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WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL

January 7, 2021

Mayor Seth Fleetwood
City of Bellingham
210 Lottie Street
Bellingham WA 98225

Dear Mayor Fleetwood:

I am writing to you today to ask you, or your representative, to participate in a newly created task force.

As you may know, the Whatcom County Council, with the support of the Executive's Office, is forming a new Child and Family Well-Being Task Force. The task force will focus on identifying ways that Whatcom County Government can best meet the needs of all young children and families in Whatcom County. This task force was created because there is a ground swell of understanding that a community that supports its youngest children will become a community that is more fully engaged, equitable and vibrant. Having representation from the City of Bellingham was identified as vitally important to this work in our community.

The Whatcom County Council adopted Ordinance 2020-079 in December, establishing the task force. The ordinance can be found on the [Whatcom County website](#). The ordinance calls for 30 members to participate on the task force, 15 of whom are permanent members selected by their agency or organization. The permanent members will come from Generations Forward Family Council, Whatcom Early Learning Alliance, Whatcom Taking Action for Children and Youth with Special Health Needs, School Superintendents, the Department of Children, Youth and Families, Whatcom County Health Department, Public Health Advisory Board, Whatcom County Council, **City of Bellingham**, Small Cities, Lummi Nation, Nooksack Tribe and the Whatcom County Executive. Additionally, 15 community members will be appointed by the County Council with special consideration given to members from under-represented communities and diverse backgrounds.

The Child and Family Well-being Task Force will consider best practices and make recommendations to the County Council, Executive, Health Board, and other appropriate officials regarding issues related to young child and family well-being.

The task force is asked to embed principles of equity, family engagement and results-based approaches into their work and accomplish the following:

- Develop recommendations for County infrastructure to promote child and family well-being
- Develop recommendations for adoption of a "children and families first" approach for County policy and funding decisions across all departments
- Develop recommendations to promote shared governmental and community accountability for child and family results
- Develop recommendations for coordination and enhancement of existing county initiatives focused on issues impacting young children and their families
- Develop recommendations for new, or enhancement of existing, funding streams to support child and family programs and services that are aligned with desired results.

The task force will begin convening in early February and will initially meet every two weeks. We would like to have our membership set for the task force by January 31st. The Health Department is taking the lead on forming this task force. Please reach out to Judy Ziels from the Health Department at 360-778-6130 or jziels@whatcomcounty.us to inform her of who will be participating on the task force as a representative of the City of Bellingham.. You can also contact her with any questions you may have about the task force.

Thank you for supporting this important work.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barry Buchanan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Barry Buchanan
Whatcom County Council Chair

c: Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council
Correspondence file
Judy Ziels, Health Department

JZ(Health Dept.)/BB