

“GREEN SHEET”

Meeting dates:	September 5-6, 2008
Agenda item 15:	Commission Meeting Costs – Briefing
Staff Contact:	Jeff Olsen, Assistant Director, Business Services
Presenter(s):	Phil Anderson, Deputy Director – Resource Policy

Background:

At the March 7-8, 2008, Commission meeting, the Commission asked Department staff to review costs associated with Commission meetings located outside of Olympia, including staff travel and meeting rooms. The Commission also requested that the Department include data on public attendance at Commission meetings located around the state.

Commission Budget Background

The 2007-09 estimated Commission budget is \$479k and includes 1.5 staff that support the Commission. The 2005-07 Commission Budget was \$435k. The Commission has spent approximately \$100,000 over the past few biennia on travel costs.

Fish and Wildlife Commission Public Meeting Attendance

By looking at the public attendance data from recent Commission meetings, attendance varied from 25 people at a meeting in Olympia in March 2008, to 84 people at the February 2008, Olympia meeting. On average, approximately 50 people attended the Commission meetings. Below is a sample of past meeting attendance:

Public Attendance at Commission Meetings

- Colville, May 2008 68 people
- Pasco, April 2008 17 people
- Olympia, March 2008 25 people
- Olympia, Feb 2008 84 people
- Vancouver, Jan 2008 70 people
- Port Angeles, Dec 2007 37 people

Commission Meeting Costs

Commission meetings include the costs of meeting rooms, lodging, travel, and per diem for Commissioners. Estimated Commission costs for a two-day meeting in Olympia are \$5,000. Meetings away from Olympia are slightly higher, at approximately \$6,000. The cost of a 3-day meeting is estimated at \$8,000 for Olympia meetings and \$9,000 for away meetings.

In addition to the Commission costs, there are Department staff travel costs to attend the meetings. An example of staff cost – assuming a meeting requiring 150 miles of travel one-way, and 2 nights lodging with meals – is approximately \$300 per staff person. Under this assumption, for every 10 Department employees attending a Commission meeting, the travel cost would be \$3,000 per meeting. If, on average, 20 difference staff attend a Commission meeting, staff costs would be \$6,000 for a 2-day meeting, and \$8,000 for a 3-day meeting.

The table below provides examples for Commission meeting costs.

Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting Costs	2-Day Olympia meeting	2-day Away meeting	3-day Olympia meeting	3-day Away meeting
Commission Cost	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$8,000	\$9,000
Department Cost (20 staff)	0	\$6,000	0	\$8,000
Total Cost	\$5,000	\$12,000	\$8,000	\$17,000

If the Commission chose to continue meetings across the state, but reduce the number of meetings, savings could be achieved for both staff travel and Commission meeting costs. For each 2-day Commission meeting that is canceled in Olympia, there would be a \$5,000 saving. Canceling an away meeting would result in a \$12,000 savings. If the Commission met 7 times per year for 2-day meetings, total costs would be reduced from \$111,000 to \$54,000.

Examples of Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting Annual Costs

COMMISSION MEETING COSTS	<u>2008 Schedule</u> 8 Away 3 Olympia	12 Olympia Meetings	6 Olympia Meetings, 2 Away meeting	8 Olympia Meetings, 2 Away Meetings
Commission Cost	\$63,000	\$60,000	\$42,000	\$52,000
Department Cost	\$48,000	\$0	\$12,000	\$12,000
Total Cost	\$111,000	\$60,000	\$54,000	\$64,000

The Department also investigated using set locations possessing video or tele-conferencing technology as an option. Under this scenario, the Commission could reduce Department staff travel costs, but must decide if the technology is sufficient for Commission needs. The assumption is staff travel costs could be greatly reduced or eliminated using this technology.

Recommendation

The Commission could evaluate its business needs when setting the calendar for Commission meetings, and attempt to reduce the number of Commission meetings held per year. Increasing the length of certain meetings from 2 days to 3 days, with the 1st day devoted primarily to committee meetings, is one alternative to accomplish Commission business with fewer than 12 annual meetings. This schedule would result in costs of \$51,000, compared to \$111,000, approximately \$60,000 in savings over the 2008 Commission meeting schedule. Listed below is a template that recognizes the timing of key Commission policy decisions, and includes seven meetings, six in Olympia, one on the eastside, with two of the meetings 3-day meetings:

	February	March	April	June	August	October	December	Total Costs
	Olympia 3-day meeting	Olympia 2-day meeting	Eastside/ Away 2-day meeting	Olympia 2-day meeting	Olympia 3-day meeting	Olympia 2-day meeting	Olympia 3-day meeting	
Comm Costs	\$8,000	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$5,000	\$8,000	\$5,000	\$8,000	\$45,000
Dept Costs	\$0	\$0	\$6,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,000
Total Costs	\$8,000	\$5,000	\$12,000	\$5,000	\$8,000	\$5,000	\$8,000	\$51,000

Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

Does the Commission wish to alter the number of and/or method for its regular meetings to minimize overall expenses related to Commission meetings?

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

The public is invited to provide comments during the public hearing portion of the 2009 Commission meeting calendar Commission (agenda item #16).

Action requested:

None at this time. The Commission will consider a meeting calendar for 2009 during the October 3-4, 2008, Commission meeting.

Draft motion language:

N/A

Justification for Commission action:

“RCW 77.04.060 Commission -- Meetings -- Officers -- Compensation, travel expenses.

The commission shall hold at least one regular meeting during the first two months of each calendar quarter, and special meetings when called by the chair and by five members...”

COMMISSION REQUEST TO DEPARTMENT

a.k.a. "blue sheet"

Title of Request: Commission Meeting Locations

Commissioner: Orr

Priority Level (put one check in each row):

Importance: High Medium Low

Urgency: High Medium Low

Date Requested: Mar. 8, 2008 **Date Assigned:** Mar. 11, 2008

Assigned To (Program/staff person): Business Services/Joe Stohr, with Commissioners Orr, and Douvia, and Commission Exec. Assistant

Requested Due Date: July 18-19, 2008 *[postponed to Sept.5-6, 2008]*

Knowledge or Action Being Requested (narrative). Describe what you want to know. Be specific.

Department staff to review costs associated with Commission meetings located outside of Olympia, including staff travel, meeting rooms. Include historical data on public attendance at meetings in various locations around the state.

Output Requested (e.g., telephone call, memo, material from files, new report, presentation, other):

Briefing and discussion at Commission meeting.