

EXCERPTS OF BOARD TIME PROCEEDINGS

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PLACE: 1300 Franklin Street, 6th Floor  
Vancouver, Washington

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PROCEEDINGS

COMMISSIONER MADORE: So to start with, back in March, the middle of March, we started looking at the qualifications and the job description for that. So if you take a minute and read what, and Bill echoed back and said, yep, that would be great, what we need. You can paraphrase what you said there.

BILL BARRON: No. This is what, yeah.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: So let me just read that.

Since we need a new environmental services department head, rather than rehire an environmental bureaucrat -- well, I don't mean that in a negative response -- I propose the following draft. If we get this right, Clark County would become a great example and model of success for the Department of Ecology while we solve our local jobs crisis. That's the sense of urgency. We have a local jobs crisis. We have to keep mindful of that. Leadership is the most indispensable qualification for this role that champions practical application of state law in granting developmental permits.

Leadership qualifications include a long track record that includes strong leadership success in both governmental operations and private business management experience as an entrepreneur and CEO processing the following -- possessing the following proven effective skills: Pioneer and manage new

innovative organizations, build and train teams committed to customer service and compliance, public relations, write and utilize multimillion dollar budgets, set and negotiate salaries, effectively communicate as a public speaker, pioneer practical creative innovative solutions that balance priorities. These qualifications stand in sharp contrast to an environmental specialist that lacks the above qualifications.

It would be so natural if we go out there and we advertise for an environmental services department head, we're going to -- the natural thing there is we're going to get somebody who has a passion for environmental and they're not going to necessarily have the kind of skills that's going to be economic development to balance those out with the management skills to head up this very large department.

The intent is to champion community success and compliance with government regulations rather than building an impractical job-killing bureaucracy, and so far we've done a pretty good job of building a job-killing bureaucracy.

COMMISSIONER STUART: That's not true, but that's your opinion based on not knowing the organization.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: Well, it's overstated.

COMMISSIONER STUART: It is overstated.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: It is overstated.

COMMISSIONER STUART: Well said.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: But we were not in good standing

with the Department of Ecology the way it is. We need to be able to --

COMMISSIONER STUART: It's not because that we're an impractical job-killing --

COMMISSIONER MADORE: No.

COMMISSIONER STUART: -- bureaucracy that the DOE doesn't like us.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: Let me finish. It's because we are -- we haven't had the balance of ensuring that we are not swimming upstream and resisting the Department of Ecology. I think we can be friends with them or that we really can be a model with them and we can also champion how to implement this.

I think the problem is not that the Department of Ecology is killing jobs, the problem is how we're implementing those policies here. I think it's possible, we get somebody with balance of private sector experience, entrepreneur, management, communication, collaboration building, all of that we can get it right.

COMMISSIONER STUART: So there's -- go ahead. Sorry.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: So with that, this is what I received from -- this is what Don Benton e-mailed me over the weekend here.

It has come to my attention the Director of Environmental Services position of Clark County is open. Decades of experience in both the private and public sectors. Successfully leading

teams and managing complex projects has provided me with the unique qualification for this position. Clark County is an outstanding innovator in so many areas for the state. With the right leadership, I believe that Clark County can become a model of success in environmental services as well.

I welcome the opportunity to lead this crucial department and collaboration with multiple departments, the DOE and local job creators, to enhance our natural and economic environment. I'd ask for the opportunity to streamline our environmental permits to help navigate Clark County out of our current jobs crisis while protecting our environment for future generations.

Pioneering new practical ways to comply with the new standards flowing from the Department of Ecology can breathe new life into Clark County development that optimizes environmental stewardship and fosters economic, healthy economic growth. My resume is attached. And he would like to be able to talk with Bill Barron and then whatever the process would be there.

At the time that was before a special session started at May 13. I did talk with him today to learn what's the update of the special session and also the potential conflict that can happen, because basically he's still a legislator and he would -- and when legislature is in session, he would have to be there probably most of that time.

COMMISSIONER STUART: So he wants to keep being a State

senator and work full-time for the County?

COMMISSIONER MADORE: Well, that's why I asked him about --

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: That's not uncommon at all.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: Well --

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Well, Pridemore, he was a full-time senator and acting CEO of environmental health.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: There are times --

COMMISSIONER STUART: He was an interim, yeah.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: And there was also Tim Sheldon who's a County Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER STUART: Of a small county, of Mason County.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: A County Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER STUART: Right, which is of a tiny county and Mason County is right next to them.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Well, I made my point, there's a couple of examples real quick there, so...

COMMISSIONER STUART: Yeah, but they're not the same. It's apples and oranges, man.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: So what you would not -- what would not be right would be double-dipping when you're paid here and you're paid as a legislator and you got, you know, that kind of thing going on. And I asked him about that up front, Don, you need to draw one paycheck. If you're not going to be here, then

you can't be drawing a paycheck here. If you're not going to be there, you can't be drawing a paycheck there. And he said absolutely, I'd be the first one to offer that.

COMMISSIONER STUART: So who would manage the department during the legislative session if the manager of the Environmental Services Division was in Olympia which is 100 miles away?

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: He just said that.

COMMISSIONER STUART: No. He said he wouldn't draw a paycheck. I'm just saying, you know, you can't -- I don't know how --

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Well, it's something to talk to him about. To me, I mean, I couldn't have a better person.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: Well, to answer the question for you --

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: If you want to grow and be successful in something you have to have an open mind.

COMMISSIONER STUART: He's an insurance salesman. How does that qualify him to be the Environmental Services Director of a large organization?

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: He teaches news, TV stations how to advertise.

COMMISSIONER STUART: So he's an advertising salesman.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: He's a teacher. You're looking at his resume there.

COMMISSIONER STUART: I've known Don for a while and I just browsed it.

So I guess the question is what are you proposing? We have a work session that's set for two weeks from now to actually find out from the organization itself, because that's what you guys had asked for them to do is to figure out how is the reorganization going, what could be done better, what kinds of things do they need and then look at a director. What are you suggesting?

COMMISSIONER MADORE: I'm suggesting that we have in front of us a person that's well qualified as a manager, who knows the private and the public sector, who can jump in and champion both causes.

COMMISSIONER STUART: Dude, that stinks of political cronyism. Stinks of political cronyism. To not even interview people but to offer up a candidate who just so happens to be a political ally for a position that he -- may be he is qualified, but if you don't put him through a process that even evaluates that outside of your own judgment, how do you know?

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: That's wrong to bring that up, I mean.

COMMISSIONER STUART: It's true.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Well, Probst was just given a job by the governor with no experience at all.

COMMISSIONER STUART: I'm not the governor and neither are you and I'm not Probst.



COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Pridemore was just given a position at the Department of Licensing. So to go back and say it's political cronyism --

COMMISSIONER MADORE: Pridemore went through the process though.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: -- takes away from the expertise that Don has.

COMMISSIONER STUART: Then put him in the mix with other candidates once you actually have an understanding of what you want, but to just try to appoint somebody who is a political ally to a position and say --

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: We have that authority to do that --

COMMISSIONER STUART: -- maybe he can even do it part-time.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: -- and I think we have a qualified individual as well.

COMMISSIONER STUART: You have the ability to abuse your authority to do that.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Oh, shame on you.

COMMISSIONER STUART: Shame on you.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Shame on you.

COMMISSIONER STUART: Shame on you for even suggesting that.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: What you did on the election

committee for the governor --

COMMISSIONER STUART: And I'm here.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: -- to appoint these people.

COMMISSIONER STUART: And I'm here.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: I wasn't talking about you. I was talking about your appointment.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: Let me get back on track.

I asked him about timing because the legislature right now is jumping into a special session on the 13th. I asked him how does that work? And he said I think that could be up to a 30-day session. And the way that he expects it to work, because he's been through this process a number of times --

COMMISSIONER STUART: When he tried to be our lobbyist.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: -- is that he would --

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Oh, yeah, when you hired Wylie.

COMMISSIONER STUART: No, no, no. Mike Burgess.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: He hired Wylie.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: No, no, Mike Burgess.

COMMISSIONER STUART: No, we hired Mike Burgess.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Sharon Wylie was there for four years.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: That's why we were looking for a new one.

COMMISSIONER STUART: Don Benton applied and we chose Mike Burgess over Don Benton.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Tell me about this cronyism.

Okay.

COMMISSIONER STUART: Burgess.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: To get back on track.

Nobody knows how it will go, but the way that he expects it to go is it would be probably several days there and then the negotiators would do their thing and they would call back the legislators. They would vote and the session would be over. That's what they expect. They don't know. They could be anywhere in the length of time. The negotiations is really what's in the works and that's when they don't necessarily have to have most of the legislators there. So that wraps up the legislative session.

Even during that time, he would be available and I would think that there's process that needs to happen. He would need to interview with Bill Barron and with HR and there would have to be -- we have to make sure it's a right fit. And if it is a right fit, then he would basically be here through the end of the year.

The session starts up again, so the next session is a 30- or is a 60-day session. The second Tuesday in January is when it starts up. He would be gone most likely most of that time. That's the one disadvantage of that.

COMMISSIONER STUART: He'd be gone for three months. You just talked about what a big organization that -- you know, what a big department it is and how important it is to the success of our community, and I totally agree with everything you said on

that. And then you follow up by talking about trying to appoint your buddy part-time to the job. Do you see the discrepancy of logic in that? I mean, you can't have both. You can't say it's an important job within our community and our County organization and that requires a lot of work to really get it right to create jobs --

COMMISSIONER MADORE: You're right.

COMMISSIONER STUART: -- and to preserve the environment and quality of life that brought you and many others here in the first place, and then say that -- then say you want to appoint somebody without much process part-time. You can't have it both ways.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: Do you want an answer?

COMMISSIONER STUART: Yeah, please.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: Okay. This is a the same thing or the same reason that I am able to be here and not at US Digital, running US Digital is because there is a process that happens. When leadership happens, you develop your team and you empower them and you train them and you guide them, and they are able to continue to run and you become dispensable during that process. That works really well.

Now, if Don should be the guy and he jumps into this position, he's going to be doing that same process. So first of all, he doesn't come in as I know everything kind of. He's going to come in to listen, to understand, to learn and to come in --

COMMISSIONER STUART: That's not his strength.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: Well, hear me out. And just like Bill here, anybody that's in a position of leadership needs to be able to develop at least one other key or two other key or three other key people who can continue to operate because they got the principles, they got the values, they got the processes, they got the -- they're the right people empowered to continue to operate and do what needs to happen even if the key person leaves for a couple of months.

COMMISSIONER STUART: So you started the organization. You started US Digital; right? It's your company. There's a big difference between you starting your own company and then now coming into this organization and figuring out how to make sure that US Digital runs while you're not there because you still own it.

Now, if you were going to hire someone at US Digital and you had a position of great value to your organization that you said is really important to the success of the organization, would you -- if I had a group of people equally qualified we'll say, one of those people said I will be there full-time to make sure that it is done right. I will develop a team that does things right, but I will be there to make sure, because I'm hiring you, I'm paying you full-time to do the job so you would be paying the full-time. And then you got another guy that says, you know, I can be there six months of the year to do the job or nine months on a good year,

if we don't go into special session, I can be there nine months a year to do the job.

And this is a rhetorical question because if you -- because I would lose respect if you actually said you would hire the guy who told you he would be there, he'd be there six months or nine months, and I respect you so I'm not even going to ask the question.

So you would hire the person that was going to be there to lead and do the job that you were hiring him to do. That is what we're doing here. We have to hire someone to do the job. If you think Don Benton is the best person for that job, then you say he does the job, but to have him do it six months a year and still say it's important --

COMMISSIONER MADORE: See, I think you're exaggerating there.

COMMISSIONER STUART: I'm not.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: The next session is a 60-day session.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Yeah, you are.

COMMISSIONER STUART: But we're at the end of April right now. They're going to go into special session May 13th. They will be done with it at the end of --

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Any type of special session consists of --

COMMISSIONER STUART: I get it, but he's on the

leadership team.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: What it consists of of being on-call while the committees work together and you go back and vote.

COMMISSIONER STUART: Right. But you may have, but he's on the leadership team, so he's on the leadership team for the majority coalition.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: He's not on the committee.

