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**From:** <BBGUN1010@aol.com>  
**To:** <NHanson@co.whatcom.wa.us>; <DBrown@co.whatcom.wa.us>; <lordward@aol.com>; <council@co.whatcom.wa.us>; <BBGUN1010@aol.com>; <campfam@comcast.net>; <RCraven@co.whatcom.wa.us>; <carlweimer@comcast.net>; <bill@cellularhero.com>; <ken.mann.whatcom@gmail.com>; <KMann@co.whatcom.wa.us>; <BKnutzen@co.whatcom.wa.us>; <KKershner@co.whatcom.wa.us>  
**Cc:** <PKremen@co.whatcom.wa.us>; <DDesler@co.whatcom.wa.us>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 19, 2010 3:56 PM  
**Subject:** Re: Thoughts on the Court Funding discussion

Very interesting and some extremely legitimate points made.

However, I do see my function as very different. I believe I was elected to be a check and a balance on the executive branch, not because I believe there is anything irregular going on but because I believe one elected official, no matter how many staff he has, cannot have the only, all encompassing correct perspective of everything.

I do agree with many of Sam's comments about superior court because I am weary of the "end of the world" attitude that repeatedly comes to us. In fact, I am open to more funding if I feel there is some end in sight and it makes sense. I do know there are federal and state unfunded mandates that get dumped on superior court and other parts of county government. We need to better prioritize and in the area of superior court I need help from superior court to do that.

For example, I have tried for many years to get a CASA volunteer program to substitute for our existing Guardian ad litem very expensive program. I do not believe it needed to take years to do it. I have watched with dismay as family members have been torn apart by politically appointed, well paid individuals instead of those who volunteer with their hearts simply because they care. Yet, it is still not fully, if at all implemented. I am not sure if it is superior court's responsibility to get it done but it definitely is a court function.

So I have mixed feelings about court funding.

Barbara Brenner

In a message dated 2/19/2010 8:33:50 A.M. Pacific Standard Time, BBrenner@co.whatcom.wa.us writes:

-----Original Message-----

Date: Fri, 19 Feb 2010 08:33:36 -0800

From: "Council Council" <Council@co.whatcom.wa.us>

To: <LordWard@aol.com>, "Barbara Brenner" <BBrenner@co.whatcom.wa.us>, "Bill Knutzen" <bknutzen@co.whatcom.wa.us>, "Carl Weimer" <CWeimer@co.whatcom.wa.us>, "Kathy Kershner" <kkershne@co.whatcom.wa.us>, "Ken Mann" <kmann@co.whatcom.wa.us>, "Sam Crawford" <SCrawfor@co.whatcom.wa.us>, <campfam@comcast.net>

Subject: Fwd: Thoughts on the Court Funding discussion

-----Original Message-----

From: Sam Crawford <campfam@comcast.net>

To: dkr@belcherswanson.com,

Tawni Helms <THelms@co.whatcom.wa.us>,

Bruce Van Glubt <BVanglub@co.whatcom.wa.us>,

Charles Snyder <CSnyder@co.whatcom.wa.us>,

Dewey Desler <DDesler@co.whatcom.wa.us>,

David Grant <DGrant@co.whatcom.wa.us>,  
 David McEachran <DMcEachr@co.whatcom.wa.us>,  
 Marianne Caldwell <MCaldwel@co.whatcom.wa.us>,  
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 "N.F. Jackson" <NJackson@co.whatcom.wa.us>,  
 Crawford Sam <SCrawfor@co.whatcom.wa.us>,  
 Pete Kremen <pkremen@co.whatcom.wa.us>,  
 msetter@co.whatcom.wa.us  
 Subject: Thoughts on the Court Funding discussion  
 Date: Thu, 18 Feb 2010 19:45:03 -0800  
 Cc: Brown-Davis Dana <DBrown@co.whatcom.wa.us>,  
 Council Council <Council@co.whatcom.wa.us>

(Tawni, could you forward this to any of the other participants I missed? Thank you.)

To all;

After listening to Tuesday's conversation, and then sleeping on it, I'd like to share some of my thoughts. As a representative of the Council, I will clarify here that I don't claim to necessarily reflect any precise opinion of the majority of the Whatcom County Council. I only speak from my personal perspective here, and will not predict any outcome from the Council as a whole.

1. Here's a quote from a good article in the current online issue of Governing (<http://www.governing.com/column/cutting-costs-without-cutting-benefits>):

"Instead of looking to explain what you can't do without, look hard at how you can make the most of what you've got."

This reminds me of Dewey's request Tuesday for everyone to define how things will operate next year without budget increases. I concur that is necessary - because looking forward I believe that's our reality.

2. Superior Court and County Clerk expenditures: 2005 - 2009:

2005 = \$4,130,631  
 2006 = \$4,536,712  
 2007 = \$5,192,900  
 2008 = \$5,385,571  
 2009 = \$5,049,014 (Drug Court separated out)

2005 to 2008 increase: \$1,254,940. That's a WHOPPING (okay, that's my characterization) 30.4% increase (over 2005), and doesn't include the 2009 breakout of drug court, which I think was separated out because of revenue source changes. I heard Chuck say Tuesday something like "historically we were always under-funded". But looking back... somehow lawsuits got litigated, criminals got convicted, employees got paid, and the system continued on. In the meantime, from the Council perspective, we tried to be responsive to needs and shortfalls, and we put in more and more and more resources (read: \$\$). Now we have no more resources. We've cut County Parks and County Health and other areas of county government well into the double-digit percentages. Now in the clearly necessary and mandated responsibility to provide for and fund Superior Court, we're just trying to hold the line without increases, after years of relatively large increases. To me, that's reasonable... very reasonable. Unless

there's something I'm missing here, it's time for the leadership in our court system to work with the resources we've currently allotted and commit to a positive result for our community.

3. I don't believe that the RCW mandates infer there should be an at-any-cost approach to operating the Superior Court. I'm not implying that Chuck/NF are waving the flag for excessive spending, but I also agree very much with Mac Setter's observation that NF and Chuck are not completely 'getting it' (sorry, that's my paraphrase, Mac was more eloquent). The Superior Court MUST realize it is not business as usual. So I say: Don't tell us how it won't work. Tell us how you'll make it work. Don't threaten the citizens and advocacy groups (or the Bar, or the Sheriff or Prosecutor) with cuts in their most advocated programs. Instead make the cuts the least painful for the community and for County Government. The Administration has been doing exactly that for a couple of years now, as have our fellow counties across the state and the country.

4. OK, this next one's personal, so I'll again qualify it as my own view, and not necessarily representative where the Council majority might be. There were several references - particularly by Doug Robertson - to 'getting the County Council' to understand or go along with some funding adjustment. I just don't see it that way. We have budget oversight authority. But I interpret the County Charter to mean that the Executive (Administration) is to work on the details of budgeting, and to present to us a workable budget, with consideration and provision - of course - for required county functions such as the courts. I am personally generally not amenable to any department, including the Superior Court, not getting satisfaction with the Administration and appealing directly to the County Council for additional spending without the Executive's acquiescence, even if we have the charter 'power' to do so. It is awkward... not in a social sense of the word, but in a functional sense of implementing sound financial practices. Bottom line for me, I want and need the Administration to 'sign off' first before I feel comfortable that we're on the same page. If the Council has given the impression to the contrary in the past, I'll apologize right here. Even though I've previously voted for budget items to expedite consensus of an obvious council majority's will to supersede the Executive (from my perspective), I'm not willing to specifically plan to "agree to disagree" here with the Administration. We have GOT to work together. Some of you might think this is 'pie in the sky' (or not the intent of the Charter), but I want the Executive and the courts to agree on a proposal for court funding - and then bring it to the County Council. That's my own litmus test, and short of any 'crisis' (or otherwise extreme) circumstances, I won't vote for any additional funding without the Executive's agreement.

5. There were 'glimmers of hope' in the discussion regarding the scheduling and expediting of the civil calendar stuff. A 'new way of doing business' sounds really good to this lay-person's ears. From my peanut-gallery seat, I'd speculate there's much to be gained by focusing on calendar and/or scheduling commitments to the legal community for the non-criminal litigation. I can't comment on the details of that, because having no personal experience with what you do, I have no clue how it might work for everyone. But I'll say again, this seems to me to be the path that needs to be explored (??)

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