

**BOARD OF ISLAND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MINUTES OF MEETING
JULY 13, 2010 – SPECIAL SESSION**

The Board of Island County Commissioners met in Special Session on July 13, 2010 beginning at 6:00 p.m. at Skagit Valley College, Hayes Hall, Room 137, 1900 SE Pioneer Way, Oak Harbor, Washington, for the purpose of holding the fourth in a series of Public Forums. The Public Forums are scheduled in various parts of the County, the fourth in Oak Harbor, in order to provide an opportunity for the public to learn about the state of the County, the additional projected \$2 million that must be cut to stabilize the 2011 budget, and the primary election levy lid lift proposition in response. Helen Price Johnson, Chair, Angie Homola, Member, and John Dean, Member were present.

On file with the Clerk of the Board:

- *Special Session Notice*
- *Attendance Sheets*
- *Power Point Presentation*
- *Handouts*

Prior to turning the floor over to Ms. Marlow, Chair Price Johnson remarked that many important governmental services are provided by the County, with some services depended upon each day and others needed only now and then. Despite drastic cuts experienced since 2008 and as a result having limited resources; Elected Officials, Appointed Department Heads, and staff continue to believe in the high quality of service provided and care deeply about the community. She was hopeful that the audience would leave at the end of the evening with a better understanding of what is before them and the community as a whole should Proposition 1 not pass.

Ms. Marlow then provided a Power Point presentation that addressed the County's financial situation and the proposed ballot measure for the levy lid lift. The presentation included:

- The basic finances of the County,
- Why property taxes are such an important part of the County Current Expense Fund,
- Services that are mandated by law and which are not,
- Steps taken to reduce costs, and
- What if Proposition 1 does not pass

Subsequently the County panel, consisting of Treasurer Linda Riffe, Assessor Dave Mattens, Auditor Sheilah Crider, Sheriff Mark Brown, Prosecutor Greg Banks, Clerk Patricia Terry, Planning & Community Development Director Bob Pederson, Public Work Director Bill Oakes, Environmental Health Director Aaron Henderson, and WSU Extension Coordinator Janet Hall, provided their perspective of the added possible impacts to services their offices provide if additional resources are not available for next year and years after.

Public comments occurred asking for clarification along with questions and remarks in favor and those not in favor of Proposition 1. In response the Commissioners and County Panel addressed perceived misconceptions, provided additional explanation, and spoke of the need to balance the County's budget in order to stabilize its future.

The Board provided closing comments, saying they are now at a point where they have made all the cuts they can that make sense. The intent of the Forums is to warn people where their government is headed and let them then make the choice about whether to let their government go down to what the Board considers unacceptable levels. Such a decision is not a proper one for the Board to make alone. Instead, when there is the possibility of going to a level of government that

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is lower than it has ever been, then the appropriate approach is to take the decision to the voters to decide what they want for the future of their government in Island County. Ultimately the voters will determine whether to retain basic public safety and other essential services; or, further reduce Law and Justice and other community services that provide for the health and safety of the County's citizens.

The Public Forum adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ISLAND COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Helen Price Johnson, Chair

Angie Homola, Member

John Dean, Member

ATTEST:

Elaine Marlow, Clerk of the Board