

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, May 13, 2025

10:30 AM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 12:00 P.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE
REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR
CALL 360.778.5010), AGENDA REVISED 5.9.2025**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

Call To Order

Committee Chair Todd Donovan called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, and Barry Buchanan

Also Present: Ben Elenbaas, Kaylee Galloway, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremler

Announcements

Council "Consent Agenda" Items

Donovan spoke about an email he sent this week, given some events that were in the media and some previous issues with not getting full information from the Prosecutor, and spoke about his concerns with the Council having only the Prosecutor's Office for legal advice. He stated maybe it is something they can talk about in Committee of the Whole today.

Buchanan moved to recommend approval of Consent Agenda items one through seven.

Stremler stated he had questions on Consent Agenda item #2 (**AB2025-354**) and the following people answered them:

- Sarah Simpson, Health and Community Services
- Allison Williams, Health and Community Services

Simpson read from a presentation (on file) on the contract amendment for Mobile Mama Therapies, and outcomes of the contract they are amending. She and Williams answered whether fathers can also access help from the program and what other services would be available for a father. Williams stated they just serve mothers, but they would connect a father to services or refer out. The same would be true for a parent whose needs could not be served with Mobile Mama.

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

1. [AB2025-347](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into Amendment No. 1 of the Interagency Agreement between Whatcom County and the Washington State Department of Health to provide additional funding for the Whatcom County Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) Program, in the amount of \$1,536,380 for a total

amendment amount of \$3,015,374 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)

Buchanan moved that the Contract (FCZDBS) be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

2. [AB2025-354](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Mobile Mama Strategies, Inc to administer a mental health internship pilot project in the amount of \$133,100, for a total amended contract amount of \$297,335

Buchanan moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

3. [AB2025-360](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service for reimbursement of overtime patrols, in the amount of \$21,900

Buchanan moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

4. [AB2025-363](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Siemens Industry, Inc. to provide the 2025 - 2027 Service Agreement for HVAC Service, in the amount of \$120,096 plus applicable Washington State Sales Tax

Buchanan moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

5. [AB2025-364](#) Request approval for the County Executive to authorize the purchase of radios,

related installation parts, and programming, using the Washington State Contract #00318, in an amount not to exceed \$100,000 per calendar year for 2025 and 2026

Buchanan moved that the Bid Award be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

6. [AB2025-369](#) Request approval for the County Executive to authorize the purchase of a RapidHIT™ ID Sytem, using the Washington State Contract #20722. The vendor is Thermo Fisher Scientific/Life Technologies Corporation, and the total cost for this purchase will not exceed \$210,784.83

Buchanan moved that the Bid Award be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

7. [AB2025-370](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Bode Technology for DNA training, analaysis, and result storage, in the amount of \$70,000

Buchanan moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

Special Presentation

1. [AB2025-289](#) Presentation by the Western Washington University Small Business Development Center

The following Small Business Development Center team members read from a presentation (on file):

- CJ Seitz,
- Eric Grimstead
- Liliana Deck

The spoke about statistics for businesses they advised in 2024, other things

they do to support the small business community beyond advising, client stories, trends and observations (related to cross border traffic, concerns about tariffs, labor costs, access to capital, and entrepreneurial spirit), and what information is in their quarterly reports. They answered what the landscape looks like for Federal and State funding for their work and for the programs that support businesses in our community, and spoke about the uncertainty of Federal and State funding.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

2. [AB2025-319](#) Report from the Facilities Division of the Administrative Services Department

Rob Ney, Administrative Services Department Facilities, read from a presentation (on file) about completed projects including:

- Judge Anderson's courtroom remodel in District Court
- Work on the courthouse roof as part of the larger multi-year courthouse exterior project
- Conversion of conference room 513/514 to a space to be used as a water adjudication courtroom for the short term and then a new Superior Court courtroom and a judge's chambers and offices
- Jail kitchen equipment replacement
- The Judge Olson courtroom ADA door project to replace non-ADA-compliant double doors with a single door

He spoke about projects that are underway including:

- A generator at their facilities on Williamson Way
- Conversion of the former I.T. space on the 3rd floor of the courthouse into new Superior Court courtroom
- Work on the 400 North Commercial facility to house I.T.
- A remodel of the Unity Street building for Health Department offices
- The Assessor's office minor remodel
- The installation of safety glass in Superior Court

He also noted the ongoing Northwest Annex and Jail facility projects.

This agenda item was REPORTED.

3. [AB2025-349](#) Presentation regarding new fees to be added to the Unified Fee Schedule for Business Hazardous Waste Management and Disposal at the Disposal of Toxics Facility

Jennifer Hayden, Health and Community Services, briefed the councilmembers on the addition of fees to the Unified Fee Schedule. They will be assuming operational control of the disposal of toxics facility starting July first and need to add fees to the Unified Fee Schedule in order

for the County to be able to charge for hazardous waste disposal. She answered questions about the service.

The following people answered whether the Council has authority in changes to the Unified Fee Schedule:

- Kimberly Thulin, Prosecuting Attorney's Office
- Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office

Pennucci spoke about how the Unified Fee Schedule is typically amended and stated approving bringing this service in-house was part of the budget process, but they missed incorporating the fee schedule.

Hayden answered why the County is taking the operations in-house and spoke about a feasibility study reported on in July of 2024. She stated they will still be using the contractor at the facility but will only be using them for transport and disposal rather than the entire facility operations.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2025-356](#) Discussion of an ordinance authorizing interfund loans to finance cash flow for county road fund up to \$4 million for a term not to exceed two years

The following people read from a presentation (on file) explaining why this ordinance is needed, the pattern of deficit spending and the structural imbalance of the fund, unanticipated and other major expenses, and strategies to address the cash flow imbalance:

- Elizabeth Kosa, Public Works Department Director
- Doug Ranney, Public Works Department

They discussed with councilmembers the strategy of freezing 14 vacant positions, that the proposed ordinance would allow them to loan money to the Road Fund from another fund in order to do needed work this year (for Beach Avenue slide repair on Lummi Island and the Everson Goshen repaver project from Smith to Pole Road) then give the money back once they get reimbursement from the State, that both of the aforementioned projects will be covered with State and Federal funds at nearly 100 percent, and how long the loan would have to be carried.

The following additional people answered questions:

- Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
- Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office

They spoke about what the impacts would be to the General Fund, that it may not be that fund that gets used, and that they could forward their recommendation for the fund to the Council when they make it to the Treasurer's Office.

Scanlon asked whether Council would want to amend the ordinance to add something into the final "Therefore" clause that Council shall be notified.

The administration agreed that it could be added and brought as a substitute ordinance for tonight's introduction.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

2. [AB2025-366](#) Discussion of proposed Whatcom Agriculture Research Station project

This agenda item was WITHDRAWN.

3. [AB2025-367](#) Discussion of an ordinance amending the 2025 Whatcom County Budget, request no. 5, in the amount of \$1,053,510

Donovan stated they could return to this item in the evening meeting (because of time constraints).

This agenda item was NOT ACTED UPON.

Items Added by Revision

1. [AB2025-373](#) Request council review and approval of the Economic Development Investment Board's recommendation for funding of the Port of Bellingham's property acquisition for the development of a Washington Agricultural Research Station

Tyler Schroeder, Port of Bellingham Economic Development Director, read from a presentation on the history of the funding request, the agriculture economy in Whatcom County, details of the property acquisition and funding, the facility operators, letters of support received, and where the facility will be located.

Buchanan moved that the Special Executive Only Item be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Todd Donovan, Committee Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger