

Whatcom County Council Finance and Administrative Services Committee

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



Committee Minutes - Draft Minutes

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

10:20 AM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

**HYBRID MEETING - MAY BEGIN EARLY/LATE - ADJOURNS BY 11:00 A.M.
(PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT
www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR CALL 360.778.5010)**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Elizabeth Boyle
Barry Buchanan
Ben Elenbaas
Kaylee Galloway
Jessica Rienstra
Jon Scanlon
Mark Stremler

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

Call To Order

Committee member Barry Buchanan called the meeting to order at 10:42 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Barry Buchanan, Elizabeth Boyle, Jessica Rienstra, Ben Elenbaas, Kaylee Galloway, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremler

Announcements

Special Order of Business

1. [AB2026-006](#) Nomination and appointment of Committee Chair
Buchanan moved and Galloway seconded to nominate Scanlon for Chair.

Scanlon spoke about the nomination and work he would like to do as the chair.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

Scanlon stated they are allowing for up to two vice chairs and *moved* to appoint Rienstra and Boyle.

The motion was seconded by Buchanan.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, Stremler, and Boyle

Nay: 0

Councilmembers started to consider the Consent Agenda and then asked if they will need a second in committee now that there are seven members. Galloway had moved to approve the Consent Agenda but withdrew it so they could discuss and vote on this issue.

Cathy Halka, Clerk of the Council, stated it would be up to the body to make a choice on that procedure.

Kimberly Thulin, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, stated they are not

required to have a second.

Galloway moved and Scanlon seconded that in their committees they require a motion and a second for each item for consideration.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremmler

Nay: 0

APPOINTMENT MOTION SUMMARY:

This agenda item was APPOINTED and other motions were approved.

MOTION 1 and 2:

Appointed Scanlon as Chair and Boyle and Rienstra as Vice Chairs

MOTION 3:

Motion approved that, in their committees, the Council require a motion and second for each item for consideration.

Council "Consent Agenda" Items

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

The motion was seconded by Rienstra.

Councilmembers asked questions about the following items:

Consent Agenda item #2 (AB2026-009)

Mark Personius, Planning and Development Services Department Director, answered questions on how permitting costs are covered and gave background on this item. He stated they have budget authority under a separate additional service request (ASR) so there will not be any additional impact on the General Fund. The fees, however, are not fully recovered in the permit application and it is a cost the County bears any time there is an appeal.

Consent Agenda item #6 (AB2026-024) PART 1

Elenbaas stated he would like more information on this item from the Sheriff's Office but there was no one available from that department (see further discussion on this item below and in OTHER BUSINESS).

Consent Agenda item #8 (AB2026-019)

Boyle stated the contract states that it does not require Council approval and asked then why they need to approve it.

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office, stated that is a small error on the contract information sheet, and stated all interlocal agreements require Council approval.

Consent Agenda item #6 (AB2026-024) PART 2

Elenbaas asked whether the County is paying the salary for training people at the facility.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, stated one of our deputies was assigned to the academy and the County is asking for the wages back. If they were not working here, they were doing work at the academy to train people, and we are supposed to receive their wages back from the academy because there are other counties that come for training.

Councilmembers asked whether the agreement holds two spaces for us to send people to the academy, and what the operational impact is to the Sheriff's Department, but they waited to get answers from the Sheriff's Office (see OTHER BUSINESS below).

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

1. [AB2026-001](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Washington State Health Care Authority to provide Medicaid-related outreach and linkage activities to Whatcom County residents as a fee for service agreement, without a not-to-exceed amount

Galloway moved and Rienstra seconded that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Boyle, Rienstra, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

2. [AB2026-009](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Cascadia Law Group PLLC to provide legal advice and services regarding SEPA procedures in relation to permit applications submitted by Petrogas in the amount of \$50,000 for a total amended contract amount of \$150,000

Galloway and Rienstra seconded moved that the Contract be

RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Boyle, Rienstra, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

3. [AB2026-012](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a Collective Bargaining Agreement between Whatcom County and General Teamsters Union Local No. 231 for the period of January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2028

Galloway moved and Rienstra seconded that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Boyle, Rienstra, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

4. [AB2026-020](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a Collective Bargaining Agreement between Whatcom County and the Deputy Sheriff's Guild for the period January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2028

Galloway moved and Rienstra seconded that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Boyle, Rienstra, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

5. [AB2026-018](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Axon Enterprises to add 36 months to Axon's proprietary cloud-based storage, software, and professional services, and to replace 90 cameras and 12 docking stations, in the amount of \$236,734

Galloway moved and Rienstra seconded that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Boyle, Rienstra, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

6. [AB2026-024](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission to reimburse salary and related benefit costs for an instructor at the Arlington Regional Law Enforcement Academy, in the estimated amount of \$200,000 for 2026

Galloway moved and Rienstra seconded that the Interlocal be

RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Boyle, Rienstra, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

7. [AB2026-013](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Ferndale Youth Sports for Northwest Fields Renovations Project capital improvements funded by the Lodging Tax, in the amount of \$109,140

Galloway moved and Rienstra seconded that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Boyle, Rienstra, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

8. [AB2026-019](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the Washington State Military Department for What-COMM Equipment (Prime contract in pass-through mechanism to City of Bellingham), in the amount of \$94,107

Galloway moved and Rienstra seconded that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Boyle, Rienstra, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

9. [AB2026-022](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Stryker Corporation to increase EMS equipment assigned to the EMS Captain at Whatcom County Fire District 7 in the amount of \$23,414 per year for the last five years of the 10-year contract, for a total amended contract amount of \$668,595

Galloway moved and Rienstra seconded that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Boyle, Rienstra, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2025-854](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham to eliminate funding for three

lateral paramedic positions, decreasing the contracted amount by \$224,823 for a total amended contract amount of \$783,619

Scanlon stated this item has a substitute.

Debbie Arthur, EMS Administrator, briefed the councilmembers on the contract. She stated this item was on the December agenda but was removed because the City of Bellingham wanted the opportunity to change some of the language. This is a variable cost contract that includes the educational costs for the paramedics. The line item for bringing in experienced (lateral) paramedics this year was removed from the budget and contract for 2026. She answered questions.

Galloway moved and Boyle seconded that the SUBSTITUTE Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Boyle, Rienstra, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremmer

Nay: 0

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

The following people joined the meeting and so the councilmembers went back to the questions around Consent Agenda item #6 (**AB2026-024**) regarding the criminal justice training center:

- Steve Harris, Undersheriff
- Donnell Tanksley, Sheriff

They discussed with councilmembers that there is a one hundred percent reimbursement of wages and benefits and it covers all of the salary costs when the deputy was at the academy, that it allows academy spots for Whatcom County that they would otherwise not have access to, that it does have an effect operationally but makes up for that with the ability to get people into the academy, that the salary they are not paying will hopefully go into the department's budget savings for 2026 and help cover additional training costs for sending people to the regional academy, and that it is a great opportunity to have a representative from Whatcom County's Sheriff's Office not only teaching a new generation of law enforcement officers in Washington State but also learning state of the art practices.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:09 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Jon Scanlon, Committee Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger