



OFFICE OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

TODD MIELKE, 1ST DISTRICT • MARK RICHARD, 2ND DISTRICT • AL FRENCH, 3RD DISTRICT

December 13, 2011

Mayor-Elect David Condon
c/o Nancy Isserlis
Chairwoman, Public Safety Transition Subcommittee
601 W. Riverside, Suite 1900
Spokane, WA 99201

Dear Mayor-Elect Condon:

As you prepare for taking office in January, we recognize you will be faced with making a number of critical decisions as to the future of the City of Spokane. Some of those decisions will be based on issues that arose during the campaign, while others will be new challenges.

One issue that has received considerable attention has been how law enforcement services will be provided in the future. The Board of County Commissioners witnessed considerable public debate over the role and powers of the police ombudsman, the influence of the Spokane Police Guild, and how law enforcement could regain public confidence.

We are also aware that Chief Anne Kirkpatrick has announced her decision to retire after the first of the year, and that Spokane County Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich has shared his willingness to serve as the director of law enforcement on a regional basis until such time as the City of Spokane has charted its course forward. Since such a contractual agreement with Spokane County would need to be ratified by the Board of County Commissioners, we felt it important to share our thoughts on this topic.

In politics, timing is everything. With the retirement of Chief Kirkpatrick, it appears there may be a unique opportunity for this region to have a dialogue about whether a regional law enforcement is in the best interests of the public. This letter is intended to inform you that the Board of County Commissioners stands ready to dialogue with you, your administration, and transition team as to whether such an arrangement makes sense, and how certain elements of such an arrangement may work.

The last time such an opportunity for such a dialogue existed was under the administration of former Mayor Dennis Hession. At the time, both the position of Sheriff and Spokane Police Chief stood vacant. While discussions were initiated, there was no dialogue with the community nor investigation into the options that existed under the law. It truly was a missed opportunity for this region.

The opportunity for such a dialogue to occur is rare, but presents itself now for this community to consider. Please know the BOCC stands ready to have this dialogue with you and your team, and will provide any additional information you may desire.

Sincerely,



Al French
Chairman
District 3

Todd Mielke
Vice-Chairman
District 1



Mark Richard
County Commissioner
District 2

C: Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich