BOARD MEETING
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
SPECIAL MEETING
KITTITAS COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS - 4-H BUILDING

WEDNESDAY 6:00 P.M. AUGUST 17, 2005

Board members present: Chairman Perry Huston, Vice-Chairman David Bowen & Commissioner Alan Crankovich

Others: Julie Kjorsvik, Clerk of the Board; Jerry Pettit, Auditor; Amy Mills, Treasurer; Gene Dana, Sheriff; Tom Swenson, Facilities Maintenance Director; Clayton Myers, Undersheriff; William Holmes, Probation Services Director; Greg Zempel, Prosecutor; Scott Sparks, Superior Court Judge; Joyce Julsrud, Clerk; Michael Cooper, Superior Court Judge; Nancy Goodloe, Public Health Administrator; and approximately 15 members of the public.

PUBLIC HEARING LAW & JUSTICE CENTER SHERIFF

At approximately 6:00 p.m. CHAIRMAN HUSTON opened the public hearing to consider proposed options for a Law & Justice Center.

GREG ZEMPEL, PROSECUTOR introduced GENE DANA, SHERIFF who gave a power point presentation including the history of the jail. CLAYTON MYERS, UNDERSHERIFF gave a report on the current status, condition and overcrowding of the jail. MR. ZEMPEL explained the constant condition of overcrowding in the jail and the liabilities associated with it. He reviewed the proactive approach the County has taken to try and keep overcrowding down (work release, booking restrictions, increased good time for release, Drug Court, Court probation and inmate work crews). He said after a thorough review of options, the Law & Justice committee recommended "Option C" which is a combination of Option A & B with a remodel of the current booking area to the Sheriff's office, remodel of the 2nd floor of the existing jail into office space remodel the current district court into a Juvenile office, holding and probation, remodel of existing 2nd floor of the Courthouse into office space, plus replacement of all exterior windows and roof top mechanical. The total amount of the project would cost approximately $27,755,153.00. SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE MICHAEL
COOPER explained the history of the Superior Court as well as their current space needs since the addition of another Superior Court Judge. He also expressed concerns relating to security risks in the Superior Court, including the lack of security staff. He felt it was now time to update and modernize the Courthouse facility. WILLIAM HOLMES, PROBATION SERVICES DIRECTOR described their conditions and environment of the Juvenile office and the lack of space. He said the Misdemeanant Probation office has over 3,300 on their caseload. Their offices are removed from a secure setting which is a risk to the county. He spoke of the Juvenile transport issues to Yakima and said they have spent most of the dollars detaining the youth in Yakima County. JOYCE JUULSRUD, CLERK spoke of the lack of security with criminal defendants that come into their office (such as a plastic shield/window) and how her staff has expressed concerns of their safety. She said their office was originally set up for 2 employees and they are now at 5½ employees. She also mentioned the lack of storage space for their office. JERRY PETTIT, AUDITOR said the proposal submitted by the Law & Justice committee would provide for the safety of employees, inmates, and the general public. The approach provides for weatherization and re-allocating space in order to provide services to the citizens. AMY MILLS, TREASURER expressed concerns for her employee’s health due to the Courthouse roof leaking etc. She said overall space needs for the Courthouse are urgent. SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE SCOTT SPARKS addressed the need for additional space, the leaks in the Courthouse roof including asbestos, as well as security concerns/risks for employees and public. He wants to be able to ensure that there are no guns or knives brought into the Courtrooms as well as the Courthouse, but with the current situation, he can’t do anything to prevent that from happening. TOM SWENSON, FACILITIES MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR said the Board would be signing a contract within the next week to repair the Courthouse roof. He said the building is fifty years old and energy wise, it is a nightmare and they are operating it with a lot of the original equipment from when it was built. He addressed various issues that are going on within the jail that needs to be addressed including the electronic systems, heating and air systems. MARSHA WEYAND, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT FOR THE ASSESSOR’S OFFICE said they have an additional 1,600 more parcels that have been added with no additional staff. She said they also needed to look at additional space for their office. There are several concerns in their office including the
Courthouse roof leaking, air and heating units not working properly, lack of security, brown water coming from their sink, and single pane windows which are not efficient. She said their office also has asbestos issues from the roof leaking. **Nancy Goodloe, Public Health Administrator** explained that her office is located in the Morris-Sorensen building and she believed the Board of County Commissioner and staff are truly dedicated to deliver the best services to the public. She said there are real issues going on in the Courthouse and felt the staff truly cares about their service, but it can be difficult with their current work environment. She said the County is growing and therefore there is a need for additional services. **Mr. Myers, Undersheriff** reviewed all of the options including “Option A” - construction of new jail including Juvenile office, noting construction costs have gone up ($17,197,124.00). “Option B” - includes Option A plus a new District and Superior Courts and Court Clerks above the new jail ($21,889,076.00). “Option C” - includes options A & B with remodel of 2nd floor of existing jail into office space, ($25,755,153.00). “Option D” is the same option as C except it remodels ½ of the existing 2nd floor of the current jail into office space and the other half of the Work Release. He said the architectural firm did factor in the construction time in their estimates. He said they wanted to hear from the public and encouraged the Board to set another public hearing and use as many resources to get the word out for people to either attend or submit written comments. **Amy Mills, Treasurer** reviewed the estimated sales tax and/or property tax that would be required which was based on 2003 and 2004 taxes.

