

# **Whatcom County Council Finance and Administrative Services Committee**

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



## **Committee Minutes - Final**

**Tuesday, January 24, 2023**

**11:05 AM**

**Hybrid Meeting**

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 12:10 P.M.; MAY BEGIN EARLY  
(PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON AT 311 GRAND AVENUE SUITE 101, SEE REMOTE  
JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT [www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil), OR CALL  
360.778.5010)**

### **COUNCILMEMBERS**

Todd Donovan  
Carol Frazey  
Kathy Kershner

### **CLERK OF THE COUNCIL**

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

## **Call To Order**

Committee Chair Kathy Kershner called the meeting to order at 11:06 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

## **Roll Call**

**Present:** 3 - Todd Donovan, Carol Frazey, and Kathy Kershner

**Absent:** None

Also Present: Tyler Byrd, Barry Buchanan, Ben Elenbaas, and Kaylee Galloway

## **Announcements**

## **Committee Discussion**

1. [AB2023-021](#) Discussion of ordinance amending the Whatcom County Unified Fee Schedule - Ferry Rates

Elizabeth Kosa, Public Works Department Acting Director, briefed the Councilmembers on what has changed with the Ordinance in the last few weeks. She corrected the record about being able to reduce the fares. They are able to reduce the fares from whatever is set by Council after January 1, 2015, but cannot reduce them lower than the rates that were set in 2015. She summarized what they put forward for the Unified Fee Schedule and stated the request is not asking for immediate change but gets us to that 55/45 split in a few years.

Randy Rydel, Public Works Department, gave an overview of Public Works' request. He spoke about the version "AB2023-021 - Alternate Fee Schedule Submitted by LIFAC" and how it compares to the original fare proposal. The Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee (LIFAC) requested to bring down the increase for the 25 ride multi-ride pass from a \$4.60 increase to a \$3.50 increase per ride, adjusted the single-ride fare from \$17 a vehicle to \$24 plus the surcharge, and also had to make some changes to the motorcycle driver, trucks and others. Both fare models result in an overall increase in fare revenue of 37 percent but get there through different means.

Councilmembers and staff discussed what percentage the LIFAC proposal increases the single driver fare, what kind of people buy the single rides, whether they have factored in a potential reduction of single rides because of the closure of The Willows restaurant, what the increase is in the LIFAC version for the multi-ride tickets, the fact that there is stability with the multi-ride passes and less so with the single rides, whether the discount is

the same for a 10-ride and a 25-ride multi-ride pass, what the plan is for unused punch cards, where the six-month timeframe (as stated in Whatcom County Code 10.34.020 Subsection M) for unused Multi-ride cards came from, whether they are just looking at the Unified Fee Schedule at this time and not the Ordinance, whether they have any specific issues with the LIFAC version, whether future amendments they make (such as changing the six-month time frame for using punch cards) to the code would retroactively change a decision they make tonight which is based on existing code, whether the fare increases could be phased in, how time sensitive this is, and how they determine what is capital and what is operating expense.

Rydel gave a brief summary of the Public Works version and answered how much the needs-based rides are increasing in both versions.

Mary Marshall, LIFAC Vice Chair, stated this has been traumatic for the islanders since there has not been an increase since 2015 and this is a fairly significant one. They understand it and want to partner with Public Works, but they have not had enough time to look through it. They tried to make it equitable in their proposal but did not notice that the needs-based had gone up and they would not support that. The advisory committee is asking for some time to go back and come up with something that satisfies all parties. The increase needs to happen but the scope of the increase is more than most people can handle right now.

Judy Olsen, LIFAC acting Chair, spoke about the concerns of the community about what is a capital expense. They are not recommending this version at this time.

Kosa answered what the timeline is for this.

Rydel answered what the current deficit is and stated it is \$866,000.

Kershner asked whether we have American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars we could dedicate to the Lummi Island Ferry Fund to wipe out the \$492,000 2022 deficit and then base the rate increase on the difference between \$866,000 and \$492,000. She would like to recommend that they have a ferry rate review every year. That way they make adjustments all along the way.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, stated Kershner's point about the ARPA dollars is well taken but they need some time. The Administration is

planning an update to the Council on ARPA dollars in March and requested they delay this a month or so and the Administration can then come back with a proposal.

Donovan asked whether a month is enough time for the Executive to figure out where we might have available ARPA money, where that money would be coming from, and how that would then affect the fare proposal.

Frazey stated she supports giving this more time.

Galloway stated if they are going to postpone this, she would like to see if they can concurrently consider code changes.

Kosa answered whether giving Public Works more flexibility in how they are able to use the Ferry Fund would be a source of funding that could alleviate some of the deficit.

Marshall stated they would support taking a break, and also revisiting a code review at the same time to include language to trigger fare increases annually or every two years.

Kershner stated her intention is to comply with the code. If we slow things down, however, and ARPA money does not come through, that just means we will be further behind in meeting the 55% threshold.

Sidhu answered whether an update on ARPA funding could be given at the last meeting in February, and stated the first meeting in March would be better.

***Kershner moved*** to delay this item until the first meeting in March.

Councilmembers and staff discussed the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** 3 - Frazey, Donovan, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

Kosa stated Public Works will not do any modeling until they know more and Kershner asked LIFAC to continue to work on their recommendations.

Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council, answered whether the hearing should be canceled tonight but stated she recommends to hold the hearing

and then keep it open. Councilmembers discussed the hearing and decided to keep it as is.

Galloway stated it would be prudent to consider possible code amendments concurrently. She is wondering if they could consider having a discussion item in the Public Works and Health Committee at the next meeting to discuss the code. Councilmembers and staff agreed it would just be an open discussion without proposed code changes.

**This agenda item was HELD IN COMMITTEE.**

### **Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council**

1. [AB2023-059](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement amendment between Whatcom County and the Washington State Department of Health for the delivery and funding of various public health services in the amount of \$80,716, for a total amended agreement amount of \$8,567,890

***Donovan moved*** that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION.

Kathleen Roy, Health Department, answered what the modification was to the Statement of Work for the Office of Immunizations - COVID-19 Vaccine. She stated it allows them to use the funding to support increased storage capacity for COVID-19 or other vaccines if it is needed in our community.

**Donovan's motion that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

2. [AB2022-731](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Hunt Forensics for increased costs of services in the amount of \$893,449.13 for the total amount of \$3,356,602

***Frazey moved*** to recommend that the Contract be AUTHORIZED.

Kershner stated there will be a report from the Medical Examiner in the Public Works and Health Committee later today but she wanted to ask about the requested increase in funding.

Tyler Schroeder, Director of Administrative Services, answered what the 25 percent increase would be going to, how operations of the Medical

Examiner's Office have changed, whether this increase is in addition to or the same as the increase they approved last fall, why there was such an increase of death investigations in 2022 from the year before, and whether there is a way to do an apples-to-apples comparison of the costs between the current and former Medical Examiners. He stated he would like the full Council to consider this increase this evening so if the Committee would like to forward without a recommendation in order to hear the presentation, that would be the best option.

Elenbaas stated he would like to know what triggers an investigation.

*Donovan moved* that they do not make a recommendation on this and *Frazey withdrew* her motion.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, stated communication was not good in the last ten years with the former Medical Examiner and several things have changed or have been brought up to date with the new Medical Examiner.

Schroeder stated he would send an email to Council with an explanation of what the increases are so Council can see that before the report from the Medical Examiner and he went through some of the costs.

**Donovan's motion that the Contract be FORWARDED TO COUNCIL WITHOUT A RECOMMENDATION carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

### **Council "Consent Agenda" Items**

Frazey stated she would like to discuss Consent Agenda items two through seven.

Mike Hilley, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Manager, answered questions about the dollar amounts requested and why the cost to operate the 2023 Paramedic Training Program does not seem to add up with the amount they are asking other jurisdictions to pay per student, and stated the difference is that the County is not paying the wages of the out-of-county students.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, stated they tried to raise these issues when the EMS levy was being discussed. This is a system we have had in place for years and the costs have changed as well as the ability and methodology of

running schools, but we have not changed our rules. This program is very expensive and there are different ways all this could be done. These are basic reforms we need over several years and the Council person on the EMS Oversight Board (EOB) should be aware.

Frazezy stated they need to look at all aspects of where this money is going.

*Frazezy moved* to approve Consent Agenda items one through twelve. Councilmembers voted on the Consent items (see votes on individual items below).

1. [AB2023-065](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a residential lease agreement between Whatcom County and Krista and Nicolas Fauquet to reside at 367 East Lake Samish Drive, for a monthly rent of \$1,295

**Frazezy moved that the Agreement be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Donovan, Frazezy, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

2. [AB2023-070](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an Interlocal Agreement amendment between Whatcom County and Bellingham Fire Department to extend the community paramedic program through 2023 in the amount of \$419,450

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

**Aye:** 3 - Donovan, Frazezy, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

3. [AB2023-071](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into Interlocal amendment to extend the Community Paramedic program though 2023 in the amount of \$199,927

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

**Aye:** 3 - Donovan, Frazezy, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

4. [AB2023-072](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Camano Island Fire and Rescue for participation in the Whatcom County Paramedic Training program in the amount of \$25,625

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

**Aye:** 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

5. [AB2023-073](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Marysville Fire District for participation in the Whatcom County Paramedic Training program in the amount of \$43,300

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

**Aye:** 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

6. [AB2023-074](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between North County Fire and Rescue for participation in the Whatcom County Paramedic Training program in the amount of \$20,150

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

**Aye:** 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

7. [AB2023-076](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Bellingham Fire Department to operate the 2023 Paramedic Training Program in accordance with Washington State Department of Health and Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) standards and requirements in the amount of \$1,169,600



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

**Aye:** 3 - Donovan, Frazezy, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

8. [AB2023-081](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interagency agreement between Whatcom County and the Administrative Office of the Courts for interpreter expense reimbursement, in the amount of \$61,597.00

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

**Aye:** 3 - Donovan, Frazezy, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

9. [AB2023-064](#) Resolution cancelling uncollectible personal property taxes.

**Frazezy moved that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Donovan, Frazezy, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

10. [AB2023-045](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Whatcom Conservation District for Lake Whatcom Homeowner Incentive Program Assistance, in the amount of \$63,500

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

**Aye:** 3 - Donovan, Frazezy, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

11. [AB2023-056](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a Local Agency Standard Consultant Agreement Supplement No. 3 between Whatcom County and Wilson Engineering LLC., to provide on-call professional land surveying services support to

Whatcom County Public Works, in the amount of \$100,000

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

**Aye:** 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

12. [AB2023-061](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to award bid #22-66 and enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Stremmer Gravel Inc., for the 2022 Flood Gates Install project, CRP No. 922020 in the amount of \$56,080

**Frazezy moved that the Bid Award be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

**Items Added by Revision**

There were no agenda items added by revision.

**Other Business**

There was no other business.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

**Kathy Kershner-via email 1/29/2023**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kathy Kershner, Committee Chair

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Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

SIGNED COPY ON FILE