

Whatcom County Council

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



Minutes - Final

Tuesday, June 24, 2025

6 PM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

HYBRID MEETING (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE REMOTE JOIN
INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR CALL
360.778.5010)

COUNCILMEMBERS

Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan
Ben Elenbaas
Kaylee Galloway
Jon Scanlon
Mark Stremmler

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

COUNTY COUNCIL

CALL TO ORDER

Council Chair Kaylee Galloway called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. in a hybrid meeting.

ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, Ben Elenbaas, Kaylee Galloway, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremler

FLAG SALUTE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, spoke about the county's financial health and structural budget problems, and what is being done to address them.

MINUTES CONSENT

Buchanan moved to accept the minutes consent items. The motion was seconded by Byrd (see votes on individual items below).

1. [MIN2025-036](#) Committee of the Whole for June 10, 2025

Buchanan moved and Byrd seconded that the Minutes Consent be APPROVED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

2. [MIN2025-037](#) Regular County Council for June 10, 2025

Buchanan moved and Byrd seconded that the Minutes Consent be APPROVED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

OPEN SESSION

The following people spoke:

- Dave Chase
- Megan Vigre
- Lindsay Anderson

- Sarah Yates
- Kathy Sparks
- John Sparks
- David Foreman
- Kathleen Sparks
- Elizabeth Hampton
- Tiffini Ayala
- John Westerfield
- Natalie Chavez
- Kaatri Jones
- Misty Flowers

Hearing no one else, Galloway closed the Open Session.

CONSENT AGENDA

(From Council Finance and Administrative Services Committee)

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and *moved* to approve Consent Agenda items one through nineteen.

Byrd stated he would like to consider Consent Agenda item numbers 1, 2, 16, and 18 separately.

Donovan amended his motion and *moved* to approve Consent Agenda item numbers 3-15, 17, and 19.

Question on Consent Agenda item number 11 (**AB2025-462**)

Julie Anderson, Public Works Department, answered whether other stakeholders in the Flip process are getting their time covered by a grant, and if the funding comes through separate grants. She stated the answer to the first question is yes, and she spoke about the agreements that will and will not be coming to Council, and the grant funding.

Councilmembers voted on item numbers 3-15, 17, and 19 (see votes on individual items below).

1. [AB2025-443](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to administer Whatcom County's coordinated entry system through the Whatcom Homeless Service Center, in the amount of \$544,578

THIS ITEM WAS CONSIDERED SEPARATELY BELOW.

2. [AB2025-444](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to authorize and distribute rental assistance through the Whatcom Homeless Service Center, in the amount of \$7,274,164

THIS ITEM WAS CONSIDERED SEPARATELY BELOW.

3. [AB2025-445](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Catholic Community Services to provide on-site supportive services and housing at Francis Place, in the amount of \$277,723

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

4. [AB2025-446](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham to provide funding for the Alternative Response Team Program, in the amount of \$375,000

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Interlocal be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

5. [AB2025-447](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services - Wildlife Services for wildlife management services, in the amount of \$87,677.87

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Interlocal be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

6. [AB2025-448](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an agreement between Whatcom County and the Port of Bellingham for the acquisition of 58.81 acres equipped with two 3,000 square foot buildings located at 6211 Northwest Avenue for the purposes of establishing a Whatcom Agricultural Research Station, in the amount of a \$1,966,542 EDI grant and \$933,271 EDI loan, for a total of \$2,899,813

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremmer

Nay: 0

7. [AB2025-449](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a two-year program agreement between Whatcom County and the State of Washington Department of Children, Youth & Families to provide detention services at the Whatcom County Jail for Juvenile Rehabilitation youth eighteen years and older, in the amount of \$26,000 per year

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremmer

Nay: 0

8. [AB2025-450](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Lydia Place to provide rapid rehousing, case management, and coordinated entry access services, in the amount of \$473,162, for a total amended contract amount of \$722,242

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremmer

Nay: 0

9. [AB2025-454](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Lydia Place to provide permanent housing and supportive services in the amount of \$258,976, for a total amended contract amount of \$388,463

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremmer

Nay: 0

10. [AB2025-461](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Whatcom Long Term Recovery Group to expand

local assistance to homeowners participating in the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, in the amount of \$80,000, for a total amended contract amount of \$120,000 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract (FCZDBS) be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

11. [AB2025-462](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a cost reimbursement agreement amendment between Whatcom County and the Nooksack Indian Tribe to compensate the Nooksack Indian Tribe for staff time to support the Floodplain Integrated Planning process, in the amount of \$64,000, for a total amended agreement amount of \$88,000 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract (FCZDBS) be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

12. [AB2025-463](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Lydia Place to provide funding for the emergency shelter program, in the amount of \$436,352, for a total amended contract amount of \$680,728

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

13. [AB2025-464](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and The Administrative Office of the Courts for reimbursement of services related to the Uniform Guardianship Act, in the amount of \$67,740

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Interlocal be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

14. [AB2025-465](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a six-month contract amendment between Whatcom County and Northwest Regional Council for Jail Nursing Services, in the amount of \$1,354,508.50 for a total contract amount of \$11,009,534.17

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremmler

Nay: 0

15. [AB2025-466](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an agreement between Whatcom County and the Department of Children, Youth and Families for services relating to evidence-based programming for juveniles under the supervision of Juvenile Court

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Interlocal be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremmler

Nay: 0

16. [AB2025-467](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to provide housing case management services in the amount of \$2,007,866, for a total amended contract amount of \$2,927,247

THIS ITEM WAS CONSIDERED SEPARATELY BELOW.

