

Whatcom County Council Finance and Administrative Services Committee

**COUNTY COURTHOUSE
311 Grand Avenue, Ste #105
Bellingham, WA 98225-4038
(360) 778-5010**



Committee Minutes - Draft Minutes

Tuesday, April 23, 2024

1:30 PM

Hybrid Meeting

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 3 P.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE
REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR
CALL 360.778.5010)**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan
Kaylee Galloway

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Committee Chair Todd Donovan called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Tyler Byrd, Kaylee Galloway, and Todd Donovan

Also Present: Ben Elenbaas, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremmer

Announcements

Council "Consent Agenda" Items

Galloway moved to recommend approval of Consent Agenda items one through nine.

Byrd stated he would like to consider Consent Agenda Item #7 (AB2024-271) separately.

Byrd moved to recommend approval of Consent Agenda Item numbers 1-6 and 8-9.

The following people answered questions on Consent Agenda Item #1 (AB2024-219):

- Gary Stoyka, Public Works Department
- Brett Piepel, Public Works Department ER&R

Stoyka answered what level of significance they will put on this study when they start making decisions and who they will include in the conversation. He stated this is just the first step, to look at the fleet and what vehicles would make sense to electrify. They would involve the departments that have the vehicles and also the people driving them, and ER&R would really be the ones in the driver's seat.

Brett Piepel, Public Works Department ER&R, stated this is a good base layer for them to get information to see where they stand infrastructure-wise. They will also have the consultant do a fleet analysis and show them what kind of emerging technologies might be out there. He thinks it would be a good move for them to get this through.

Galloway requested they *amend the motion* and also pull out Consent

Agenda item #3 (**AB2024-260**).

Councilmembers voted on Consent items 1-2, 4-6, and 8-9 (see votes on individual items below).

1. [AB2024-219](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Makers Architecture and Urban Design to implement a Fleet Electrification Study, in the amount of \$80,000.00

Byrd moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Galloway, and Donovan

Nay: 0

2. [AB2024-258](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Lynden Tribune and Print Co. to provide print and mail services in the amount of \$30,623.32 for a total amended contract amount of \$90,623.32

Byrd moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Galloway, and Donovan

Nay: 0

3. [AB2024-260](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract with Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc. to perform certain tasks associated with developing the 2025 Comprehensive Plan's new Climate Change and Resiliency element in the amount of \$180,295

This item was considered separately below.

4. [AB2024-265](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Whatcom Fire Protection District No. 7 for EMS Captain start up costs, in the amount of \$39,900.00

Byrd moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Galloway, and Donovan

Nay: 0

5. [AB2024-267](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and ScoCon LLC for the 4th Floor District Court - Courtroom 1 remodel, in the amount of \$227,265.00

Byrd moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Galloway, and Donovan

Nay: 0

6. [AB2024-270](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Northwest Regional Council for Inmate Care Coordinator Services in the amount of \$125,000.00 for a total amended amount of \$8,482,536.17

Byrd moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Galloway, and Donovan

Nay: 0

7. [AB2024-271](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Triangle Associates, Inc. to support the Forest Resilience Task Force for a total amount of \$74,927.50

This item was considered separately below.

8. [AB2024-255](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the Administrative Office of the Courts for reimbursement for Coordinator wages and benefits related to Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Program (FJCIP) in the amount of \$108,000

Byrd moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Galloway, and Donovan

Nay: 0

9. [AB2024-266](#) Request approval for the County Executive to authorize the purchase of radios and related installation parts, using the Washington State Contract #00318, in an amount not to exceed \$200,000.00 in 2024

Byrd moved that the Bid Award be RECOMMENDED FOR

AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Galloway, and Donovan

Nay: 0

Council "Consent Agenda" Items Considered Separately

3. [AB2024-260](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract with Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc. to perform certain tasks associated with developing the 2025 Comprehensive Plan's new Climate Change and Resiliency element in the amount of \$180,295

Galloway stated she would like to beef up task 4.2 of the scope of work with regards to wildfire resilience and to add at least two references to community wildfire resilience.

Galloway moved to amend Task 4.2 (page 17) of Exhibit A (Scope of Work) to add the following:

[The Washington Department of Natural Resources guidance on community wildfire protection plans](#)

She stated the intent would be to have that as a resource that is reviewed and considered as a part of the audit.

