



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

May 19, 2009

Motion 12986

Proposed No. 2009-0265.3

Sponsors Gossett, Patterson, Hague and
Lambert

1 A MOTION setting the council's 2010 budget priorities
2 and providing direction to the executive on specific areas
3 of council interest.
4

5 WHEREAS, under the King County charter, the county council is the policy
6 determining body and adopts budgets for King County government, and

7 WHEREAS, the executive under the charter carries out policy as set by the
8 council and presents budgets and a budget message setting forth the programs that the
9 executive proposes for the county during the next fiscal year, and

10 WHEREAS, the council over the years has provided policy direction to the
11 executive to be reflected in the proposed budget, including initiatives such as the juvenile
12 and adult justice operational master plans, realignment of the district court system,
13 expansion of drug and mental health courts, development of framework policies for
14 human services, establishment of the nearshore habitat conservation initiative and
15 creation of the cultural development authority, the property expert review task force, the
16 citizens' election oversight committee, the office of information resource management,

17 the county's annexation and children's health initiatives and the public health operational
18 master plan, and

19 WHEREAS, the council has been a leader in promoting performance
20 management, efficiency and effectiveness in using county revenues for service delivery
21 in King County by adopting Motion 11561 in 2002, which encouraged the executive to
22 broaden the use of performance measurement throughout county government as a way of
23 enhancing management of scarce resources and demonstrating accountability, and

24 WHEREAS, through adoption of Ordinance 16202, in July 2008, the council
25 created a countywide performance and accountability system, which will increase
26 transparency and accountability through better reporting of county performance, and

27 WHEREAS, over the last several budget years, the council has increased its role
28 in the oversight and accountability of capital project management by including
29 requirements for increased transparency in capital project reporting and through the
30 creation of the office of capital project oversight, and

31 WHEREAS, the council has consistently sought citizen input in the development
32 of its budget priorities through such efforts as public meetings, citizen boards and
33 commissions, the countywide community forums and the citizen engagement initiative,
34 which collected the views of hundreds of county residents on how the county should
35 prioritize spending, and

36 WHEREAS, in both 2006, 2007 and 2008 the council has adopted budget priority
37 motions, which have been forwarded to the county executive for use in formulating the
38 executive's budget proposal, and

39 WHEREAS, in delivering his 2009 budget address, the executive informed the
40 council that the county would be facing significant deficits, beginning with a ninety-three
41 million dollars deficit in 2009 and growing in future years, and

42 WHEREAS, the current projected deficit for 2010 is approaching fifty million
43 dollars, and

44 WHEREAS, the budget instructions for agencies to use in preparing their 2010
45 budgets included significant across-the-board cuts for general fund mandated services,
46 and

47 WHEREAS, the growth in county revenues has been restricted by state-wide
48 voter-approved measures, including Initiative 747 and the subsequent enactment of it by
49 the state legislature; and

50 WHEREAS, this restriction, which limits the growth in the county property tax
51 levy to one percent annually plus new construction - a rate of growth that is insufficient
52 to meet the increasing costs of providing services due to inflation and population growth -
53 has resulted in a structural gap whereby the structure of the tax system generates a
54 persistent shortfall in the revenues needed to maintain public services; and

55 WHEREAS, other major sources of county revenues, are limited by the health of
56 the economy, such as sales and real estate excise taxes, and

57 WHEREAS, this is not the first time that the public finance system in this state
58 has adversely affected public safety services; the council, in prior efforts to balance the
59 budget, cut in excess of one hundred million dollars from the general fund and has made
60 decisions including transferring swimming pools and local parks to other jurisdictions

61 and shifting the burden for regional parks and recreation services to special levies in an
62 effort to avoid further reductions to public safety services, and

63 WHEREAS, whenever possible, the county council prefers collaboration and
64 partnerships for regional services that impact cities, and

65 WHEREAS, King County has implemented special revenue programs like the
66 mental illness and drug dependency sales tax and the veterans and human services levy to
67 address human services needs, and

68 WHEREAS, while these new revenues have addressed specific funding needs,
69 they have not addressed the structural nature of public funding for basic services in
70 Washington counties;

71 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the council of King County:

72 A. The council is committed to using the resources available to county
73 government to support a vibrant, growing King County that honors the values of its
74 citizens and respects the provision of local and regional services.

