Whatcom Council of Governments
Whatcom County

Report Date
September 21, 2012

Report No. 1008336
September 26, 2012

Council
Whatcom Council of Governments
Bellingham, Washington

Report on Accountability

We appreciate the opportunity to work in cooperation with your Council to promote accountability, integrity and openness in government. The State Auditor’s Office takes seriously our role to advocate for government accountability and transparency and to promote positive change.

Please find attached our report on the Whatcom Council of Governments’ accountability and compliance with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures. Thank you for working with us to ensure the efficient and effective use of public resources.

Sincerely,

BRIAN SONNTAG, CGFM
STATE AUDITOR
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Audit Summary

Whatcom Council of Governments
Whatcom County
September 21, 2012

ABOUT THE AUDIT

This report contains the results of our independent accountability audit of the Whatcom Council of Governments from January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2011.

We evaluated internal controls and performed audit procedures on the activities of the Council. We also determined whether the Council complied with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures.

In keeping with general auditing practices, we do not examine every transaction, activity or area. Instead, the areas examined were those representing the highest risk of noncompliance, misappropriation or misuse. The following areas were examined during this audit period:

- Donations
- Payroll benefits
- Petty cash/imprest funds
- Professional service contracts

RESULTS

In the areas we examined, the Council’s internal controls were adequate to safeguard public assets. The Council also complied with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures in the areas we examined.
Related Reports

Whatcom Council of Governments
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September 21, 2012

FINANCIAL

Our opinion on the Council’s financial statements and compliance with federal grant program requirements is provided in a separate report, which includes the Council’s financial statements.

FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAMS

We evaluated internal controls and tested compliance with the federal program requirements, as applicable, for the Council’s major federal programs, which are listed in the Federal Summary section of the financial statement and single audit report.
Description of the Council

Whatcom Council of Governments
Whatcom County
September 21, 2012

ABOUT THE COUNCIL

The Whatcom Council of Governments is an inter-governmental organization that coordinates projects primarily relating to transportation issues to mutually benefit the member entities. Established in 1966 as a multi-jurisdictional body, the Council represents local governments in Whatcom County, which serve an estimated 185,000 citizens. The Council has a staff of 12 employees. In fiscal year 2010 and 2011, the Council operated on budgets of approximately $1.9 million and $2.6 million, respectively. The majority of the Council’s funding comes from federal, state and local grants along with local dues.

The governing officials of the Council consist of an Executive Board and Full Council. The Full Council is a 20-member board comprised of elected representatives of local general purpose and special district governments throughout Whatcom County. The Executive Board carries out the responsibilities of day-to-day Council activities. Mayors, Executives, Commissioners and Council Members of participating local governments serve as Board Members. As of December 31, 2011, the Full Council included representatives from the following local governments: city of Bellingham, city of Blaine, city of Everson, city of Ferndale, city of Lynden, city of Nooksack, city of Sumas, Whatcom County, Port of Bellingham, Birch Bay Water and Sewer District and Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

These officials served during the audit period:

Executive Board:
- City of Sumas
- City of Bellingham
- Whatcom County
- Port of Bellingham
- Whatcom County
- City of Bellingham
- City of Bellingham
- City of Ferndale
- City of Everson

Bob Bromley
Dan Pike
Sam Crawford
Scott Walker
Pete Kremen
Barry Buchanan (2010)
Jack Weiss (2011)
Gary Jensen
Andy Rowlson

Note: Jack Weiss replaced Barry Buchanan on the Executive Board in 2011.
Full Council includes the Executive Board plus the following:

City of Lynden          Scott Kothuis
City of Blaine          Bonnie Onyon
City of Nooksack        Tom Jones
City of Bellingham      Jack Weiss (2010)
City of Bellingham      Barry Buchanan (2011)
Whatcom County          Bill Knutzen
Whatcom County Water District No. 10 Tom Hadd (2010)
Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District Deb Lambert
Birch Bay Water and Sewer District Pat Alesse

Note: Barry Buchanan replaced Jack Weiss on the Full Council in 2011.

APPOINTED OFFICIALS

Executive Director      Jim Miller
Finance Manager         Ron Cubellis
Office Manager          Lesley O’Shaughnessy

COUNCIL CONTACT INFORMATION

Address:                Whatcom Council of Governments
                        314 E. Champion Street
                        Bellingham, WA  98225-4502

Phone:                  (360) 676-6974
Website:                www.wcog.org

AUDIT HISTORY

We audit the Council biennially. The past seven audits have been free of findings. We attribute this to the Council’s strong internal controls and timely response to audit recommendations.
The State Auditor's Office is established in the state's Constitution and is part of the executive branch of state government. The State Auditor is elected by the citizens of Washington and serves four-year terms.

Our mission is to work with our audit clients and citizens as an advocate for government accountability. As an elected agency, the State Auditor's Office has the independence necessary to objectively perform audits and investigations. Our audits are designed to comply with professional standards as well as to satisfy the requirements of federal, state, and local laws.

The State Auditor's Office employees are located around the state to deliver services effectively and efficiently.

Our audits look at financial information and compliance with state, federal and local laws on the part of all local governments, including schools, and all state agencies, including institutions of higher education. In addition, we conduct performance audits of state agencies and local governments and fraud, whistleblower and citizen hotline investigations.

The results of our work are widely distributed through a variety of reports, which are available on our Web site and through our free, electronic subscription service.

We take our role as partners in accountability seriously. We provide training and technical assistance to governments and have an extensive quality assurance program.

State Auditor
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Deputy Chief of Staff
Chief Policy Advisor
Director of Audit
Director of Performance Audit
Director of Special Investigations
Director for Legal Affairs
Director of Quality Assurance
Local Government Liaison
Communications Director
Public Records Officer
Main number
Toll-free Citizen Hotline

Brian Sonntag, CGFM
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Larisa Benson
James E. Brittain, CPA, CFE
Jan Jutte, CPA, CGFM
Ivan Dansereau
Mike Murphy
Mindy Chambers
Mary Leider
(360) 902-0370
(866) 902-3900

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