



Board of Commissioners Work Study Minutes

8:30 AM Wednesday – July 28, 2010

Port Blakely Conference Room

County Commissioners: Josh Brown, Steve Bauer, Charlotte Garrido

County Administrator: Nancy Buonanno Grennan

County Treasurer: Meredith Green

Commissioner's Office: Carolyn Siems

Office of Strategic Financial Planning: Amber D'Amato

Parks: Jim Dunwiddie

Personnel and Human Services: Fernando Conill, Sue Wohleb, Penny Starkey

Prosecutor's Office: Jacquelyn Aufderheide.

Press: Chris Henry

Commissioner Bauer announced that he has asked Treasurer Meredith Green to serve in an advisory capacity with the Housing Authority budget. Meredith has agreed to serve in this capacity.

The Board recessed into closed session from 8:41 am to 9:14 am to discuss collective bargaining pursuant to RCW 42.30.110 (1)(). No action taken.

Board Workshop/Parks – Jim Dunwiddie

Over the last four years the department has had to reinvent itself on an annual basis due to budget cuts. The department has cut 25% from its budget thus far. The budget is pressuring the department into the direction of becoming land managers instead of a land maintenance agency. Parks is currently subsidized by the general fund at \$1.8MM, with anticipated revenues of \$1.6MM.

Future of Parks

- Jim proposed concentrating on being a regional type of service, focusing their resources on heritage parks, regional parks, and parks that have special features.
 - Need a land acquisition policy developed that states the focus will be on land adjacent to heritage, regional, or special features parks.
- There are a lot of properties close to cities or within UGA's that we need to look turning over.
- Jim has developed criteria to evaluate the remaining parks based on the 2007 budget criteria. Once the evaluation is done, need to have discussion about terms of responsibilities, divesture through outright sales, or finding some other groups to take over.
 - Jim can start today with the evaluations and would like the Park Advisory Board's help.
 - Jim will include the resources that we expend for each park.
 - The parks inventory is sorted by which ones have grants for acquisition or development, which ones are encumbered, and which ones have contractual obligations.
 - As each property is looked at, its potential use will be an evaluation factor.
 - During the budget process, this is a consideration people need to have some say about.
- Many of the parks not targeted by Jim are really a part of a regionalized and localized system.
 - Focusing on heritage, regional, and special feature parks follows the Boards priorities (regional vs. local, urban vs. rural); however, the vast majority of that acreage is being taken care of by volunteers already.
 - The Board wants the list of parks that we are going to divest ourselves of, or will no longer maintain, and requested the rationale for that decision.
 - The goal isn't to close parks, but we cannot maintain them any longer.
 - Parks has done a great job working with volunteer groups to avoid the two closures; however, it was done after the budget was adopted, after we had a crisis.

- This is an opportunity to notify neighbors and beneficiaries early to collaborate on solutions.

Department Reorganization – need to develop a management team to make better use of Jim’s time.

- Resource Division - will be subsidized by general fund dollars. The budget will determine the levels of service at existing parks.
 - Need to restructure maintenance staff to become “SWAT” teams to tackle daily projects.
 - Started discussion with the union on how to create a staffing model that mirrors the operation’s needs.
 - Talked about creating a hybrid model where there are core full-time, year-round positions, and then there are others that might be a three month benefited position to solve the extra help policy issue.
 - Staff up for the peak season in a different way.
 - Need to move one supervisor to focus on working with the stewardship groups.
 - This person will increase the responsibilities in terms of stewardship.
 - This person will define maintenance plans, come up with the projects, and develop the projects ahead of time.
 - Parks has 4,500 out of their 6,100 acres being maintained by stewardship groups. The future of the parks is volunteers, being able to match their resources with our resources.
- Operations Division
 - This person would probably be the second in command in Parks. They will:
 - Be able to work on policies with the Board in terms of park use and permits.
 - Take over the golf operation portion and also oversee the Fair and Rodeo.
 - Take all of the revenue producing activities and put it under one division.
 - This will remove the question about the general fund subsidy. This would be a self sustaining operation.
- Support Division – small-scale department that will support the other two operations.
 - Everything seems to have stopped in 2005. Everyday Jim finds a new contract that expired in 2005. Most of them have revenue attached to it.
 - Budgeting, human resource issues, and training.

Sustainability of Parks

- How does the Board strategically go about this so that Jim can implement the changes needed to make the department sustainable? Could possibly come up with an amount that the Board would dedicate each year as a subsidy – like the County does with the Health District.
- The Board does not have the luxury of giving stability to anybody in the future, and the cuts may not stop at 9% for Parks this year. Don’t see us being able to give a guaranteed certainty to the department in the long term.
- The notion of guaranteeing an amount every year is attractive, don’t see being able to do that unless we figure out another revenue source.

Technology and Systems Improvements

- Need a map on the website where users can click on the parks and easily find active stewardship groups. This will increase the ability to recruit and manage volunteers.
- Parks facility reservations: can this be done on-line or through the open line?
 - The current process is cumbersome. It is tougher and more expensive for ourselves to do the rentals.
 - Jim has \$30K committed from public facilities for some sort of reservation system.

Revenues

- What the department earns in revenue is significant and should be highlighted
- \$1.6MM in revenues comes from building and ball field rentals. There is a potential for more.
- Jim’s background makes him perfect here, he had to live or die on the revenue he made on golf courses. He can see the same thing happening here.

- Jim is not keen about the ball field idea, we make more money by someone coming in and running a tournament and paying us to use the fields, than doing it ourselves.
- Need to come up with a formula of how we are going to track direct, indirect, and overhead costs.
- Would like to meet in the future to discuss proposal of costing out services and use that as a basis to build a fee structure.
 - This will be part of the budget discussion; Jim would like to have this done before the end of the year.
- Need to target revenue makers when the County is in a position to make investments in the capital side. Not only spinning off revenue for the department, but eliminating a lot of maintenance costs.

Performance Indicators

- The Board wants to focus on the bigger performance expectations for the system and free up Jim's time and the Board's time by not discussing minutia.
- The Board is use to the behavior of wanting to know everything, and giving an opinion about everything. These are bad habits that need to be broken.
- This is the high level performance stuff – what is it that the Board wants to see from the Parks Department? That may take some work on the Board's part at the same time.
- At the end of the year, how does the Board know if the program has been successful? What is it that the Board wants to see and evaluate Jim and the department against?
- We need to evaluate performance against objectives and leave the methods and techniques to Jim as the manager.

Miscellaneous Discussion Items

- Standards of expectations of providing services to community.
 - Would like to see us go through the accreditation review. Need to know that we are serving the public in Kitsap with the resources we have.
 - Once the department is reorganized, Parks will be able to meet with the community and ask them what they want, and then figure out if we can provide it and how we are going to provide it, and what the standards will be.
- The Board will need briefings on the labor relations.
- Cost centers need to be restructured to put a lot of these systems in place.
- Once the department is defined, it shouldn't be changed or redefined based on each year's numbers.
- Want some kind of performance based on mutual public and county expectations for parks that have plans attached to them - an annual work plan that reflects our responsibilities and our costs.
 - If we are engaging stewards, need to ensure that the stewards are engaged with the plan.
- Forest management policy component needs to be worked on simultaneously.

Synopsis

- Go ahead for Jim to develop his Parks Department restructuring as part of the budget with idea that he would have a:
 - Resource division, paid labor working side-by-side with volunteers (that would take some general fund subsidy, but we would also look at conservation futures).
 - Operations division, with the goal that it would be self sustaining, and could eventually generate enough revenue to help support the other operations.
 - Small support services department.
- Parks Budget – it is assumed that Jim, Fernando and Nancy will work on bargaining whatever flexibility Jim is going to need to move forward. The Parks budget will have to include a plan for public outreach that deals with the level of service.
- We need to go back to the written plans for the “mega-parks” and review them as part of the work plan moving forward.
- Need to consider the forest management policy and have the resource division develop that.
- Ultimately, in a joint development with Jim, the Board needs to know what outcomes to measure the Parks Department against.

- A theme is Parks need to work on enhancing technology.
- Jim will be working on a broad policy for how to set fees and cost recovery policy, for the Board's approval, so that he can work out details and manage within that.
- These points need be the starting point of the next Board meeting with Jim.

Next Steps

- Jim needs come back with dates of when these tasks will be completed.
- Next critical task is the parks inventory and the board wants to sign off on the criteria, included in that criteria would be how we evaluate what we do with parks in the UGA's and how we approach the regional-local paradigm.

The Board recessed into executive session from 11:00 am to 11:30 am to discuss potential litigation pursuant to RCW 42.30.110 (i). No action taken.

The Board recessed into executive session from 11:30 am to 12:00 pm to discuss real estate issues pursuant to RCW 42.30.110 (b). No action taken.

Adjourned 12:00 pm

Submitted by Rhiannon Fernandez