

**COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES
KITITITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
COMMISSIONERS AUDITORIUM
SPECIAL MEETING**

TUESDAY

3:00 P.M.

March 15, 2011

Board members present: Chairman Paul Jewell, Vice-Chairman Alan Crankovich and Commissioner O'Brien.

Others: Catherine Dunn, Deputy Clerk of the Board; Judy Pless, Budget and Finance Manager; Jerry Pettit, Auditor; Greg Zempel, Prosecuting Attorney; Marsha Weyand, Assessor; Kirk Holmes, Director of Public Works and Interim Community Development Services Director.

SPECIAL MEETING

MONTHLY FINANCE DISCUSSION

COMMISSIONERS

At 2:00 p.m. **Chairman Jewell** opened the special meeting to consider the financial state of the County.

Chairman Jewell started with a discussion of billing by the Prosecutor's Office for work done for other County departments and outside agencies. He said that the billing was requested by the Board in order to capture funds from non-general fund grants. Large billings are going out to general fund departments as it is not legal to "cherry pick" those departments and funds to bill over others. The County Road fund in particular has been impacted with Prosecutor billings and 2010 and 2011 levy shifts. **Chairman Jewell** said he would like to stop the billing as soon as possible.

Commissioner O'Brien asked if the amount of the billings was a surprise. **Prosecutor Zempel** said some of it was but most is consistent throughout the year. **Chairman Jewell** said he thought the tracking of time and projects is a good thing and will help in the future to gauge needs at budget time. He noted that some of the billings should rightfully have been sent to the Board instead of the departments billed. **Auditor Jerry Pettit** said the theory is that the County can't have one fund benefitting from another fund with the exception being the General fund. **Chairman Jewell** said this wouldn't directly affect the Prosecutor's budget as the remittance goes into the General fund but not specifically to the Prosecutor's office.

Commissioner O'Brien directed Mr. Zempel to continue to bill outside agencies to capture those grant monies.

Prosecutor Greg Zempel said the pathway to creating a civil department in his office has been tortuous. He explained that the

first civil deputy was funded by raising Community Development Services fees and the next by raising the CDS/Public Works fees. The most recent addition was funded by keeping employment law in house and using diversion fees. He said he was not filling a vacant position because of a lack of funding and he was nervous about taking this funding source away.

Chairman Jewell said the only position that was tied to funding was the employment law position. He said he didn't look at revenues versus expenditures in the Prosecutor's office. In other departments, he does look at that.

Commissioner O'Brien asked if the tracking would give valuable information. It was agreed that the information would be valuable. He said he was concerned over unintended consequences such as not having contracts reviewed by the Prosecutor's office if it was going to have a large cost.

The Board directed the Prosecutor to stop the billing as of March 1, 2011 but to keep billing the outside agencies.

Levy Shift -

Chairman Jewell said that there has been a great deal of confusion over the Levy Shift and he wanted to discuss it with everyone present. He said the Levy Shift was thought to be \$1,000,000 in 2010 and \$635,000 in 2011. In reality, it was \$1,000,000 in 2010 and \$1,635,000 in 2011 plus monies to the Sheriff in Road Diversion Fund. The Levy Shift is a permanent, not a yearly shift. He said the goal was to reduce it to zero in four years.

Commissioner O'Brien asked why it could not be transferred back the next year. **Assessor Marsha Weyand** said it doesn't work that way, but if the Board chose to set the tax amount lower and set a new base for both funds, the General fund portion can be reduced to even out the base amounts. **Chairman Jewell** and **Vice-Chairman Crankovich** said they had not understood that.

A discussion on Bank Capacities and Levy Shifts followed.

Commissioner O'Brien expressed concern that taxes were being raised but **Chairman Jewell** said the General Fund portion would be lowered to make up for the increase in the Road Fund. He said it seems there is some flexibility on this and suggested a meeting with Department of Public Works accounting staff to be sure they understand it as well.

Judy Pless, Budget and Finance Manager, explained that on the first Monday of March each year, the Board is required to file with the County Auditor a Certification of County Assets. She presented a letter for signature as this was overlooked at the first of the month.

LETTER

CERTIFICATION OF CAPITAL ASSETS

AUDITOR

Vice-Chairman Crankovich moved to approve Board signature on the letter regarding Certification of the County's Capital Assets. **Commissioner O'Brien** seconded the motion. Motion carried, 3-0.

Kirk Holmes, Interim Director of Community Development Services, reported the number of building permits is low in Community Development Services as well as the land use permits. He said the building permits were down 65%-70% and might be a sign of the impact of the water moratorium or of the lack of money in general. This year there won't be a wind farm to offset it.

Vice-Chairman Crankovich suggested delaying filling approved positions. A discussion followed on methods of delaying. **Mr. Holmes** expressed concern over the level of service.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD


Catherine Dunn

**KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**


Paul Jewell, Chairman