



MEMORANDUM

TO: WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
FROM: CATHY HALKA, CLERK OF THE COUNCIL
RE: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING COUNCIL OFFICE BUDGET
DATE: JUNE 2, 2025

On May 27, 2025, Council discussed potential 2026 Council Office budget adjustments and requested staff provide the following information for the continued discussion on June 3, 2025 (see AB2025-396).

1. BOARD OF EQUALIZATION BUDGET (2025)

Legislative Coordinator	\$ 122,433
Legislative Clerk	\$ 90,564
Temporary Extra Help (internal) (estim.)	\$ 5,892
Temporary Staff (external)	\$ 6,343
Board Members (estim.)	
Per Diem -2023 petition hearings in 2025	\$ 21,600
Per Diem - 2024 petition hearings in 2025	\$ 29,250
BOE Meetings & trainings	\$ 3,650
Overhead (estim. for 2 staff members, postage, facilities, copiers, etc.)	\$ 28,551
TOTAL	\$ 308,283
<i>Legislative Coordinator 2-year Temp (unfilled)</i>	<i>\$ 106,054</i>

2. STAFF TIME BY TASK

*required by state or local law

Cathy Halka, Clerk of the Council

Cathy is the administrative department director of the Whatcom County Council Office, responsible for the operation of the office and supervision of the Council Clerk's staff. She provides advisory and administrative support to the Council, manages all legislative functions set forth in state and county code, and oversees board of equalization and hearing examiner operations.

- 55% *Meeting Management
- 25% Department administration
- 10% Councilmember support
- 10% Miscellaneous special projects

Kirsten Smith, Legislative Analyst / Deputy Clerk

Kirsten researches, collects, develops, and analyzes advanced data and assists the Council with planning, zoning, budget, program, and policy analysis. She drafts legislation, recommendations, and findings for Council review and consideration, and acts as the Clerk of the Council in the Clerk's absence. Kirsten also provides guidance and supervision to junior staff and intern(s).

- 85% Legislative research and support for councilmembers (includes *Charter Review Commission in 2025)
- 10% *Meeting management
- 5% Department administration

Kristi Felbinger, Legislative Coordinator II

Kristi manages the county's enterprise-wide agenda management system (Granicus/Legistar) and provides administrative support to the Clerk of the Council. She prepares official minutes and acts as the office accountant.

- 40% *Meeting management and minutes
- 20% *Granicus system administration
- 30% Accounting
- 10% Miscellaneous projects

Jenna Gernand, Legislative Coordinator (Communications)

Jenna is responsible for Council communications. She manages the Council newsletter and social media accounts, writes newsflashes and press releases, drafts Council correspondence, and prepares public notices.

- 70% Communications: website, web/meeting accessibility newsletter, press release/newsflash, social media, correspondence, Council Community Conversations, handbook, etc.
- 10% *Public Notices
- 10% Miscellaneous projects: *ballot measure submittals, *Charter Review Commission support, *IPRTF/Justice Project support, etc.)
- 5% *Meeting management and minutes
- 5% *Granicus system backup

Lisa Bruner, Legislative Coordinator (Hearing Examiner Coordinator)

Lisa provides administrative support to the Hearing Examiner and Clerk of the Council. She manages the Council Office staff payroll and coordinates responses to public records requests.

- 50% *Hearing Examiner
- 20% *Processing ordinances and resolutions
- 10% *Public Records Requests
- 10% Payroll
- 10% Miscellaneous: *archiving, *meeting duties, office supplies, committee reorganization, *levy certification, on-boarding of new councilmembers

Kiana Oos, Legislative Coordinator (Policy Analyst)

Kiana provides research assistance and policy analysis, drafts ordinances and resolutions, and assists the Council on special projects including the Comprehensive Plan update and the Charter Review Commission

- 85% Legislative research and support for councilmembers (includes Charter Review Commission in 2025)
- 10% *Meeting management
- 5% *Granicus system backup

Liia Bray, Legislative Coordinator (Board of Equalization Clerk)

Liia provides specialized administrative support to the Board of Equalization (BOE) (and the County Council as needed).

- 98% *Board of Equalization
- 2% Miscellaneous: Council Office support

Janie Randall, Legislative Clerk

Janie provides complex administrative support for the Board of Equalization (and County Council as needed).

- 98% *Board of Equalization
- 2% Miscellaneous: Council Office support

Tara Jackson, Legislative Clerk

Tara is the first point of contact for guests arriving to the Council Office. She supports the Clerk of the Council in the organization and accomplishment of special projects and assignments, processes Council email and correspondence, and coordinates Council Office room reservations.

- 30% Council Office lobby
- 25% *Contracts verification
- 25% *Archiving
- 10% Miscellaneous: invoices and minutes, meeting reservations, special projects
- 10% *Meeting support for Council and Board of Equalization

Jill Nixon, Legislative Coordinator II

Jill provides specialized administrative and technical support to advisory groups and the Clerk of the Council. She supports the Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force (IPRTF).

- 56% *IPRTF, IPRTF subcommittees and workgroups, Justice Project
- 30% *Council-appointed Advisory Groups
- 14% Direct support to the Council and Council Office operations (*agenda review and other special projects)

3. INCARCERATION PREVENTION AND REDUCTION TASK FORCE (IPRTF) STAFF ACTIVITIES

Staff provides the following services to the IPRTF and its subcommittees:

IPRTF ACTIVITIES	HOURS	%
IPRTF Mtg. Support	164	10%
IPRTF Subcommittees: Meeting Support (does not include JPOP, which has contractor services)	372	22%
IPRTF Steering Committee Meeting Support	141	8%
IPRTF Miscellaneous: questions and support provided to IPRTF Members, County staff and the public; Onboard new members, IPRTaskForce Email correspondence; research; create and maintain files per PRA, OPMA compliance	200	12%
Planning Team & JPOP contract support (not including contracted scope)	70	4%
Total	947	56%

Please note, an estimated 235 hours of support services to the JPOP are currently provided by a consultant (contract expires Dec 2025).