COMMISSIONER STUART: Yeah, he is for the transportation and for overall budget, he's on the leadership team. He's the -- what is he, the whip? He's the whip.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: No, he has a different title.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: I talked to him about his role and he said he could have chosen leadership teams, he's not. He is not -- he is not on -- he's free. He's on the transportation committee.

COMMISSIONER STUART: You have to understand, even at the minimum then, that's three months a year, three months a year that you're going to just say, oh, yeah, we'll pay this guy, but he's not going to be here. What are you telling the organization about the importance of the job?

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: This job has to come first, and that's a stipulation that would go forward that this job comes first.

COMMISSIONER STUART: So you're not going to go out and look for the best person. You're just going to take somebody's

word for it.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: I think this is the best person --

COMMISSIONER STUART: Oh, my gosh.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: -- in the interest of time. No, I mean, what do you mean? He has management skills. He's owned his own business. He works for three jobs. He's taken a total leadership for the last four years in the minority.

COMMISSIONER STUART: What does that have to do with running --

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Skill.

COMMISSIONER STUART: -- the Department of Environmental Services?

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Skill. Skills of getting along with others --

COMMISSIONER STUART: Really?

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: -- accomplishing --

COMMISSIONER STUART: Skills of getting along with others, Don?

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Absolutely. It's a proven record. I think it's a great choice. I think that -- I think he'd shine at the experience. The leadership ability that the man has --

COMMISSIONER STUART: I can't even believe you guys are discussing this. This is disgusting. It really is. I'm done for the day. I am so sick. You got to honor the organization. You



got to actually honor the integrity of the organization and the process to find the right people for the job. If after that process you find that he is the right person, God bless, then you choose him and you choose him with pride.

But to choose him without even going through a process is diminishing and demeaning to him. It's demeaning to Don Benton because it smacks the political cronyism that you would appoint him without a process. It is saying that he couldn't make it through the process on his own accord with his own merits.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: You're way out of line. I think he --

COMMISSIONER STUART: You guys are out of line.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: We don't need three months.

COMMISSIONER STUART: No, you need two votes. That's all you need is two votes. You feel free. You do your thing.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Been there, done that.

COMMISSIONER STUART: Bullshit.

(Commissioner Stuart left the proceedings.)

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: I'm sorry he feels that way. I think it really warrants him talking to Bill and see what works out. I think the man is talented in his ability. You can't take away his performance whether you agree with it or not.

In the last four years in the minority in Olympia he has managed to bring together and control Olympia for a -- two years ago he and Senator Zarelli passed the budget at the leadership of

Don Benton in the House and the Senate. This year in the minority, he put together a coalition that so far has stopped a billion and a half dollars in additional taxes and have a proposed budget with no taxes. You don't do that unless you're a leader of sorts, so...

COMMISSIONER MADORE: First of all, I respect Bill and I respect Commissioner Stuart. And the whole idea of, you know, appointing a favor or a friend to a position, you that have come to know me since I've been here, you know that I don't grant favors, I don't grant exceptions. When people come from, let's say, citizens and they have a case that they want to talk about how their permit went south or something like that, I do not grant and I haven't granted favors. Instead it's example and it's catalyst to be able to identify a category that needs to be improved.

When it comes to the what needs to happen here in order for us to make the job creating permits a priority for this county, we need to fix what's broken and we need to fix what needs to be tuned up. We need to be able to make sure we have leadership that can get it, that can champion it. And I like process. I know when we talked about the railroad coordinator, we talked about the process, and the process works well. I respect that process.

And in this case, if we walk through a 90-day period to, you know, once we nail down what needs to be nailed down after going through the natural process would be for us to wait for two weeks, have a work session, I guess, that come up with the specifics, go through the recruiting process and we are over this building

season. And I don't -- most problems are foreseeable. That's a foreseeable one, the lost opportunity. We need to make sure that we don't set our staff up for failure to overwhelm them with a process that we need to bring in new leadership to champion that.

I've looked very carefully at this resume and it's not because of if he's a friend, because I have lots of friends and I don't grant favors to friends. In fact, I'm overly sensitive to that whole idea. He has to -- the qualifications have to be right.

