

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, January 25, 2022

3:10 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

Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan
Ben Elenbaas
Carol Frazey
Kaylee Galloway
Kathy Kershner

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Council Chair Todd Donovan called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m. in a virtual meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, Ben Elenbaas, Carol Frazey, Kaylee Galloway, and Kathy Kershner

Absent: None

Announcements

Special Presentation

1. [AB2022-064](#) Report on transitioning GRACE/LEAD to the Health Department.

The following people presented and answered questions:

- Dean Wight, Health Department
- Erika Lautenbach, Health Department Director
- Daniel Hammill, Bellingham City Council
- Rachel Lucy, Peach Health St. Joseph Medical Center
- Eric Richey, Whatcom County Prosecuting Attorney
- Mike Hilley, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Manager
- Kathleen Roy, Health Department

They answered whether they have an estimate of how much costs would increase for the County, how much the programs were costing when the County was contracting them, whether they anticipate cost expenses to be reduced in any other areas of the County budget that might offset the increase in costs for this work, how much of the \$2.6 million overall program budget will be covered by other funding sources, how much the cost of the programs have increased on average each year over the last five years, the anticipated year over year increase if it is internalized, whether the current vendor is not capable of billing Medicaid, whether paying more to the contractor within the contract would create the incentive necessary for them to set up the appropriate billing structures, whether there would be specific cost savings that the County would only receive by internalizing the programs, the plan for staffing the programs going forward, whether the \$650,00 program cost increase includes the systems manager position discussed earlier, and what the time constraints are for this transition.

This agenda item was REPORTED.

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2021-209](#) Resolution regarding permanent affordability of childcare in Whatcom County
- Frazey* briefed the Councilmembers and *moved* to recommend approval of the “Revised Resolution for 1.25.2022 Agenda” as a recommendation to use the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The motion was seconded by Galloway.

Frazey answered how this revised Resolution is different than what has been looked at in the past.

The following people discussed the item with the Councilmembers.

- Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council
- Tyler Schroeder, Executive's Office
- Allison Williams, Health Department

Councilmembers and the speakers discussed whether the Resolution was voted on in the past, whether the proposed amount of \$22.25 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for these priorities would be consistent with percentages of that fund previously discussed, the priorities listed in Exhibit A, how the County can make zoning more inclusive to require that new developments include a childcare or family service center, whether they should take the budget items for 2022 (the investment for capital facilities and the investment in workforce development) to the Child and Family Well-Being Task Force and develop some plans to implement those dollars, whether the revised Resolution was included in the Council packet, recognizing the work and recommendations of the task force and whether it should be sent back to the task force, whether the priorities listed in the Exhibit should be amended, whether the Resolution should be amended to include what has been pre-determined by Council to be the ARPA allocation amounts, and using language that uses Exhibit A as a guiding document and not a binding document.

Galloway began to make a motion to amend the Resolution as follows:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the funds received through ARPA in the amounts of \$5.5 million for child care; \$3.5 million to support construction of previously determined capital investment projects and \$2 million to support the child care workforce be allocated to permanent solutions using Exhibit A as guidance.

Councilmembers concurred to sort out the language before tonight's meeting and continued to discuss the Resolution.

Frazey withdrew her motion.

This agenda item was FORWARDED TO COUNCIL WITHOUT A RECOMMENDATION.

Special Order of Business

1. [AB2022-063](#) Letter to Commissioner of Public Lands and Washington State Board of Natural Resources regarding proposed Bessie Sorts Timber Sale

Galloway updated the Councilmembers and they discussed the item with the following people:

- Michael Feerer, Whatcom Million Trees Project
- Chris Elder, Public Works Department
- Gary Stoyka, Public Works Department

They discussed the differences between the first and subsequent letters and what the Council's ask is, an email sent by Elder to Council regarding "Additional information re: AB2022-063," whether the forest industry is asking the Council to pause the sale, where the recommendation to pause is coming from, the age of the trees as reported by the Department of Natural Resources, where the proposed area is located, and whether the proposed letter is time sensitive.

Councilmembers concurred they would return to the discussion at tonight's Council meeting.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

The County Council approved these minutes on February 8, 2022.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Todd Donovan, Council Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

SIGNED COPY ON FILE