17. [AB2025-468](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Developmental Disabilities Administration to ensure a coordinated system of local services for persons with disabilities, in the amount of \$6,129,076

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Interlocal be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremmler

Nay: 0

18. [AB2025-473](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between

Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to administer the Housing and Essential Needs Program, in the amount of \$3,409,883

THIS ITEM WAS CONSIDERED SEPARATELY BELOW.

19. [AB2025-474](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a lease agreement between Whatcom County and Ferndale Youth Sports for maintenance and operation of the baseball fields at the Northwest Sports Complex, in the amount of \$1

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Agreement be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremmer

Nay: 0

CONSENT AGENDA CONSIDERED SEPARATELY

1. [AB2025-443](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to administer Whatcom County's coordinated entry system through the Whatcom Homeless Service Center, in the amount of \$544,578

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract be AUTHORIZED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Buchanan, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremmer

Nay: 1 - Byrd

2. [AB2025-444](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to authorize and distribute rental assistance through the Whatcom Homeless Service Center, in the amount of \$7,274,164

***Donovan* reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and *moved* that the Contract be AUTHORIZED.**

Stremmer spoke about why he would not vote for this.

Donovan's motion that the Contract be AUTHORIZED carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Buchanan, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Byrd, and Stremmer

16. [AB2025-467](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment

between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to provide housing case management services in the amount of \$2,007,866, for a total amended contract amount of \$2,927,247

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract be AUTHORIZED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Buchanan, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 1 - Byrd

18. [AB2025-473](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to administer the Housing and Essential Needs Program, in the amount of \$3,409,883

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract be AUTHORIZED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Buchanan, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Byrd, and Stremler

OTHER ITEMS

(From Council Finance and Administrative Services Committee)

1. [AB2025-451](#) Ordinance amending the 2025 Whatcom County Budget, request no. 7, in the amount of \$1,500,000

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and ***moved*** that the Ordinance be ADOPTED.

Councilmembers discussed the motion, that this intervention is a good investment, prioritizing youth when considering the budget and maybe having to impact other programs, that they will potentially be able to bail out the Behavioral Health Fund if they recognize that this contract ends and that they can transfer \$1 million of mental health millage revenue from the Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities Fund, and that the North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization (ASO) has decided that youth are going to be the focus of their next needs assessment and will hopefully come back with some recommendations for ASO recourses to help with that.

Ann Beck, Health and Community Services, spoke about the reports from surveys that are starting to come in from the school districts regarding the mental health expansion (MHE) contracts, and stated they expect to be able

to have a more robust report in a few weeks. They are happy to come back and share that with Council.

Councilmembers continued to discuss the motion and concern with making up shortage in one fund using another.

Donovan's motion that the Ordinance be ADOPTED carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 - Buchanan, Donovan, Galloway, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas, and Stremmler

Abstain: 1 - Byrd

Enactment No: ORD 2025-030

2. [AB2025-453](#) Ordinance amending the 2025 Whatcom County Budget, request no. 6, in the amount of 16,735,908

Donovan reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and *moved* that the Ordinance be ADOPTED. He stated the vast majority of this is accepting the Consolidated Homeless Grant from the State for the Homeless Housing Fund and Economic Development Investment (EDI) money for the agricultural research station.

The following people discussed the item with councilmembers:

- Ann Beck, Health and Community Services
- Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office
- Randy Rydel, Administrative Services Department Finance Director

They discussed the motion, how much has been appropriated for the vulnerable children portion of the Healthy Children's Fund and that the current request is continued appropriation, the contract amounts approved from the Consolidated Homeless Grant, that they cannot ask for budget authority unless they have contracts and a spending plan lined up, and that they cannot budget for the whole grant yet since it goes through June of 2027 and that is too far into the future.

Donovan's motion that the Ordinance be ADOPTED carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Buchanan, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremmler

Nay: 1 - Byrd

Enactment No: ORD 2025-031

(From Council Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee)

3. [AB2025-479](#) Discussion and request for motion regarding draft Justice Project Stakeholder Group Charters

Buchanan reported for the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee and stated they approved a motion to hold. He stated they need to set up a schedule for how they should get questions and comments to the Clerk of the Council in order to get them to the Executive's Office in time for the next meeting.

Buchanan moved that the Request for Motion be HELD IN COMMITTEE.