Matt Aamot, Planning and Development Services Department, answered whether they are able to amend the contract at this stage and stated they have negotiated with Cascadia so they might have to go back to them to talk about additional costs.

Chris Elder, Public Works Department, stated adding an additional resource should not derail anything or add additional costs.

The motion to amend carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Galloway, and Donovan

Nay: 0

Galloway stated she is not sure if it requires a scope amendment, but one of the things Council could request to come out of this audit is to include a recommendation for a Whatcom County Community Wildfire Protection Plan as an element of our Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Aamot stated it would be a good policy discussion for Council, but the contract does not necessarily need to be amended. House Bill 1181

(climate bill) addresses fire issues so it is going to be on the County's radar anyway.

Scanlon stated it sounds like staff across different departments have gone to various trainings regarding the Community Wildfire Protection Plan process and it might be helpful to have an update on that at some point to see where that process is at and what resources may or may not be needed.

Galloway stated that is something they could arrange in the Climate Action and Natural Resources Committee.

Elder stated he could try to get that lined up.

Galloway moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION AS PREVIOUSLY AMENDED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Galloway, and Donovan

Nay: 0

7. [AB2024-271](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Triangle Associates, Inc. to support the Forest Resilience Task Force for a total amount of \$74,927.50

Byrd asked whether there are other committees they are putting budgetary funding behind, and Galloway listed the Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force, the Racial Equity Commission, and the Whatcom County Ferry Advisory Committee. He stated those seem like they were bigger issues that were tied to ballot initiatives and larger projects. This one seems like any other committee they have.

Galloway stated the difference with this one is that it has a limited time duration and has a very specific task and she spoke about other bodies that worked with consultants on deliverables. She answered whether this committee has met yet and stated they have not. She and Byrd discussed the model of the Climate Impact Advisory Committee in using a contractor.

Byrd stated he is concerned because it seems like there is already an idea and a specific outcome and that it takes away from the purpose of advisory groups. There have also been other groups that have requested funds and the Council has not funded them.

Galloway stated some of the need for contracted services is administrative capacity and the technical piece of having subject matter expertise. She

spoke about the project view and priorities of the contractor while they would try to maintain a respectful, objective process that does not result in a biased outcome.

Byrd stated he does not really have any issue with the contractor themselves. It is more about other committees and how this one is being treated differently. He asked whether it would make sense to fund another part time FTE for all committees for administrative purposes, instead of hiring a consultant for this committee, to help alleviate some of the congestion with staff and facilitate all of their committee meetings a little bit better.

Donovan stated that would be a separate agenda item.

Galloway stated she shares that interest with Byrd and it is on her list to bring forward at the next budget policy work session. But for this one, the reason for the consultant is two-fold. It is not just for the administrative capacity, it is also for their technical expertise in this work.

Donovan stated this touches on a bigger conversation they need to have about how they staff Council advisory committees.

Galloway moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Galloway, and Donovan

Nay: 1 - Byrd

Special Presentation

1. [AB2024-272](#) Presentation from Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence

Susan Marks, Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, read from a presentation (on file) on the history, purpose, current projects, and roles of the Commission.

Donovan thanked her for the presentation.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

2. [AB2024-185](#) Report from the Information Technology Division

Perry Rice, Administrative Services Department Information Technology Manager, read from a presentation (on file).

He and Tyler Schroeder, Director of Administrative Services, answered questions.

Rice answered whether they plan for the County to switch from using Zoom to using Microsoft Teams and stated they plan to continue using Zoom for public-facing meetings.

Schroeder answered how much State funds will cover the costs for filing adjudication and for the Superior Court increases and stated the Legislature has been able to provide some funding for the water adjudication and for the efforts with the Superior Court Judge. He stated that, in general, they will cover the costs with water adjudication for the duration and the technology improvements in some of the facilities. For the fifth Superior Court Judge, we will probably need to talk more with the State for actual construction of a courtroom chamber.

Rice answered whether the County supplies its data dashboard feeds to open feed databases and stated it does, but in a limited fashion. He and Schroeder answered questions about the audio-visual set-up in the Council Chambers. He answered what staffing looks like in his office and stated they are about 20 percent vacant right now but they have been surviving because of staff retention in the last couple years, and they just added two positions this year. He and Councilmembers discussed getting more open public data out there and available online.

This agenda item was REPORTED.

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2024-217](#) Ordinance establishing the project budget for the Austin Court Stormwater Improvements Fund, request no. 1

Galloway moved that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Galloway, and Donovan

Nay: 0

2. [AB2024-229](#) Ordinance closing the Birch Bay Drive and Pedestrian Facility Fund and Project Based Budget

Tyler Schroeder, Director of Administrative Services, answered whether this is closing the project-based budget for the berm and stated it is. He pointed out the remaining balance (as noted in the memo) which will be returned to the Road Fund as described in the proposed ordinance.

Galloway moved that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Galloway, and Donovan

Nay: 0

3. [AB2024-235](#) Ordinance amending the project budget for the new Public Health, Safety and Justice Facility, request no. 6

***Galloway moved* that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION.**

Tyler Schroeder, Director of Administrative Services, answered where the \$20,000 not included in the two supplemental budget requests is and stated it is probably not specifically accounted for yet. They decided to ask for a little bit more since the amounts in request 4629 are just estimated expenses.

Galloway's motion that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Galloway, and Donovan

Nay: 0

4. [AB2024-237](#) Ordinance amending the project budget for the Way Station Project Fund, request no. 3

***Galloway moved* that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION.**

Tyler Schroeder, Director of Administrative Services, briefed the Councilmembers and stated this is a contingency to make sure the work does not stop over the summer. They have had more change orders than with past projects and found some other things, such a water damage, that they have taken care of, and this is just to ensure that they have the funds to keep the project going so they can get it to completion. Whether they spend the money or not will still be decided in these last couple months. He answered why this supplemental budget request is separate from the one in the next agenda item (**AB2024-239**) and stated this item is the ordinance amending the actual project fund. It is a capital fund and takes Council action to amend it. The next item is the actual dollars that go into that capital fund.

Galloway's motion that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Galloway, and Donovan

Nay: 0

5. [AB2024-239](#) Ordinance amending the 2024 Whatcom County Budget, request No. 6 in the amount of \$8,600,501

Galloway moved that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION.

Request #4637 - “To fund Presidential Primary Election Costs.”

Stacy Henthorn, Whatcom County Auditor, answered whether the State is paying us for presidential primary election costs and stated they bill the State and the State does pay them.

Request #4626 - Request “To fund Washington State Department of Commerce Targeted Eviction Prevention grant.”

Chris D’Onofrio, Health and Community Services, answered whether this is a proactive program, and whether it is a one-time grant and what happens when the grant money runs out. He stated it is an eviction prevention program and there are criteria around who is eligible. The grant funding is available from the Washington State Department of Commerce and the grant cycle will continue until the end of June of 2025. They do not know if it will be renewed. He answered how the County can help these people get more permanent solutions so they do not become reliant on this.

Scanlon stated he is interested in pursuing other options as well to help people out.

Galloway's motion that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Galloway, and Donovan

Nay: 0

6. [AB2024-118](#) Resolution to declare Whatcom County owned structure located in Hovander Park as worthless

Bennett Knox, Parks and Recreation Department Director, gave an update. He stated the property is now vacant and, on that basis, they would like to have it be reconsidered. They have three options at this point. One is to move forward with a demolition, the second would be to put it out for bid to have it be sold and moved off the property, and the third would be to wait until Parks has as a master plan in place to actually have recommendations based on that plan.

Christ Thomsen, Parks and Recreation Department, Knox, and

Councilmembers discussed the options, the square footage of the house and how many rooms and bathrooms it has, what revenue it would bring in if they sold the house, the fact that they would not have to pay for demolition if someone could cover the moving costs, and getting an appraisal on the house to show it is not worthless.

Donovan moved that they support the resolution to declare the structure worthless so they can potentially get the house moved and go on with the plans for the site.

Councilmembers and the speakers discussed the square footage of the house, the fact that the term “worthless” is a technical term related to the cost of maintaining or renovation versus the cost of disposal, whether the County partners with local fire departments to provide training opportunities before demolition, whether they ever partner with organizations known for reusing parts of a demolished structure, whether the County might have an alternative use for the building, whether they should discuss all properties currently under Parks being managed as rentals, and whether Parks should be doing that.

Councilmembers voted on the resolution (see below) then continued to discuss it.

Councilmembers and the speakers discussed whether they have to declare the structure worthless and whether using that word is driven by State law. Thomsen stated he would get them the ordinance that speaks to that for tonight.

Donovan's motion that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL carried by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Galloway, and Donovan

Nay: 1 - Byrd

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:01 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Todd Donovan, Committee Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription