the task of preparing this report.

COMMISSIONER McCLAIN indicated he had spent most of his campaign focused on the narcotics issues in Kittitas County. He expressed his sympathy and understanding for the time consuming process it takes to get things accomplished within County government. He indicated he was very familiar with the difficulty of getting a response back and follow through when working with a large group. He indicated that in 2001 he was the only Prosecutor in the Prosecutor's office that had over four thousand criminal cases that year.

CHAIRMAN CRANKOVICH expressed his thanks to the committee for all their hard work. He indicated his priority coming into office was to fill vacant positions including those at the Sheriff's office. He indicated that had been done and actual positions added. He felt the sunset clause was very important, and was in support of the clause. He felt it was important to move forward with the citizen's request.

COMMISSIONER McCLAIN felt we were opening ourselves up for trouble with the requests for law & justice court facilities and there being no room for the courts presently.

CHAIRMAN CRANKOVICH expressed his understanding of Commissioner McClain's concerns but indicated this money cannot be used for any facility expansion. He indicated that respecting the citizen's advisory report is key.

COMMISSIONER BOWEN & CHAIRMAN CRANKOVICH expressed their hope for a unanimous vote.

COMMISSIONER BOWEN moved to approve the 3/10 of 1% sales tax increase to go on the voter's ballot for September. **COMMISSIONER McCLAIN** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD

KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Mandy Robinson

Alan Crankovich, Chairman