

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA

MONDAY

12:00 P.M.

APRIL 26, 2010

PRESENT:

David Humke, Chairman
Bonnie Weber, Vice Chairperson
Bob Larkin, Commissioner
Kitty Jung, Commissioner
John Breternitz, Commissioner

Amy Harvey, County Clerk
Katy Simon, County Manager
Melanie Foster, Legal Counsel

Chairman Humke called the special session of the Board to order at 12:03 p.m. in the Commission Chambers of the Washoe County Administration Complex, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada. Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our Country, the Clerk called the roll and the Board conducted the following business:

10-315 AGENDA ITEM 4

Agenda Subject: “Discussion with Washoe County Employees to receive input with regard to the 2010/11 Fiscal Year Budget. (All Commission Districts)”

Katy Simon, County Manager, conducted a PowerPoint presentation, which was placed on file with the Clerk, describing the current budget situation, revenues for fiscal year 2010/11, the structural deficit, balanced planned for a “new normal,” online budget survey, prioritizing reductions, Manager recommendations, budget cut impacts and the next steps.

Ms. Simon indicated the County Commission voted to take a 3.7 percent salary reduction and would contribute \$25 per pay period toward their health benefits. She commented that reduction would also be imposed for management, division directors and department heads. Ms. Simon remarked it was the Board’s policy to have all the Employee Associations treated consistently across all departments, groups and levels.

Employees were given the option of speaking directly to the Commission or submit written comments to be read into the record. The written comments were placed on file with the Clerk. The Board listened to comments and questions from employees. Ms. Simon indicated responses to questions would be posted on *Ask.Washoe* located on the County intranet site. The questions were summarized as follows:

- *Why is there no cafeteria plan for insurance.*

Commissioner Larkin indicated that was a negotiation item. He said the Commission had requested further discussions be conducted concerning that plan.

- ***Where did leftover money go from the Washoe County Employee Association (WCEA) decrease of 2.5 percent salary last year.***

Commissioner Jung stated the reduction last year was to plug the gap occurring during that budget year. She did not believe there was any leftover money and added that reduction fulfilled a short fall that had to be attacked at that point in time.

Ms. Simon commented statute required there be a fund balance at the end of the year. She said money had to be there as the next fiscal year began in order to pay bills arriving as soon as July 1st.

- ***Since the WCEA employees gave a 2.5 percent decrease in salaries last year and no other departments except nurses had the same salary cuts, why should WCEA employees receive the same 3.7 percent proposed cut as proposed this year for all employees. A comment was requested on furlough days versus a decrease in salary or other benefit losses.***

Commissioner Weber believed all the reductions taken were placed back into salaries during December of 2009. She said WCEA had requested a fair and even playing field for all Associations and noted the Board agreed with the request. Ms. Simon explained only the Associations that gave something last year were eligible to have their members receive Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) buy-outs.

Commissioner Breternitz stated the County was charged with delivering a broad-base of services. He said with staff reductions and/or encouraging furloughs, services then needed to be made-up in some other fashion.

Chairman Humke said it was decided that furloughs created a difficult management situation to provide for the furloughs and still cover all the work.

- ***If employee and bargaining units do not agree to take the 3.7 percent salary decrease how would lay-offs for each department be determined.***

Ms. Simon replied the Board's policy had been to have all employee associations treated consistently across all departments, groups and levels. She said if there were concessions not provided by one Association, impasse procedures would begin, and placed in the employee agreements. She said what would come from those impasse procedures would be what the Board would implement.

- ***Can you guarantee that after employees take a possible cut, there would be no lay-offs.***

Commissioner Breternitz replied that could not be guaranteed. He said the Board was estimating and budgeting for the anticipated revenues expected and, if that failed, then future lay-offs would need to be reviewed.

Ms. Simon added unless there were unforeseen circumstances, the only lay-offs would be the two mentioned in the PowerPoint presentation.

- ***When the real estate market first showed it was “tanking” why did we keep spending and hiring and why do employees need to take a permanent reduction rather than another temporary reduction.***

Commissioner Breternitz said no one in recent history had been previously faced with the type of change in the economy as the past few years. He said the County began reductions four years ago and what was being completed now was adjusting to a “new normal.”

Commissioner Breternitz stated the contract was a year-long contract and was not a permanent issue. He said the economy would be discussed again in the future and believed expectations of services needed to be reset.

- ***Do all of the associations have to vote for the 3.7 percent decrease and what would happen if some did not vote for the decrease.***

Ms. Simon stated there were Associations that gave more, but gave reductions in other ways. She reiterated going forward all Associations would contribute equally.

- ***I do not feel long-term employees are equally represented by the bargaining units.***

Commissioner Larkin said when it came to reductions and allocations everyone was in the same boat. He said the new economy was before everyone until the economy began to expand. He stated staff was requested to put in place sustainable practices and principles.

- ***When $A+B=C$ and you remove A , how can you possibly get C . In other words, with all the cuts that have been made and the cuts that will be made, how can you realistically ask or expect the same level of service.***

Commissioner Larkin commented if the County reduced below the past three years, there would be service reductions. He said department heads were asked to evaluate and return with significant reductions and to show how service levels would be reduced. Commissioner Larkin said with the current environment the previous level of service could not be sustained.

Commissioner Weber thanked employees for their willingness to share what was important to them and how they were being affected. She indicated there was still more work to be done and more questions to be asked.

Commissioner Jung commented these were difficult times and she was constantly thinking about possible ways to minimize the impacts.

No action was taken on this item.

10-315(A) AGENDA ITEM 3 – PUBLIC COMMENT

Agenda Subject: “Public Comment. Comment heard under this item will be limited to two minutes per person and may pertain to matters both on and off the Commission agenda. The Commission will also hear public comment during individual action items, with comment limited to two minutes per person. Comments are to be made to the Commission as a whole.”

Penny Rasmussen, Washoe County Employee Association (WCEA) President, indicated negotiations were currently in process and employees would be contacted when there was an agreement or a vote brought forward. She read from a prepared statement, which was placed on file with the Clerk.

Carla Fells, WCEA Executive Director, explained nothing had been decided and commented the WCEA Board was currently in negotiations. She said during the departmental budget presentations some issues came about such as stand-by pay for the Roads Division. Ms. Fells explained supervisors in the Roads Division voluntarily went above and beyond the 2.5 percent and gave up their stand-by pay. She said it had been mentioned this was the only local government that put any General Fund money toward the Building Department; however, emphasized that over the last two years those employees had given up 20 percent.

Ms. Fells thanked the County Manager, Finance Department and Human Resources for allowing the employees an opportunity to speak.

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1:25 p.m. There being no further business to discuss, the Town Hall meeting was adjourned.

DAVID E. HUMKE, Chairman
Washoe County Commission

ATTEST:

AMY HARVEY, County Clerk and
Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners

*Minutes Prepared by:
Stacy Gonzales, Deputy County Clerk*