

## **CITY – COUNTY LOCAL GOVERNMENT COOPERATIVE SERVICES STUDY GROUP**

### **Final Report - July 25, 2011**

Last December the Clallam County Commissioners and the City of Port Angeles City Council agreed to establish a Local Government Cooperative Services Study Group that was assigned the task of exploring ways that the City and County could cooperate in the provision of certain governmental services. This Group was made up of one County Commissioner and the County Administrator representing Clallam County and the Mayor and City Manager representing the City of Port Angeles. The Study Group was charged with looking for areas within both the County and City operations that might be more efficient and cost effective if performed in a cooperative manner. Both Clallam County and the City of Port Angeles are experiencing budgetary challenges and it is our position that additional cooperative approaches will provide both short-term and long-term cost savings for local taxpayers.

The Group met six different times starting with the first meeting held last January. It was agreed to present this report at a joint meeting of the County Commissioners and City Council scheduled for August 2. It is hoped that, following presentation and discussion at this joint meeting, both the Commissioners and Council will support the on-going cooperative efforts between the County and City and approve the implementation of the recommendations for new areas of cooperation that have been identified in this report.

At the first Study Group meeting held on January 12 it was agreed to start the review process by identifying areas where the County and City were already using a cooperative approach and try to expand upon these areas where feasible. An initial listing of 11 different areas of current cooperation between the City and the County was distributed at this first meeting. Over the past six months, this listing has been greatly expanded and these current areas of cooperation are summarized in the next section of this report. The Study Group was pleasantly surprised that there are a large number of services and special projects where the County and the City are already working together in a cooperative effort. One of the benefits of this Study Group review process is the fact that these areas were identified so that they can be shared with County and City officials as well as the general public.

It was also agreed at the initial meeting that the Study Group needed to meet with certain County and City department heads to explore areas of cooperation in detail. A number of these department heads and their employees attended the meetings over the past six months and were very helpful in identifying possible areas of cooperation. This included representatives from the Finance, IT, Public Works, Parks and the Community and Economic Development Departments. In most cases, these departments met in advance of the Study Group meetings so they could discuss possible areas of cooperation and be prepared to present suggestions to the Study Group. In addition, several of these departments have recently agreed to meet on a more regular basis in the future to discuss sharing of services and equipment on a more on-going basis. The Study Group members feel like an additional benefit of this review process is the fact that County and City departments will be meeting and sharing information on a more frequent basis.

The Study Group also discussed the possibility of extending several of these areas of cooperation to include other local government such as the Tribes, Port, City of Sequim and the City of Forks.

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It was decided that, once we completed this study and started implementation of the recommendations, we would share this information with other governmental agencies and they would be invited to participate in these efforts. The Study Group feels like extending some of these cooperative programs and services to other agencies could result in additional cost savings and we welcome their involvement in the near future.

Finally, the Study Group agreed that we should assess the results from both the current areas of cooperation and future cooperative services to determine the specific cost savings and improvements in the level of services that are the outcome of these efforts. With this in mind, it was agreed that starting in 2012, the County Administrator and City Manager will prepare an annual report in October of each year. The report will include the specific outcomes of all areas of County/City cooperation, planned areas of cooperation in the upcoming year, and new suggestions to be discussed with City and County elected officials at budget time.

### Current Areas of County/City Cooperation

There are a number of current examples of cooperation between Clallam County and the City of Port Angeles. It is the hope of the Study Group that these areas can be highlighted so that County and City elected officials and employees as well as the general public will understand the benefits that can occur to both the County and the City whenever we can work together.

The most recent example of this cooperative effort is the establishment of the William Shore Memorial Pool District which includes areas of the City and the County within the Port Angeles School District. The Pool District, which was approved by local voters about two years ago, includes a Board with two elected representatives of the County, two elected representatives from the City and one member from the public. This five-member Board hires the Pool Manager and oversees the finances and operations of the indoor swimming pool. Since the District was established they have made a number of improvements in the operations of the pool and increased pool revenues. District Board members work closely together to insure that the Pool is efficiently operated and that the District tax rate is maintained at a low level.

Other current or recent areas of cooperation between the County and the City include the following:

1. Shoreline Master Plan - The County has been actively involved over the past year in the City's efforts to update its Shoreline Master Plan and the City is currently involved in assisting the County with their update of the County Shoreline Master Plan.
2. PenCom Emergency Dispatching - The City currently operates a consolidated county-wide emergency dispatch service. The County provides network services, connectivity, backups and back-end infrastructure for dispatch applications in the County Data Center, as well as a multi-agency project placing mobile data terminals in patrol vehicles. The County also has a representative who serves on the PenCom Advisory Committee that oversees the operation of these dispatching services.
3. Valley Creek Improvements - The City recently received a grant to design improvements to Valley Creek within the City Limits. Due to an increased workload in the City's

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Engineering Department, the County was contacted and they agreed to provide engineering design services via an interlocal agreement whereby the County is reimbursed for its costs.

4. Airport Marketing Grant - The Port of Port Angeles recently received a marketing grant to improve the marketing of commercial airline services. Both the County and the City agreed to be partners in this grant by providing a portion of the local match that was required.
5. County Jail - The City has a current agreement to use the County Jail for housing of City prisoners at a per diem rate of \$71. The use of the County Jail avoids the need for the City to construct and operate its own municipal jail.
6. Shared Parking - The County provides parking in the County Courthouse parking lot for city-sponsored events held at the Vern Burton Center.
7. Lincoln Park - The City allows the County to use facilities at the City's Lincoln Park during the County Fair including its T-Ball field and restrooms.
8. Shared Equipment - Both the County and the City share equipment from the other agency when needed including mowers, tractors, bucket truck, aerator, vactor truck and weed eaters. When necessary, an operator is required for use of major equipment such as the bucket truck and the vactor truck.
9. Shared Facilities - The County and City utilize each other's meeting facilities when they are available and when there is no revenue loss from this use.
10. District Court - The City contracts with the County for District Court services rather than operating its own Municipal Court. The costs for these services are shared based upon the percentage of Court cases the previous three years.
11. Shared Tax Agreement - The County and City extended wastewater services in the City's Eastern UGA area and have agreed to share on a 50-50 basis in any increased sales tax revenues generated by new businesses in this area.
12. Economic Development Summit - The County and City recently provided joint funding to sponsor a County-Wide Economic Summit that resulted in agreement on five different economic clusters that would be the primary focus of the various economic development agencies.
13. PenPly Funding - Both the County and the City provided start-up funding to reopen a major plywood manufacturing business, Pen Ply, which provides about 100 jobs in the community.

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14. Parking Lot Surfacing and Striping - The County and City work together on chip-sealing parking lots at Lincoln Park and the County stripes portions of the Volunteer parking lot.
15. Energy Conservation - The City and County assist in jointly funding a Shared Resources Conservation Manager position based at the County offices with this employee dedicated to implementing energy efficiency improvements in County and City facilities.
16. Shared Training - The City and County conduct employee training sessions both on-site and via webcasting with the other agency often invited to attend these sessions.
17. The City partners with the County on the Stream Keeper program that involves volunteers who monitor the water quality in various streams and rivers in the Port Angeles area.
18. The County and City worked jointly together to form a Major Incident Response Team (MIRT) that has been successfully deployed to major incidents such as a recent prison incident.
19. The County and City work closely together on OPNET which is a joint Narcotics Enforcement Taskforce from Law Enforcement Agencies across the Olympic Peninsula.

Potential Areas for Future Cooperation

A number of areas were identified and discussed by the Study Group for future cooperation between the City and the County as outlined below. With regard to these new areas, the goal was to initiate new cooperative activities on or about January 1, 2012 and continue to look for additional areas for future cooperation. Therefore, if the County Commissioners and City Council indicate approval for these recommendations, staff will work out the details over the next 4-5 months and be prepared to start these new cooperative efforts at the beginning of the year.

In addition, the Study Group discussed how we could move forward with additional cooperative programs and activities in an expedient manner. With this in mind, a standardized interlocal agreement was prepared by the legal staffs of the County and City and this will be used in the future.

It is recommended that the City and County focus on the following new areas of cooperation with an anticipated start-up date of January 1, 2012:

1. Telephone Systems - Both the County and the City currently have the same type of telephone system and a County employee has extensive experience with maintaining this system. Therefore, it is recommended that the City enter into a contract with the County for maintenance of the City's phone system. It is also recommended that County and City staffs work towards the total merger of the phone systems including the voice mail and auto attendants.

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2. GIS Mapping - Currently the County has a key GIS position that is vacant. Prior to filling this position it has been agreed that a meeting will be held in August with all local governments in the County that have GIS mapping capabilities. This will include the County, City of Port Angeles, City of Sequim, Port of Port Angeles, Jefferson County, Jamestown Tribe and the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. The goal of this discussion will be to share information on current and planned GIS activities and discuss the merits for consolidation of GIS as well as the possibility of sharing GIS services.
3. Vehicle Maintenance - The City currently contracts with a local company for maintenance of police vehicles. The County maintains vehicles for the Sheriff's Office with an experienced mechanic. The City has begun using the County Shop on a limited basis for maintenance of police vehicles. The City will evaluate whether the cost savings and service provided warrant continuing or expanding the use of the County shop.
4. Inspections of Facilities and Equipment - The Study Group identified a number of areas where we could share inspection services. For example, the City has a certified playground inspector and the County has three playgrounds that need annual inspections. The County and City also maintain a large number of backflow prevention devices, several elevators and commercial boilers that are all required to be inspected on an annual basis. It is recommended that all of these inspection services be performed under a single contract with a private company or, if there is a County or City inspector, then this employee provide inspections for both the County and City facilities and equipment.
5. Arborist - The City currently has two state certified arborists. It is recommended that the County contract for services from the City for hazard tree assessments and other associated tree issues.
6. Archaeology - The City also currently employs a full-time archeologist and it is recommended that the County contract with the City for any archeological services that might be needed.
7. Joint Purchasing - Both the County and the City try to support local merchants with their purchasing practices and get the best possible pricing for these items. However, there are certain large items such as fertilizer, seed and ice melt that can be shared by bulk purchasing which could result in decreased shipping costs.
8. Sharing Specialized Equipment - While the County and the City currently share certain equipment through the Agencies Working Together process, this practice should be expanded to include specialized equipment such as floor maintenance equipment and confined space equipment. In addition, prior to the completion of each budget, the County and City should confer on planned equipment purchases to determine whether the equipment is available from the other entity.
9. Staff Training - Although there is currently some participation in joint training activities this should be expanded by the Human Resources Departments of the County and City so that the staffs of both entities are invited to every training session that is conducted

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during the year when space is available. In addition, the HR staffs should assist in coordinating out-of-town training so that car-pooling can occur.

10. Joint Use of Greenhouse - The City currently has a greenhouse on 16<sup>th</sup> Street and it is recommended that this greenhouse be made available to the County for short-term use.
11. I.T. services are another potential area for cooperation and/or joint operation, in the foreseeable future, as both organizations look to upgrade hardware and software systems over the next 5 – 7 years, as our current systems age and become obsolete. Working together ahead of time, we could study the possibility of purchasing the same operating software, over the same hardware platform, so that future systems could potentially be merged into one, or at least we could provide high-tech support for one another instead of relying on more expensive, off-the-peninsula support companies.

In completing this report and recommendation the members of the Study Group hope that this is merely the start rather than the completion of the process of assessing areas of cooperation between the County and the City. There are likely a number of other areas that will be feasible to consider in the future and we request that a clear message be sent to all of our staff that cooperation with each other is a requirement not just something that we want to passively consider. In these tough economic times we have to look for ways to support each other while keeping in mind that we are both responsible to the taxpayers for getting the best possible return on their investment in their local governments.