

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

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COUNCILMEMBERS

Rud Browne
Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan
Ben Elenbaas
Carol Frazey
Kathy Kershner

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL

JOINT MEETING OF SAN JUAN COUNTY COUNCIL, SKAGIT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, AND WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL TO APPOINT A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE STATE HOUSE OF THE 40TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT (SPECIAL MEETING OF THE OF THE SAN JUAN AND WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCILS; REGULAR MEETING OF SKAGIT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS)

JANUARY 6, 2020
SKAGIT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' HEARING ROOM
1800 CONTINENTAL PLACE, MOUNT VERNON WASHINGTON

(PLEASE NOTE: MINUTES WERE PREPARED BY THE SKAGIT COUNTY CLERK OF THE BOARD FOR SEPARATE APPROVAL BY THE WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL, SKAGIT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, AND SAN JUAN COUNTY COUNCIL.)

A joint meeting was held by the San Juan County Council, Skagit County Board of Commissioners, and the Whatcom County Council on Monday, January 6, 2020, in the Skagit County Commissioners' Hearing Room located at 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, WA.

All members of the San Juan County Council were present: Council Chair Jamie Stephens, Councilmember Bill Watson and Councilmember Rick Hughes.

All members of the Skagit County Board of Commissioners were present: Chair Ron Wesen, Commissioner Kenneth A. Dahlstedt and Commissioner Lisa Janicki.

The following members of the Whatcom County Council were present: Councilmember Barbara Brenner by telephone, Councilmember Barry Buchanan, Councilmember Tyler Byrd by telephone, Vice Chair Todd Donovan, Councilmember Carol Frazey and Councilmember Satpal Sidhu. Council Chair Rud Browne had recused himself from the meeting.

1. CALL TO ORDER, FLAG SALUTE, ROLL CALL, AND SELECTION OF THE CHAIR

Skagit County Chair Wesen called the proceedings to order at approximately 1:00 p.m. which was followed by Whatcom County Council Vice Chair Donovan, and San Juan County Council Chair Stephens calling their Councils to order.

Skagit County Chair Wesen led the gallery in the salute to the flag.

Skagit County Clerk Amber Erps called roll. All members of the joint proceedings were present except for Whatcom Council Chair Rud Browne who had recused himself from the meeting. Councilmember Tyler Byrd joined the proceedings by telephone shortly after roll call was taken.

San Juan County Councilmember Hughes made a motion to nominate Skagit County Chair Wesen to Chair the joint meeting. The Motion was seconded by Whatcom County Vice Chair Donovan. The vote passed unanimously.

2. **DISCUSSION AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

No changes were made to the agenda.

3. **REVIEW PROCESS INCLUDING TABULATION**

Chair Wesen provided background information regarding the purpose of the joint meeting. The 3 legislative bodies were meeting in order to make an appointment to a vacancy that existed in the Washington State 40th Legislative District. The vacancy was due to the resignation of former Representative Jeff Morris. Since the 40th district encompassed San Juan County and portions of Skagit and Whatcom County, councilmembers and commissioners from the 3 counties needed to collectively take action to appoint 1 of the 3 candidates nominated by the Washington State Democratic Central Committee. The Committee nominated (in order of their preference): Alex Ramel, Michael Lilliquist, and Marco Morales.

Chair Wesen described how the vote would be taken and how it would be weighed so that each county received 3 votes in total. Each of the 3 members of the San Juan County Council had 1 vote. Each of the 3 members of the Skagit County Board of Commissioners had 1 vote. Each of the 7 members of the Whatcom County Council had 3/7th of a vote (however since 1 Whatcom County Councilmember had recused himself from the meeting, Whatcom County's vote was redistributed and they had 3/6th of a vote). This equaled 9 total votes.

Discussion regarding a potential absent member was held. If they did not join the meeting before the vote was taken, the absent vote would be redistributed to that county.