So what I'd like to be able to do is to not insist that this happen, but rather to start the process and to invite him to sit down with Bill, interview with him and to see what we can do if this -- if he is a qualified candidate. Let's find out if that be the case. This is the first step to make that happen.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: I like that. I like that process. I think that -- I've known Don for a long time. We don't buddy or run around. I go to him when I need help. He's always been there for Clark County. The only thing I can say is that -- and I think that we've stuck to process. I think it would be great for him to come in and talk to Bill and I think that he'll have a different opinion from what I know of him.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: I think he can hit the ground running. He can -- he really has a passion for this area. He really wants to be able to invest in jobs for Clark County. And he's convinced that he can -- he knows the inside of the legislative

process and what goes into the Department of Ecology there and to somehow work with them to find ways to brainstorm to make us a model so that we're not on -- and we're not fighting this, but we're finding a way to implement it that's smart.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: I'm not concerned with the legislative part of it. He has another business he has to address also.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: Well, I had asked him about his business because whoever jumps into this, it can't be a part-time position. It needs to be a full-time position.

His business that he's been running for years as an entrepreneur, he's already backed away from that a while ago, and so he's -- this would be his full-time job and that would be the full-time job. He would put in his time. He would have to perform just like anybody else on Bill's team. He would have to be able to perform.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: I know.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: So he'd be here full-time.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Yeah, (inaudible). He's a proven character for dedication and I think he definitely deserves, and I'd hate to turn someone down because he's an acquaintance. I mean, you know, I guess we all become acquaintances or work buddies or whatever, but I think that he can be very successful at that.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: Well, the fact that he's been able

to pull together both sides of the aisle up there and pull together a coalition and have it hold during a very, very challenging time to me says that he knows how to work with people and get them to buy in. The people that work most closely with him have a lot of respect for him.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Okay.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: Bill, you have his resume. I invite you to communicate with him and give us your feedback.

BILL BARRON: Okay. Now I'm to do what? I'm to interview him --

COMMISSIONER MADORE: Yes.

BILL BARRON: -- or just start the process? I can't learn anything more than what you've already said about him, so there's no use in me interviewing him. If you want him as the job, I'll just start him through the process, start him through the process.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: Okay.

BILL BARRON: Because it does no good for me to interview him. You're obliterating every process that we've had in place for 14 years.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: I think --

BILL BARRON: I've told you that.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: -- you need to ask the question how he's going to deal with this, his other job, how he feels he's going to deal with the legislature --

BILL BARRON: Well, you've just said that doesn't make any difference.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: -- so that we know.

BILL BARRON: You just said that doesn't make any difference.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Well, it does make a difference. I mean, he can't be running his business and be working here. This has got to be his number one job.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: We've already got the answers to that ahead of time.

BILL BARRON: And he's resigning his seat in the Senate, then?

COMMISSIONER MADORE: No. No. He will be out of session here in a matter of days. He'll be full-time and available. The next session starts, it's a 60-day session, on the second Tuesday in January. Between now and then he's a full-time, he's able to dedicate full-time, continue to learn, continue to empower, train and --

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: You know, it may or may not work for a full-time session, but we'll find out. I think that that's something we can address along the way. This has got to be the priority.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: Well, this is --

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: I would rather have him -- I can see an advantage, you know, and we have a citizen legislature. We

have teachers, doctors, firemen, policemen. That's what the legislature is made up of.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: Yup

BILL BARRON: So I'll just have to communicate with him and tell him what then and have him come in to process for the job and I'll make an announcement to the department.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Okay. This will work out.

BILL BARRON: Just so you know, my interpretation is this will devastate the organization, not only the department but this organization because this is bypassing every human resource process we have for hiring department heads, just so you know.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: Bill I heard what you said earlier and um I can assure you your fears are not going to come to pass.

BILL BARRON: I have no fears. I'm just telling you the reality.

COMMISSIONER MIELKE: Okay

BILL BARRON: I do what I'm told.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: I care about this team and I will make sure that this team is going to be healthy.

BILL BARRON: Well I will assure you that it will have a grave impact on this team. Not even the personality we are not talking the person. I'm talking the process and I told you process

is your friend when you are in local government unless you abuse it.

COMMISSIONER MADORE: Let's you and I talk.

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