

**SULTAN CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET**

ITEM NO: Consent C 2

DATE: November 13, 2008

SUBJECT: Public Hearing – Regional Police Contract

CONTACT PERSON: Laura Koenig, Clerk/Deputy Finance Director

SUMMARY:

Attached are the minutes of the October 23, 2008 Public Hearing on the Proposed Regional Police Contract as on file in the office of the City Clerk.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve as submitted

MOTION:

Move to accept the consent agenda as presented.

CITY OF SULTAN COUNCIL MEETING – October 23, 2008**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

The Public Hearing on the Proposed Regional Police contract was called to order by Mayor Eslick
Councilmembers present: Champeaux, Wiediger, Slawson, Flower, Blair and Davenport-Smith.
There were no objections to the Council participation.

Staff:

Deborah Knight, City Administrator presented the staff report.

In reviewing the 2009 budget with the Interim Police Chief, the question came up whether the Council wanted to proceed with the current police chief contract with Snohomish County or proceed with a hiring process for an in-house chief. This discussion prompted staff to request a cost estimate from Snohomish County for the in-house chief contract for 2009 for Council consideration.

Snohomish County also provided a regional model proposal for the City's consideration. The regional model would move the East Precinct office in Monroe to Sultan. However, the regional model has the potential of lowering police levels of service to a minimum of one officer on duty. The benefit of the regional model is the total number of staff working out of the Sultan Police Department facilities would increase from 6 FTE to 23 FTE.

The City Council discussed three police department business models (in-house chief, contract chief, and regional services contract) at its budget workshop in September. The Mayor and Council directed staff to request the Sheriff's Office prepare a regional services contract for the Mayor and Council's consideration.

The regional services contract provides for 6.33 FTE or a minimum level-of-service of 1 full-time equivalent (FTE) patrol deputy on service 24/7. The City would share a lieutenant with the County. The lieutenant would manage the sergeants responsible for Sultan, Gold Bar and unincorporated areas of Snohomish County.

The City of Sultan would be assigned a sergeant to manage the master patrol deputy (MPD) and three patrol deputies (deputy sheriffs) assigned to the City. The City would add a .33 FTE detective and .50 law enforcement secretary.

Evidence, record keeping and support services such as planning and research, labor relations, civil service, fleet management, purchasing, and internal investigations would be handled by the County as a part of the contract.

There will be a lower level of service provided to the City. The 2009 proposed budget provides for the chief and six officers. The County contract would have a cost savings of \$95,000 due to fewer paid officers, equipment costs and civil service.

Council Questions:

Where will the vehicles be parked? There will be 8 people working at a time so the current parking should be adequate.

The City will get a credit for the vehicles and equipment, will it increase next year? There is a proposed credit for vehicle and equipment. The credits are spread out over the contract which is for five years.

What is the impact to the current personnel and costs? The expense should be minimal. The state law requires the County to take all officers that meet the minimum standards of the County. Other City's are offering hiring bonuses to officers, is this part of the problem with filling the position? There is a shortage of people going into law enforcement. The City has been hiring lateral officers to reduce the training time and costs of entry level.

Will the County assume the liability and lawsuits? Yes, they would assume all liability.

The City will not have to pay the cost of investigations, will there also be savings on insurance?

The City will be guaranteed 24 hour coverage under the contract and the five year contract will help the budget process.

CITY OF SULTAN COUNCIL MEETING – October 23, 2008**Public Input**

Brian Cottle: Is a business owner in town and supports the proposal. He has not heard anything negative about this proposal. The important part to him is the presence of officers in the downtown core to help deter crime. If people know they are being watched, the level of conduct changes. He trusts the Council to make the good budget decisions and there are other costs that can't be placed on paper to consider. The City can prepare an ordinance to control dogs, but who will enforce it.

Dave Wood: He is with the VOA and they have been burglarized two times and lost \$10,000 worth of equipment. It took the officer more than 24 hours to respond and take the report. He supports the proposal as there will be a police presence into the community. The criminals watch and know when the police are not in town. This contract will help encourage business in the city.

Howard Durant: Urged the Council to accept the contract as it is embarrassing for residents to have the crime and homeless in the town. People who go thru town are disgusted with what they see and new businesses do not want to come to town. The police department has done a good job but they are overwhelmed. The criminals know when the police are out of town to take people to jail and they take advantage of that. We need to stop crime and bring in the sheriff.

Debbie Cottle: Supports the proposal. The Visitors Center had problems when they opened with drug dealing in front of the building. Discussions with people made them angry and they reacted by threatening the staff. They were required to go through the system to get a restraining order. A security system was installed to protect the volunteers and other buildings around the area and it has been successful and the police have used the surveillance film.

Bob Knuckey: This is great deal for the city and he urged the City to sign the contract with the county. His wife witnessed a robbery and she is being threatened and having to go through the court for help. The regional police department will help.

Jeffrey Beeler: There is positive input on the contract proposal this time around. He did not agree with the proposal last year and wanted to keep our own department and control. This new contract will provide full coverage and budget control for five years. This will straighten out the budget and will be good for the community.

Joe Platt: Supports the proposal but question what will happen five years from now? The selling point is the regional department located in Sultan, but what keeps them here? The City should provide information to the public on those issues. Thanked Chief Hawkins for his service.

Ken Marshal: Asked when the transfer would happen?

Marianne Naslund: There was an emergency evacuation drill two weeks ago and it demonstrated the lack of personnel in the city to deal with emergencies. There are 1900 students in the schools and the School Resource Officers has been a great help. There is a need for more help during the day and she supports the proposed contract.

Frank Linth: The presence of the regional office will help police the area. Gold Bar had an in city contract but the crime was outside the city.

CITY OF SULTAN COUNCIL MEETING – October 23, 2008**Council Comments:**

Champeaux: The vagrants live in the County and come into the City to cause trouble. The County officers would be able to deal with issues. The County is giving the City a good deal and they can only charge what it costs them and can't increase the cost in future years to make up losses.

Slawson: This is a good contract and there has been discussion of a regional station for the State Patrol, County and the Fire District. The Mayor of Stanwood advised they are happy with the contract and the service.

Blair: There are concerns about what will happen in five years and she expects it will be a shock based on the cost of city services. The County is larger scale when it comes to purchase but there are no guarantees for the future. The budget is over \$1 million this year for police service. The Fire District would like to build a new facility and they may be able to discuss a regional facility.

Davenport-Smith: What happens if an officers doesn't fit, can they be replaced?

Flower: Since 1989 this has been an emotional issue. The proposal last year for a regional contract with limited service was not support by the people. People had concerns and were in support of their own police department. He has been impressed with the leadership in the department during the past eight months. The contract is better for the city this time and a regional office will help.

On a motion by Councilmember Flower, seconded by Councilmember Wiediger, the public hearing was closed. All ayes.

Carolyn Eslick, Mayor

Laura J. Koenig, City Clerk