The manner that the vote normally worked was described: that once a motion was made and seconded, the clerks would call the roll one member-at-a-time and they would be tabulated. If the total number of votes totaled more than 4.5 than it passed and the Resolution could be executed. Chair Wesen provided his expectation that after the motion was made and seconded for a nominee, there would be opportunity for discussion where members could highlight their preferences for the candidates, then the roll call on the vote would be taken.

Councilmember Sidhu addressed the joint legislative body and explained that he wished to change the voting process so that as votes were called for one-at-a-time, they were not changed by members who were voting last. He suggested nominating all 3 candidates, have members of the legislative body write their preferred candidate on a piece of paper, and show their choices at the same time for tabulation by the clerks.

A motion was made by Councilmember Sidhu to change the voting process as he described (members write name of preferred candidate on a piece of paper and show their choices at the same time for tabulation). Councilmember Frazey seconded the motion. Discussion was held both for and against the motion. The vote failed on a 2 – 7 vote with Councilmember Buchanan, Vice Chair Donovan, Councilmember Frazey, and Councilmember Sidhu dissenting. Chair Brown recused himself from the meeting and his vote was redistributed to the remaining 6 Whatcom County Councilmembers.

A motion was made by Councilmember Frazey to change the voting process to nominate all three candidates and then vote by saying the name of the member's preferred choice. Councilmember Buchanan seconded the motion. The vote failed on a 4 – 5 vote with Vice Chair Hughes, Councilmember Watson, Councilmember Buchanan, Vice Chair Donovan, Councilmember Frazey, and Councilmember Sidhu dissenting. Chair Brown recused himself

from the meeting and his vote was redistributed to the remaining 6 Whatcom County Councilmembers.

Chair Wesen asked if there were any additional questions on voting and tabulation. No additional discussion was held.

Chair Wesen provided an overview regarding the process for candidate interviews. Each candidate would have 10 minutes to address the legislative body and answer questions.

4. **FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATE 1 - ALEX RAMEL**

Alex Ramel provided information about why he was seeking to fill the vacant position in the 40th Legislative District and he answered questions from the Councilmembers and Commissioners.

5. **FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATE 2 - MICHAEL LILLIQUIST**

Michael Lilliquist provided information about why he was seeking to fill the vacant position in the 40th Legislative District and he answered questions from the Councilmembers and Commissioners.

6. **FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATE 3 - MARCO MORALES**

Marco Morales provided information about why he was seeking to fill the vacant position in the 40th Legislative District and he answered questions from the Councilmembers and Commissioners.

7. **COUNCIL/COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Comments were made by Councilmembers and Commissioners regarding the process, the excellent pool of candidates to choose from, wanting a representative who understood the challenges of local government, and wanting an effective representative.

Chair Wesen announced that after a successful vote, the person appointed to fill the vacant position would be sworn in by Skagit County District Court Judge Dianne Goddard.

8. Possible Executive Session: Appointment Qualification - RCW42.30.110(1)(h). (Review qualifications of candidate for appointment to elected office.)

The joint legislative body did not hold an executive session.

9. **SELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVE - JOINT RESOLUTION TO FILL THE VACANT POSITION**

A motion was made by Vice Chair Donovan to nominate Alex Ramel to fill the position of state representative for the 40th legislative district in the Washington State House of Representatives. Commissioner Janicki seconded the motion. The vote passed on a 5 – 4 vote with Council Chair Stephens, Chair Wesen, Commissioner Dahlstedt, Councilmember Brenner, and Councilmember Byrd dissenting (**Whatcom County Resolution 2020-001**). Council Chair Brown recused himself from the meeting and his vote was redistributed to the remaining 6 Whatcom County Councilmembers.

District Court Judge Dianne Goddard swore in Alex Ramel as Representative for the 40th Legislative District.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Whatcom County Council Vice Chair Donovan, San Juan County Council Chair Stephens, and Skagit County Chair Wesen adjourned the joint proceedings at 2:11 p. m.

The Whatcom County Council approved these minutes on February 11, 2020.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

Video is archived online with Skagit County and can be found *On Demand Online* under Board of County Commissioners' Meetings for January 6, 2020:
<https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/TV21/mediaplayer.htm>