75 B. The council recognizes that there are many challenges facing the county that
76 will make decision-making in the 2010 budget difficult. There continues to be a
77 widening structural gap between the cost of continuing current services and revenues
78 available to support these services. At the same time, county service needs continue to
79 increase. Given these challenges, the council intends that the adopted 2010 budget will
80 be one that addresses the following major issues:

81 **EFFICIENCY**

82 1. Council-Initiated Oversight Actions: The council is committed to
83 implementing savings identified by the ongoing transit performance audit. We are

84 further committed to using recommendations from the capital project oversight office to
85 improve the county's capital budgeting processes and examine the continued feasibility of
86 all capital projects - especially those experiencing cost overruns or schedule delays and
87 scope additions;

88 2. Personnel costs: We acknowledge and respect the recent achievements of our
89 workforce in helping to lower the county's personnel costs including the implementation
90 of the health reform initiative, enactment of the ten-day furlough in 2009 and agreements
91 made to increase co-payments for health insurance. Given our current budget crisis,
92 however, the council recognizes that we all must contemplate additional sacrifice in order
93 to avoid severe program and service reductions. The council will continue to examine
94 creative ways of reducing the overall costs related to the county's personnel expenses. We
95 will review the feasibility of expanding and/or continuing existing cost-saving efforts, as
96 well as developing new cost-saving measures, as part of the development of our 2010
97 budget;

98 3. Strategic Planning Efforts: The council is committed to pursuing the results
99 and savings from past efforts in public health and adult and juvenile justice operational
100 master plans and looks forward to implementing savings and efficiencies realized within
101 the ongoing roads services operational master planning efforts;

102 4. Department Savings: The council expects that all departments will submit
103 budgets that reflect a focus on business models and practices that result in cost-savings
104 and efficiencies. Each department shall prioritize and implement long term and
105 sustainable reforms, while maintaining a commitment to a high level of service.

106 Departments shall include an explanation of the reforms they have implemented when
107 providing budget detail to the legislative branch;

108 **PUBLIC SAFETY**

109 5. Sheriff: The executive is encouraged to identify sufficient funding for patrol
110 and law enforcement activities necessary to maintain public safety in the unincorporated
111 areas and the region as a whole. The executive is further encouraged to identify
112 sufficient funding to provide needed equipment necessary for the sheriff's office to carry
113 out its regional emergency services role;

114 6. District court: The county council will endeavor to adopt a budget that
115 continues support for the vital mental health court that addresses legal problems for
116 individuals whom would be more appropriately dealt with by mental health professionals
117 than incarceration. Also, the executive is encouraged to continue implementation of the
118 District Court Staffing Study. Finally, the executive is encourage to continue capital
119 funding for planning needs at the Bellevue and Kent court facilities;

120 7. Superior court and judicial administration: The county council will strive to
121 adopt a budget that preserves the vital drug diversion court that addresses legal problems
122 for individuals who most appropriately are dealt with through the drug court's
123 programming as opposed to incarceration. The executive is encouraged to identify
124 funding to sustain Juvenile Justice Operational Master Plan programs in juvenile court
125 services and identify capital support for the family and juvenile court facilities planning
126 and regional justice center planning;

127 8. Public defense: The county council will strive to adopt a budget that
128 identifies sufficient funding to provide effective public defender services for the near-
129 indigent consistent with the county's adopted public defense payment model;

130 9. Prosecuting attorney: The executive is encouraged to identify funding
131 sufficient to support the criminal division implementation of more efficient felony case
132 processing and replacement of the prosecutor's management information system
133 (PROMIS) information systems;

134 10. Adult and juvenile detention: The executive is encouraged to identify
135 sufficient funds in his proposed budget to continue the programs created by the adult and
136 juvenile justice operational master plans that have been proven to save the county money
137 and achieving better outcomes for those individuals that come in contact with the
138 criminal justice system. Further, the executive is encouraged to identify funding to
139 continue the Regional Integrated Jail Project and support for housing options for youth as
140 an alternative to secure detention;

141 **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

142 11. Public health: The executive is encouraged to propose a budget that
143 maintains public health as a core value of the county, is consistent with the policies, goals
144 and strategies adopted in the public health operational master plan, moves towards
145 adoption of a stable and predictable county contribution to the health care safety net and
146 prioritizes programs that are most effective in reducing involvement in the criminal
147 justice system. Further, where possible, fee-based regulatory services should be full cost
148 recovery;

149 12. Human services: The executive is encouraged to propose a budget that
150 maintains the core human services safety net programs that provide critical, life savings
151 services, as demand for these services continues as economic conditions worsen. Support
152 for programs that prevent or reduce homelessness, as homelessness is a leading factor in
153 jail recidivism and overuse of crisis services like emergency rooms, detox and sobering
154 centers should be pursued. Programs that assist victims of domestic violence and sexual
155 assault should be prioritized as domestic violence and sexual assault are primary causes
156 of homelessness and physical and mental trauma for women and children. The executive
157 is encouraged to propose a budget that better coordinates and integrates public health and
158 human service programs in order to maximize the public's investment;

159 **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

160 13. Transportation: King County continues to hold the principal goal of
161 improving transportation options and providing greater mobility for people, vehicles and
162 freight as a long-term ideal. Where reductions in roads services division maintenance,
163 operations or construction are needed, choices should be measured against impact on
164 achieving this goal. In response to the recession-induced loss of revenue for transit, a
165 collaborative process, including the council, executive branch, customers and
166 stakeholders, should be undertaken to guide the difficult choices between how much
167 transit service is delivered and how that service is delivered to the customers;

168 14. Solid waste management: The executive shall manage solid waste division
169 expenditures within the adopted 2008-2010 rate structure for the utility, and shall
170 endeavor to extend service contracts with the cities through at least 2048, while

171 continuing the reconstruction of the Bow Lake and Factoria transfer stations as scheduled
172 and completing a strategic plan to add near-term disposal capacity to the regional system;

173 15. Water and land resources: Absent approval of new revenue authority as
174 called for in the county's state legislative agenda, the water and land resources division
175 should work with the council and the office of management and budget to identify policy
176 options for addressing the loss of revenue. This approach should include:

177 a. constructive budgeting exercise to identify the key components of achieving
178 the division's mission;

179 b. a review of existing revenue options available to the county;

180 c. use of a transparent mechanism to communicate with stakeholders; and

181 d. engagement of policymakers in the choices between reducing or eliminating
182 these programs; and

183 16. Parks and recreation: Absent approval of new revenue authority as called
184 for in the county's state legislative agenda, the parks and recreation division should work
185 with the council and the office of management and budget to identify policy options for
186 local parks in potential annexation areas. This approach should include:

187 a. a cost benefit analysis of the cost of closure;

188 b. provisions to protect the security of parks facilities while closed; and

189 c. the potential conversion of certain parks facilities within potential
190 annexation areas to regional parks;

191 C. The council supports a legislative agenda that urges the governor and state
192 legislature to permanently address the structural funding gap facing all counties in

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193 Washington state by authorizing expanded types of revenues for local jurisdictions that
194 provide for sufficient growth to meet rising annual costs and have the flexibility of
195 helping to fund basic public services.

196

Motion 12986 was introduced on 4/13/2009 and passed as amended by the Metropolitan King County Council on 5/18/2009, by the following vote:

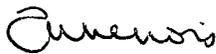
Yes: 9 - Mr. Constantine, Mr. Ferguson, Ms. Hague, Ms. Lambert, Mr. von Reichbauer, Mr. Gossett, Mr. Phillips, Ms. Patterson and Mr. Dunn
No: 0
Excused: 0

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Dow Constantine, Chair

ATTEST:



Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

Attachments None