The following people discussed the item with councilmembers:

- Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office
- Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
- Cathy Halka, Clerk of the Council

Councilmembers discussed with the speakers being more overt in the charters that there is a cooperative relationship between the Council and the Executive, how councilmembers should work on their recommendations in the interim, and that the Clerk of the Council can collect the feedback and provide it to the Executive's Office in advance of the July 8 meeting.

Buchanan's motion that the Request for Motion be HELD IN COMMITTEE carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

1. [AB2025-434](#) Appointment to a vacancy on the Business and Commerce Advisory Committee, for-profit health care position, Applicant(s): Dave Chase, Elizabeth Hampton

Byrd moved to appoint and vote for one. The motion was seconded by Buchanan.

The applicants addressed the councilmembers.

Elizabeth Hampton was appointed with 6 votes as follows:

Elizabeth Hampton: 6 - Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, Stremler, and Buchanan

Dave Chase: 1 - Byrd

Hampton was APPOINTED.

Appointed Elizabeth Hampton with six votes

CONFIRMATION OF EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

1. [AB2025-476](#) Request confirmation of the County Executive's appointment of Kyann Flint to the Whatcom County Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance Committee

Donovan moved and Byrd seconded that the Executive Appointment be CONFIRMED.

Councilmembers discussed the applicant.

Donovan's motion that the Executive Appointment be CONFIRMED carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

ITEMS ADDED BY REVISION

There were no agenda items added by revision.

COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER ITEMS, AND COUNCILMEMBER UPDATES (PART 1)

Clerk's note: Councilmembers gave committee reports, and as part of those reports, made a motion on an item from executive session. The notes on committee reports are broken up to show discussion up until that motion, the motion on the file, and then a continuation of committee reports and other updates after that vote.

Councilmembers gave committee reports.

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office, spoke about the agreement with the City of Bellingham about potentially funding out-of-jurisdiction emergency response in Galbraith (**AB2025-470**) and finding ways for the County to fund a third of the costs outside of the General Fund.

Councilmembers discussed a memo prepared by staff that shows alternative models for how this is funded in other jurisdictions and they continued committee reports.

- [AB2025-471](#) Discussion of pending litigation with Civil Deputy Prosecutor Jesse Corkern, re: Richard Kirkham v. Whatcom County et al. United States District Court for Western District of Washington in Tacoma, Cause No. 2:25-CV-208-DGE-DWC
[Discussion of this item may take place in executive session (closed to the public) pursuant to RCW42.30.110 (1) (i)]

Galloway reported for Committee of the Whole Executive Session and **moved** to approve defense and indemnification of Donnell Tanksley, Whatcom County Sheriff, Wendy Jones, Former Chief of Corrections, Caleb Erickson, Chief of Corrections, and Breanna Brock, RN, BSN, CCHP, named as defendants in Richard Kirkham v. Whatcom County et al., United States District Court for Western District of Washington in Tacoma, Cause No. 2:25-CV-208-DGE-DWC.

This motion is based on the following findings:

- A. That Donnell Tanksley, Wendy Jones, Caleb Erickson, and Breanna Brock were acting in a matter in which the county had an interest;
- B. that Donnell Tanksley, Wendy Jones, Caleb Erickson, and Breanna Brock were acting in the discharge of a duty imposed or authorized by law;
- C. and that Donnell Tanksley, Wendy Jones, Caleb Erickson, and Breanna Brock acted in good faith.

The motion was seconded by Buchanan.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremmer

Nay: 0

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

Motion approved 7-0 to approve defense and indemnification of Donnell Tanksley, Whatcom County Sheriff, Wendy Jones, Former Chief of Corrections, Caleb Erickson, Chief of Corrections, and Breanna Brock, RN, BSN, CCHP, named as defendants in Richard Kirkham v. Whatcom County et al., United States District Court for Western District of Washington in Tacoma, Cause No. 2:25-CV-208-DGE-DWC.

This motion is based on the following findings:

- A. That Donnell Tanksley, Wendy Jones, Caleb Erickson, and Breanna Brock were acting in a matter in which the county had an interest;
- B. that Donnell Tanksley, Wendy Jones, Caleb Erickson, and Breanna Brock were acting in the discharge of a duty imposed or authorized by law;
- C. and that Donnell Tanksley, Wendy Jones, Caleb Erickson, and Breanna Brock acted in good faith.

COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER ITEMS, AND COUNCILMEMBER UPDATES **CONTINUED**

Councilmembers continued committee reports and gave other updates on recent activities and upcoming events.

The following people answered a question about a motion that was

previously approved to add a footnote to the Healthy Children's Fund in the budget:

- Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office
- Randy Rydel, Administrative Services Department Finance Director

Byrd asked about the motion made last year by Buchanan (see Committee of the Whole meeting on November 6, 2024) regarding adding a note in the budget wherever they encounter the Healthy Children's Fund expenditures, and stated the note is not there.

Pennucci and Rydel spoke about delays in getting the final budget book published but that the footnote is included.

Councilmembers continued their updates.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

The County Council approved these minutes on July 8, 2025.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Kaylee Galloway, Council Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger

SIGNED COPY ON FILE