

FULL COUNCIL
MINUTES
September 16, 2009

ATTENDANCE

BOARD MEMBERS: Jack Louws, Gary Jensen, Andy Rowilson, Tom Jones, Scott Walker, Pete Kremen, Louise Bjornson, Sam Crawford, Dan Pike, Steve Swan, Barb Audley

STAFF: Jim Miller, Ron Cubellis, Leslye O'Shaughnessy

GUESTS: Tony Tortorice, Joanne Todd, Brian Beard

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:15 p.m. without a quorum. No action was taken until a quorum was reached at 3:30 p.m.

Agenda items were addressed out of order.

H. REPORTS

H.1 Handouts

Unemployment rates by county. The August 2009 numbers show that Whatcom County has had the lowest unemployment rate over the recession.

ARRA Fund transportation distribution by county. Whatcom County is the 9th largest county in the state. The county was 33rd out of 39 counties in the total ARRA funds received and 30th out of 39 in transportation ARRA funds.

Collaborate or Else - By Peter A. Harkness, Governing Magazine article. Under the new administration they are focusing on a regional approach to transportation. This could mean more empowerment and direct funding to the MPOs around the country.

Paul Weyrich's Last Ride - By Alan Ehrenhalt, Governing Magazine article. Paul Weyrich was a co-founder of the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think-tank. He wrote a book on how public transportation got a bad rap. His position is from a national security and economic stimulus point of view.

State Fiscal Year 2009 Unified Planning Work Program Annual Report. WCOG's annual transportation work program was distributed.

H.2 Information

Cubellis received Professional Finance Officer Award from the Washington Finance Officers Association.

2008 Single Audit WCOG received no findings.

B. PRESENTATION

Mr. Tortorice, Director of the Department of Information Services. Joanne Todd Director of Communications for the Department of Information Services.

Mr. Tortorice gave a presentation on technology and shared services. The State is trying to identify where the services that can be shared are, how to define them, how to fund them, how to set up the government mechanisms to sell them so that everyone benefits. One of the big areas is data center consolidation. They are building a new data center in Olympia that will have space available to state and local governments.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

Crawford congratulated Bellingham on the Sunset Drive project.

D. MINUTES

MOTION: Pike moved, Kremen seconded, to approve the minutes from January 28, 2009.

MOTION PASSED

E. BUDGET/CLAIMS

D.1 Budget Report

The June, July and August 2009 budget reports were included in the packets. Miller reviewed the budget reports and claims.

D.2 Claim Voucher Listing

Vouchers audited and certified by the Auditing Officer as required by RCW 42.24.080, and those expense reimbursement claims certified as required by RCW 42.24.090, have been recorded on a listing which has been made available to the Council.

As of this date, September 16, 2009, the Council approves for payment those vouchers included in the above list and further described as follows: voucher numbers 2009207 through 2009327 in the total amount of \$368,091.68.

MOTION: Kremen moved, Pike seconded, to retroactively approve vouchers 2009207 - 2009327 in the amount of \$368,091.68 for June, July and August 2009.

MOTION PASSED

F. NEW BUSINESS

F.1 2010 Draft Budget

The process for wage increases this year is the same as last year - the cost of living increase will be the average of the jurisdictions and the matrix is 3 percent. Those at the end of their salary range will receive the 1 percent longevity along with the cost of living increase. Staff used a 2 percent place holder for the cost of living until the average can be determined.

Bjornson noted that there are no new programs listed in the budget.

Kremen stated that the budget looks good and that the salaries are in line. He asked that travel be looked at. He would like staff to consider reducing travel expenses.

Pike stated that 2 percent salary increase seems reasonable. He would like staff to make sure that there is value added to travel that is completed.

Louws asked if there are any board members that want to form a salary committee and have a meeting to discuss salaries. No board members requested a committee be formed.

Walker asked if the employees pay a share of the medical premiums. Cubellis responded that employees pay 9 percent of the premium. WCOG has a benefit buy-out program in place where an employee can opt out of medical insurance if they have other coverage and WCOG will pay the employee \$200.00 per person opted out. This has saved WCOG \$20,000 per year on premiums.

Swan stated that he believes strongly in the need to pay for talent, but in the times we're in Western has cut their travel by 45 percent.

Ferndale is asking its employees for a freeze on wages for 2010.

Louws stated that government employees are receiving 20-30 percent higher wages than the small business private sector employees and are paying less out of pocket for medical insurance premiums.

Kremen's human resources department did an extensive salary survey and the County is 20-30 percent lower than the private sector for the higher skill level employees but higher for the mid-level employees. He thinks the WCOG salaries are at the correct level.

Walker stated that typically what gets missed in salary comparisons are the benefit packages and how much they are worth.

G. OLD BUSINESS

None reported.

H. REPORTS Continued

H.3 2010 Chairman

Miller reminded board members that Louws will be gone next year and they need to think about the chair position for next year.

H.4 TIGER Grant

Bellingham has submitted the application for the Waterfront project Tiger grant. Pike thanked everyone for their letters of support.

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I. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Jack Louws
Chair

James G. Miller
Executive Director