Those in attendance: Commissioners Max Golladay, and Perry Huston

Others: Shannon Carlson, Deputy Clerk of the Board; Sheriff Gene Dana, Sheriff’s Dept.; Sgt. Bert Marx, Corrections; Chief Clay Myers, Sheriff’s Dept; Jim Herum, Sheriff’s Dept; Judge Haven, Lower District Court; Bob Gubser, Sheriff’s Dept., and Approximately 5 members of the public.

COMMISSIONER GOLLADAY opened the meeting at 10:00 A.M. to consider
Resolution regarding criminal justice funding; funding options for future budget amendments, and jail service agreements for State agencies.

COMMISSIONER HUSTON gave a brief staff report that lead up to calling the special meeting. He acknowledged a letter that was received from the State Patrol giving their opinion the Board’s action to make State agency’s financially responsible for prisoner’s they bring into the jail. He was pleased to have received the letter because it opens up communication lines. Commissioner Huston read the two Resolutions that were drafted for the meeting. He cited RCW 43.135.060, which states the State, is responsible for the cost of new programs or an increase in service levels. Commissioner Huston stressed that currently the state is taking no financial responsibility for the increase in service at the Kittitas County Corrections Facility, and that Washington State was ranked 50th in terms of state support for the judiciary system, and has consistently reduced financial support in other areas of law enforcement and public safety.

Commissioner Huston has met several times with the Sheriff’s Department discussing priorities and where the rank and file should be with regard to the Correctional Facility. If that is something that needs to be added to the resolution before final adoption that is something he can add. The request is to ship out the state prisoners and for the Sheriff’s Department to draw up State Jail Service Contracts. The Resolution also authorizes the Sheriff to take any means to collect the money from State agencies (i.e. use of collection agencies or litigation). The Legislative session will reconvene May 12th, so this gives the Board some time to get the Resolutions and Agreements together.
CHIEF CLAYTON MYERS from the Sheriff’s Department gave some figures and costs for additional staff. The Sheriff’s Department is requesting:

- 5 Control Room Officers @ $161,400/year (includes benefits)
- 1 Clerical Staff @ $29,220/year (includes benefits)
- 1 Correctional Officer @ $36,000/year (includes benefits)

The annual total from the budget for this request would be $226,620. It is a savings of $30,000 (not including cost of training) if seven (7) Correctional Officers were hired. The difference from a Correctional Officer and a Control Room Officer is that the Control Room Officer does not have any contact with the inmates. They are strictly in the control room watching cameras, answering the phone and opening doors. This will free up time for the Correctional Officers to be on the floor and perform the responsibilities that are not getting completed because of the inmate to officer ratio.

CHIEF MYERS explained that shipping out 10-15 inmates and adding staff will not completely remove the safety issues. Shipping out the inmates will bring the population down to 90-95, which is still high for a 45-bed jail that has been modified to accommodate 75. To give an average daily cost to house an inmate at another facility the County is looking at $75.00 a day charge. This cost includes medical bills, transportation of the inmate and the bed cost.

COMMISSIONER HUSTON computed the numbers, and said just in staffing requests it will run the County $19,000 a month. This does not include the shipment of 15-20 prisoners to another facility and staff time to transport. When figuring out the amount of funds to be used from the sales tax fund it still comes out a little short. The additional funds may need to be directed out of other budget areas. Commissioner Huston expressed his appreciation to Chief Myers for the time he has spent gathering all the information needed. Commissioner Huston said he would sit down with the Budget Officer to go over some figures. The budget isn’t looking as bad as they thought in the beginning. Currently the bed population is 112, at it’s highest is 126, so the average is 110. Removing at least 15 would bring the number to 95, which is not perfect, but it is a little better.

JUDGE THOMAS HAVEN suggested the Board pick a number and stick with it. He has heard from several Corrections Officers that 90 is manageable. He stressed the importance of staying with the occupancy number and not going over it for any reason, because then the same problem will arise of the over crowding.
COMMISSIONER HUSTON said he would look at combining the Resolutions and make modifications. He asked the Sheriff to put together State Jail Service Contracts for the May 6th Agenda to go with the Resolution. He also said he would draft up a response to the letter received from the State Patrol.

COMMISSIONER HUSTON moved to continue the hearing under Board Discussion and Decision on the Commissioners regular Agenda May 6th 2003 at 3:00 P.M. COMMISSIONER GOLLADAY second.

Motion carried 2-0.

The Special Meeting was adjourned at 11:00 A.M.