



Beverly Stein, Multnomah County Chair

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MEMORANDUM

TO : Commissioner Sharron Kelley
Commissioner Gary Hansen
Multnomah County Taxpayers
Multnomah County Employees
FROM : Beverly Stein
DATE : April 23, 1998
RE : **1998 Chair's Executive Budget**

Overview

Multnomah County services are essential for maintaining a high quality of life in our region. Our services are critical for healthy children and families, preparation for entry into the workforce and maintaining employment, and providing key ingredients for maintaining public safety and a strong economy.

After adopting a budget with an \$18M cut last year due to Measures 47 and 50, it is a pleasure to present a budget today which continues all current services, including those funded last year with one time money. We are able this year to maintain our current services with approximately \$10M left for new projects.

Of the \$10M, over \$6.5M is designated for school related programs. This is consistent with our focus on our long-term benchmark goals of:

- **school completion by all students which will prepare them for their future as skilled workers, competent parents, active citizens and compassionate people**
- **reduction of child poverty by assuring that all parents have the skills and social supports to get and keep living wage jobs, and**
- **reduction of crime through a continuum of services and sanction for juveniles and adult offenders.**



Support to Schools

A healthy school system is a cornerstone for healthy communities, families and children. The County has recognized the critical nature of our schools in meeting our community vision of providing *an opportunity for all people to succeed*. Consistent with our mission I have included in this budget the following expenditures that will assist us in meeting all three of our long-term benchmarks:

- **Multnomah County School Attendance Initiative funded at nearly \$2,500,000 for truancy teams and support services for children and families focused on 4th to 9th graders in Portland and East County schools districts.** Truancy teams will identify students who have dropped out or have poor school attendance records and work to ensure the students return to a school setting where they can succeed. To increase the chances for success, the County will provide resources to support families and children with tutoring, mentoring, counseling, and skill classes. Additionally, we will fund a Lice Resource Center through our Health Department to help families avoid the loss of crucial school time this problem brings. We expect these to be ongoing programs that the County commits to for the future. We want to work with the schools to make sure they are prepared and committed to working with these youth when they return to school.

If this school attendance program works schools will have more students which will generate more state funding.

- **One time allocation to Portland Public Schools of \$1,300,000 pay for alternative school teachers who might otherwise be cut to assure returning students can succeed.** This allocation will stabilize funding in this area and can supplant current resources so the School Board can reduce the deficit in its 1998-99 year funding. This should result in saving approximately 25 teaching positions.
- **East County school districts would benefit from a short-term transition program for returning students to get them ready to reenter their home school.** This budget includes \$225,000 of one time money to the Multnomah Education Service District for this purpose with the hope that the East County school districts will continue this program if it is effective.
- **Resources from the recent passage of the BIT special education surcharge will not all be collected in time to be used this year by schools.** The County will pay schools the full amount this year and will be paid back when future receipts are collected. This amounts to a \$2.25M advance of one time money to schools.
- **Parental involvement with parent-friendly schools has proven to be an excellent way to improve school attendance and school success.** \$80,000 is included in the budget for a demonstration program of organizing parents. Research indicates that parental involvement is a critical element of keeping children in school. This has been funded and endorsed by the Multnomah Commission on Children and

Families as consistent with building upon the strengths of students and parents in the community.

This budget includes funds for an additional school-based health clinic at Binnsmead Middle School and four new Touchstone sites. Touchstone social workers are assigned to schools to work with struggling families of school children, especially around alcohol and drug issues. In addition, the Multnomah Commission on Children and Families will have additional grant funding available for programs like the Buckman Community Partnership, developed in cooperation with SE Impact at the initiative of Buckman parents.

Of course, the passage of the recent library levy allows us to upgrade our library in hours and services that provide direct assistance to students such as the School Corps which connects children's librarians directly with schools.

I will ask the Board of County Commissioners to allocate an additional \$1.5M out of our reserves for local schools beyond what is already in my proposed budget. I am doing that with the hope that Mayor Katz will recommend that the Portland City Council add \$3M for Portland Public Schools.

Meeting Service Needs of an Increasingly Diverse Population

Every year I have tried to add programs and funding to meet the special cultural needs of the County's diverse ethnic populations. These have included the Asian Family Center, youth support services for African Americans and the NE Community, and neighborhood health access through Self Enhancement, Inc.

Hispanics are the fastest growing minority population in Multnomah County. Our investments in schools will assist in reducing the disproportionately high number of dropouts among Hispanic youth.

This budget also responds to other needs of the Hispanic population by adding \$325,000 for increased mental health services for Hispanic children and families and \$100,000 for expanding mental health, health, youth services and outreach/organizing services in the new Cully Community Center being built at the Clara Vista and due to open after the first of the year. Commissioner Hansen and former Commissioner Saltzman have been specifically supportive of expanded services to the Hispanic population at the Clara Vista.

Public Safety Enhanced by Alcohol and Drug Treatment for Offenders

Commissioner Sharron Kelley and Commissioner Gary Hansen have led the way in their advocacy for alcohol and drug treatment programs for offenders. 48% of male and 45% of female inmates are dependent on alcohol or drugs. Dealing with the root causes of criminal acts is a more humane and effective solution for the safety and health of our

community. A recent state study concluded that a dollar invested in alcohol and drug treatment saves \$5.60 in other services.

Commissioner Kelley, as the leader of a Local Public Safety Coordinating Council workgroup, has worked very hard to articulate a set of programs based on best practices. We are reprogramming some funds in order to provide funding for an alcohol and drug treatment relapse program, mental health treatment for dual diagnosis individuals, and for alcohol and drug free housing.

I have also provided funding to assume the ongoing costs of alcohol and drug programs for offenders funded through the Target Cities grant. These programs including uniform diagnosis, in jail services, emergency and basic needs, client tracking and evaluation, and training have laid a foundation for more effective public safety policy.

Finally, I am proposing funding for a pilot project for a home based alcohol and drug treatment program specialized for juvenile offenders with the hope additional State funding next year can expand our efforts.

We have added a significant number of jail beds over the last few years and a new jail is in the process of being sited. It is appropriate to turn our attention to alcohol and drug issues which have a tremendous possibility of reducing recidivism of offenders.

Community Building in Outer Southeast Portland

As a part of its welfare reform efforts, the State funded a number of services on a one time only basis in Outer Southeast Portland. Faced with the loss of considerable new capacity to assist their residents, advocates met with the County and other funders and convened a special neighborhood budget discussion. While I was unable to fully fund all aspects of the program, I did try to work with the State and City of Portland to assume funding for their efforts which linked most closely with the County's mission and benchmarks.

I am recommending that the County begin funding the award winning Kelly House program with its cooperative pre-school, the GEARS outreach assistance program, and provide funding for the SE Works One Stop Workforce Center. I am also recommending that the County forgive the loan to the Brentwood Darlington Community Center, started through the leadership of former Commissioner Tanya Collier. I applaud the organizing work and advocacy of these citizens.

The beauty of the efforts of our citizen partners in Outer Southeast, the Clara Vista/Cully areas, and the Buckman neighborhood, is that each represents a distinct, grassroots community effort to improve the quality of life in that area of the County. I love the spirit and energy that comes with these community-building efforts and I am very excited to be able to allocate County revenues to help support them.

Homeless Youth

I am pleased to add funds in this budget to address the issue of homeless youth. Following up on our commitment to homeless youth and the Citizens Crime Commission, I have provided an additional \$100,000 for services and funding for a County homeless youth coordinator. The City will match the \$100,000 and I will continue to work closely with our private sector partners to provide matching funds for these public investments. I have appointed a diverse committee to redesign our system of response to the needs of homeless youth and look forward to their report.

In addition, I have expanded the voucher assistance with funding for homeless children and families.

Additional Programs Contributing to Increasing Opportunity for All

Citizens should be pleased to hear about the following additions in this budget:

- Funding for the District Attorney to add a deputy to assist with the community's gun violence reduction strategy advanced by Mayor Vera Katz.
- To assist the elderly struggling with increased housing costs, money put into a housing fund to provide temporary assistance.
- To assist the disabled population now served by the County, additional funds for a multi-disciplinary team.
- To assist Project Respond's loss of funding, almost \$70,000 added for this on-the-street mental health assistance.
- To assist the new Parkrose Community School Center, funding a health access clinic with evening hours.
- To help protect the investments of our "shareholders" – the taxpayers – in your government, we have:
 - improved the human resources system and County employee recruiting practices;
 - begun correcting the "infamous" Year 2000 problems that all computer users face;
 - developed a way to set aside funds to maintain new and remodeled County facilities; and
 - provided additional support to County Counsel for prevention to avoid future liabilities.

Ongoing Programs Contribute to Quality of Life in Multnomah County

While I am pleased to announce important new investments and programs, I want to emphasize that the bulk of the County budget pays for ongoing programs and efforts which are continually evaluated, measured and refined, and which make a strong contribution to the quality of life in our community. These programs include those which:

- make sure elderly people can stay in their homes for as long as possible
- assist people with disabilities to find appropriate services and employment
- provide jail space, alcohol and drug treatment, community supervision and programs for both adult and juvenile offenders
- provide parent education, mental health services and assistance for homeless families and youth
- provide health services for people without health insurance, immunizations, and community health nurses who meet with newborns
- collect taxes, run elections, protect the Columbia River Gorge, operate the bridges, license dogs, do land use planning and transportation in unincorporated areas, and
- keep the libraries open and connected to schools and the information age.

Once again, I am deeply thankful for the hard work of Multnomah County department heads, our Operating Council, the Citizen Budget Advisory Committees, Bill Farver on my staff, Dave Warren and his Budget and Quality Office, and departmental budget teams who have brought this budget proposal together.

I also want to thank the many community people who provided ideas, a sense of urgency and passion for many of the initiatives described in this budget. As Multnomah County works closer with the community, our budget reflects more of their involvement. This has been a good year for community interaction and I am proud of the results of that effort.