**Public Testimony:** **Fred Kruger** felt that each County department should do a detailed article for the newspaper for the public’s review. He mentioned that Morgan Middle School will also be proposing a 26 million dollar project for 2006 ballot. He asked if the Commissioners would work jointly with the City of Ellensburg in order to combine facilities and services to assist cutting down on property and/or sales tax (since the City is talking about a new Police Station, etc.). He felt a public defender should have a facility somewhere within the proposal and felt the indigent were being denied justice and they should have same services available to them as anyone else. He distributed a checklist (EXHIBIT 1) for the Board’s consideration. He stressed that the County should have no cost overruns. **Charles Weidenbach** felt the proposal was
basically the same proposal as last year, with additional options and he would like to see a proposal with a lesser options. THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL TESTIMONY THE PUBLIC PORTION OF THE HEARING WAS CLOSED.

COMMISSIONER BOWEN felt departments went out and did their research and they looked more globally for the County needs for both the Courthouse and Jail. He noted the County didn’t get 100% participation from all the cities the last time. He said he shared the same safety concerns for the public, employees, Courtrooms, departments space needs, etc. and felt “Option C” may be the best for the County. He said he would be inclined to support committee’s recommendation and noted the County may need to also be prepared for a public defender and a coroner position. COMMISSIONER CRANKOVICH felt the County was sitting on the edge of a disaster and if something catastrophic happens, the County would end up paying more in the end than what a new jail would cost now. He explained it was the County’s responsibility to protect their staff and public. He noted a small step the County was currently taking was to issue Employee ID badges with their photos on them. He understood that no one likes to pay taxes, but “Option C” is the best option for an overall improvement for what needs to be done. He applauded everyone’s efforts putting information together. CHAIRMAN HUSTON said if there was a revenue line he could approve and pay for it by a motion, he would do it, but he can’t, so it must go before the voters on a ballot. He said they had previously contacted various entities for participation and did not get much response. He said he is going to ask the citizens to assist in fixing the problem, but the citizens must give their approval. COMMISSIONER CRANKOVICH noted that construction costs do not go down. COMMISSIONER BOWEN asked if the real estate excise tax would be an option for funding? CHAIRMAN HUSTON explained it doesn’t generate enough revenue each year and said is was not predictable.

CHAIRMAN HUSTON moved to select “Option C” indicating the predisposition for funding to come from an increase of sales tax in the amount of 3/10 of 1% and a property tax levy. COMMISSIONER BOWEN seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

CHAIRMAN HUSTON moved to set a public meeting for 9:00 a.m. Monday August 22, 2005 in the Commissioners Conference Room to consider another hearing notice for both the Upper and
Lower County to allow additional public testimony. COMMISSIONER BOWEN seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

CLERK OF THE BOARD

KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Julie A. Kjorsvik

Perry D. Huston, Chairman