

**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, February 11, 2025**

**10:30 AM**

**Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers**

AGENDA REVISED 2.10.2025 - HYBRID MEETING (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON,  
SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT [www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil](http://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 10:30 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

## Roll Call

**Present:** 3 - Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, and Barry Buchanan

Also Present: Ben Elenbaas, Kaylee Galloway, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremmler

## Announcements

### Council "Consent Agenda" Items

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

Byrd stated he had questions on Consent Agenda item numbers 7 (**AB2025-153**) and 8 (**AB2025-158**), and also on Consent Agenda item number 9 (**AB2025-161**).

Consent Agenda item numbers 7 (**AB2025-153**) and 8 (**AB2025-158**)  
Donnell Tanksley, Sheriff, answered whether the interlocals are related to the existing jail or the new facility, and stated the two agreements are in reference to the current jail and Council will see other agreements with other small cities in the next couple weeks to a month.

Consent Agenda item number 9 (**AB2025-161**)  
Donnell Tanksley, Sheriff, answered how the funding is going to get used and whether it will be available to families that were affected by the bomb cyclone and need help preparing their homes. He stated it is for a small group of families. He answered whether those families have already been identified or whether this will be something families can apply for, and he stated he will find out that information (see **AB2025-163** below for more discussion on this item).

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

1. [AB2025-117](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Lake Whatcom Residential & Treatment Center to provide funding for HVAC system and window replacement at the Birchwood assisted living and treatment facility, in the amount of \$1,000,000

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

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

**Nay:** 0

2. [AB2025-133](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Rick Ackerman for the provision of evaluations and treatment services to youth referred or sentenced under the Special Sex Offender Disposition Alternative (SSODA) in Whatcom County Juvenile Court, in the amount of \$22,000

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

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

**Nay:** 0

3. [AB2025-134](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and L&L Counseling and Consultation for the provision of evaluations and treatment services to youth referred or sentenced under the Special Sex Offender Disposition Alternative (SSODA) in Whatcom County Juvenile Court, in the amount of \$30,000

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

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

**Nay:** 0

4. [AB2025-136](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization to provide behavioral health services within the North Sound Integrated Care Network in the amount of \$104,295, for a total amended contract amount of \$3,025,135

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

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

**Nay:** 0

5. [AB2025-150](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between

Whatcom County and the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center (WDRC) to provide for the administration of the family law mediation program, fee subsidy for low income participants of mediation sessions and parenting seminars, and language interpretation for participants, in the amount of \$65,000

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

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

**Nay:** 0

6. [AB2025-151](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement with Diking District No. 3 and landowners John and Rich Appel to provide flood control/river improvement work on Cougar Creek for the Neveel Levee Cougar Creek Fish Passage Project, which includes a cost-share contribution from the landowners and an in-kind contribution from the Diking District, in the amount of \$350,927 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)

**Buchanan moved that the Contract (FCZDBS) be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

**Nay:** 0

7. [AB2025-153](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the City of Ferndale for Correctional Services

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

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

**Nay:** 0

8. [AB2025-158](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an Interlocal Agreement between Whatcom County and the City of Everson for Correctional Services

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

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

**Nay:** 0

9. [AB2025-161](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and the Washington State Military Department to utilize Emergency Rapid Response Funds to aid in the recovery of qualified low-income individuals/households affected by the November 2024 Bomb Cylone, in the amount of \$135,000

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

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

**Nay:** 0

### **Committee Discussion**

1. [AB2025-152](#) Discussion regarding contract thresholds

Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office, read from a presentation (on file) about potential changes to the County's purchasing code and administrative process, with particular focus on contracts that require Council approval, and she highlighted other fiscal transparency work they have underway.

Councilmembers and Pennucci discussed a desire for Council to be more proactive and to have the tools to be involved on the front end of appropriating funds, as well as having oversight on the back end by getting presentations about how money is being spent, that they could make some short-term improvements in process as well as changing the threshold now and then do other changes as they get new systems in place, that Council would still have to approve spending authority and that approving the contract with a service provider is the part that would be subject to the threshold, how they would handle large contracts that get broken up into smaller pieces that may not meet the threshold, studying the tools that other counties are using around open budget and open data, that thresholds in other Washington State counties vary from county to county, the fact that some of Whatcom County's requirements in current code are more strict than what State law requires, and that the Administration would be reporting at least once a quarter on all the contracts.

Donovan stated he can work with Councilmember Scanlon and the Deputy Executive to bring something to Committee of the Whole to get feedback on a specific threshold amount.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, stated the biggest driving factor from the Executive's Office is more oversight and more clarity to the Council and he

spoke about the proposed changes.

Donovan stated they also need tools to be more proactive on the appropriation part of this because it is hard to look in the budget right now and track what is being spent on a particular program.

**This agenda item was PRESENTED AND DISCUSSED.**

### **Items Added by Revision**

1. [AB2025-163](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an agreement between Whatcom County and Sustainable Connections for the purpose of conducting a feasibility study for the development of an Office of Healthy Housing in the amount of \$190,000

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office, briefed the Councilmembers and stated she can discuss this item in the evening meeting.

#### From Consent Agenda Item #9 (AB2025-161)

Matt Klein, Sheriff's Office Department of Emergency Management, answered whether families or projects, that the money for the bomb cyclone is going toward, have already been identified or whether there is a process for people to apply for it. He stated there are general eligibility requirements for the program on the County website and they worked to develop a survey for people to effectively pre-apply to make sure they are already meeting the requirements of the contract. He spoke about the process once they get approval for the contract.

**This agenda item was NOT ACTED UPON.**

### **Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

**Todd Donovan-via email 2/24/2025**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

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Todd Donovan, Committee Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger

SIGNED COPY ON FILE