

Whatcom County Council Committee of the Whole

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



Committee Minutes - Final

Tuesday, November 9, 2021

2:50 PM

Virtual Meeting

VIRTUAL MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 4:45 P.M. (TO PARTICIPATE, SEE INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil OR CALL 360.778.5010)

COUNCILMEMBERS

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

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Council Chair Barry Buchanan called the meeting to order at 2:50 p.m. in a virtual meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 6 - Rud Browne, Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, Ben Elenbaas, and Carol Frazey

Absent: 1 - Kathy Kershner

Announcements

Special Presentation

1. [AB2021-651](#) Presentation from Health Department, Human Services Division staff to review interim shelter options over the winter season

The following people presented:

- Erika Lautenbach, Health Department Director
- Ann Beck, Health Department

Beck answered where people should check in for winter shelter, whether the facility at 1013 West Holly Street would only open if there is a particular weather trigger, and the shelter capacity this year compared to last year.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2021-395](#) Discussion and periodic update of the Shoreline Management Program
Cliff Strong, Planning and Development Services Department, briefed the Councilmembers and he and the following people answered questions:

- Ryan Ericson, Former Planning and Development Services Department staff
- Mark Personius, Planning and Development Services Department Director

They answered questions about projects listed in Exhibit J, whether there is a trigger for starting those projects, how they keep focus on items that are on the list, a request sent to Council (via email on this date) from the Building Industry Association of Whatcom County to delete the term “professional membership” from the proposed changes to Whatcom County

Code 16.16.900 Definitions item number 7 under the definition of “Qualified professional,” and whether the public hearing for the related resolution should be held open until the final ordinance adopting and effecting the update is on the agenda for consideration.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

2. [AB2021-656](#) Discussion of proposed options for financial assistance to Point Roberts
The following people briefed the Councilmembers and answered questions:

- Tyler Schroeder, Executive's Office
- Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
- Jed Holmes, Administrative Services Community Outreach Facilitator

Councilmembers and the speakers discussed looking into distributing money from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) fund to the 59 people in Point Roberts whose unemployment benefits ran out, directing some of the funds to pay the utility to make up for late water payments, whether unique types of businesses that are not covered would be covered with option three, limiting help with utilities to people who actually live in their houses, and how many numbers of people crossed the Canadian border yesterday now that it is opening.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

3. [AB2021-645](#) Discussion of the County Executive’s recommended 2022 Biennium Budget Adjustments
The following people briefed the Councilmembers and answered questions:

- Tyler Schroeder, Executive's Office
- Satpal Sidhu, County Executive

Councilmembers and the speakers discussed a suggested change to create a County Buildings Fund under the Capital Facilities Fund and maybe dedicating one percent of the General Fund or using the budget lapse to fund it. Sidhu answered questions about the recently passed Federal infrastructure bill and how it might affect the County.

Schroeder spoke about the infrastructure bill, and how money might be allocated.

Councilmembers and the speakers discussed the proposed new fund, how it should be funded, whether the related ordinance would have to be

re-introduced if the Council makes changes after the Water Work Session next week, when they should discuss FTE changes, possibly scheduling a special meeting, and Councilmembers providing topics to the Administration by November 16 that they would want to discuss on the 23rd (regular meeting date).

Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council, answered questions about possible special meeting dates.

Frazezy stated she attended the exit interview for the audit and acknowledged the excellent work of the County's Finance Department.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2021-612](#) Discussion and request for motion regarding County Council meeting broadcast on Bellingham public access television (BTV) and streaming on YouTube

Cathy Halka, Council Legislative Analyst, briefed the Councilmembers.

Councilmembers discussed the issue, whether they have had communication from the City Council or from the Mayor's Office, how citizens access meeting information, who is making the decision not to air the meetings on BTV, and whether they should send a letter to the Bellingham City Council.

Councilmembers concurred that Browne would draft a letter to the City Council.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

Browne stated that about this time last year they approved the budget on the condition that they would do a merger of the 9-1-1 services and suggested they allocate time at the next Council meeting to do a presentation on the results of that.

Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council, asked if he would like it to be in the evening meeting or during the day and Browne stated he would like it to be in the evening meeting in two weeks.

Councilmembers discussed whether the discussion should be in the evening meeting or in Committee and the history of the issue, and Browne amended the date to December 7, 2021.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

The County Council approved these minutes on November 23, 2021.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

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