

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, November 18, 2025

9:50 AM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 10:35 A.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON,
SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil,
OR CALL 360.778.5010)**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

Call To Order

Committee Chair Todd Donovan called the meeting to order at 9:56 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 2 - Tyler Byrd, and Todd Donovan

Absent: 1 - Barry Buchanan

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

Announcements

Council "Consent Agenda" Items

Donovan moved to recommend approval of Consent Agenda items one through seven and stated Consent Agenda item #1 (**AB2025-737**) is a substitute.

Councilmembers asked questions on some of the items.

Consent Agenda Item #6 (AB2025-817)

Lauren Templeton, Planning and Development Services Department, answered what the easement is accomplishing, and stated it is protecting the property for long term forestry and protecting it from development. She answered if it is part of the Bay to Baker trail, and stated it will allow for recreation but forestry is the priority and the main use. She stated the land owner was OK with public access on this property.

Consent Agenda Item #7 (AB2025-819)

The following people answered questions:

- Eric Chambers, Health and Community Services
- Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office

They discussed with councilmembers that this (Bellis Phase I) is separate from another project (Bellis Phase II) for which the Council approved EDI funding, that funding for this part (the child care facility) was not included in the original amount approved for the affordable housing project because those too are separate, and that there is a possibility that the Administration will bring forward a contract amendment for additional funds in the next several months. The speakers answered questions.

Councilmembers voted on the Consent items (see votes on individual items below).

1. [AB2025-737](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and General Code, LLC for legal code publishing services, in the amount of \$16,000

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

Aye: 2 - Byrd, and Donovan

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 - Buchanan

2. [AB2025-791](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Washington State University to continue the jointly shared costs for faculty positions and program support for WSU Whatcom County Extension in the amount of \$282,257 for a total amended contract amount of \$3,825,050.90

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

Aye: 2 - Byrd, and Donovan

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 - Buchanan

3. [AB2025-800](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and K2 Towers III, LLC in the amount of \$140,133 for a total amended contract amount of \$266,579

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

Aye: 2 - Byrd, and Donovan

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 - Buchanan

4. [AB2025-802](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Gitts Autobody to provide autobody repair services to county vehicles, in the amount of \$80,000

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

Aye: 2 - Byrd, and Donovan

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 - Buchanan

5. [AB2025-804](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Washington State Health Care Authority to provide Criminal Justice Treatment Account (CJTA) funding for substance use disorder treatment and recovery support services for individuals involved in the criminal legal system, in the amount of \$651,108

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

Aye: 2 - Byrd, and Donovan

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 - Buchanan

6. [AB2025-817](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a grant agreement between Whatcom County and the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office - Washington Wildlife and Recreation Forestland Preservation grant program for the acquisition of a forestry conservation easement on the Maple Falls Forest property in the amount of \$454,000

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

Aye: 2 - Byrd, and Donovan

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 - Buchanan

7. [AB2025-819](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to increase the number of childcare slots for low-income families through the funding of the interior build out of a child care facility located in Unit 2 of the Bellis Fair Family Housing Condominium, in the amount of \$944,084

Donovan moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR

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

Aye: 2 - Byrd, and Donovan

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 - Buchanan

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2025-797](#) Discussion of an ordinance establishing the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Leasehold Improvements Project Fund and establishing an initial budget for the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Leasehold Improvements Fund

Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office, stated this is the budget action to create the project-based budget to fund the tenant improvements at the new location for the Sheriff's office. The lease was approved at the last council meeting. She answered where the \$1.5 million would come from, and stated it is in the ordinance that it comes from Real Estate Excise Tax (REET).

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.
2. [AB2025-799](#) Discussion of an ordinance establishing the Birch Bay Beach Park Project Fund and establishing an initial budget for the Birch Bay Beach Park Project Fund

Bennett Knox, Parks and Recreation Department Director, briefed the councilmembers on the ordinance, the funding components, the scope of the project, and the goal of supporting road to shoreline access. He stated they will need to work through the maintenance of the park in the future and have the potential to partner with the Birch Bay Park and Recreation District on that. He spoke about the location of the project and determining elevation of the restroom facility to accommodate for sea level rise. He responded to a suggestion to talk to the Birch Bay Chamber to discuss the site being used for a similar project to what the Port of Bellingham is doing downtown with container shops.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.
3. [AB2025-818](#) Discussion of an ordinance to amend the 2025 Whatcom County Budget, request no. 12, in the amount of \$3,565,060

Randy Rydel, Administrative Services Department Finance Director, briefed the councilmembers and stated it is the final request for the year.

He and the following people answered questions:

- Jennifer Hayden, Health and Community Services
- Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office

They discussed with councilmembers the request to fund additional waste disposal costs for toxic waste and spoke about increases in costs, that these supplemental requests are for 2025 but may be brought over into the new year if needed, whether cost escalations will be considered for the next biennium, and that conflict attorneys will still be housed in the Clerk's Office next year, but the Public Defender has agreed to be the conduit for the outside contracts rather than those going through the Clerk's Office.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2025-756](#) Ordinance establishing the Opioid Settlement Fund and establishing a budget for the Opioid Settlement Fund

Byrd moved that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Byrd, and Donovan

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 - Buchanan

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:29 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Todd Donovan, Committee Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger