

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, October 7, 2025

9:20 AM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 10:05 A.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON,
SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil,
OR CALL 360.778.5010); AGENDA REVISED 10.6.2025**

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 9:20 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 Stremmer

Announcements

Council "Consent Agenda" Items

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

Donovan stated he would like to consider Consent Agenda item number 13 (**AB2025-697**) separately.

Byrd stated he would like to consider Consent Agenda item number 10 (**AB2025-691**) separately.

Stremmer asked questions about item number 2 (**AB2025-670**) and the following people answered:

- Chris D'Onofrio, Health and Community Services
- Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office

D'Onofrio spoke about this lease compared to last year's and stated it is very similar.

Schott-Bresler spoke about a separate companion contract with the tenant for property management services.

D'Onofrio spoke about the role of the property owner as it relates to the shelter.

Councilmembers voted on Consent items 1-9, 11, 12, and 14 (see votes on individual items below).

1. [AB2025-669](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families to administer the Nurse Family Partnership Program, in the amount of \$393,195

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

2. [AB2025-670](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Lutheran Community Services Northwest to lease a facility intended for use as a severe weather shelter, in the amount of \$66,455

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

3. [AB2025-671](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Geosyntec Consultants, Inc. to provide adjudication technical assistance, in the amount of \$105,000 (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

4. [AB2025-675](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and GeoTest Services, Inc. in the amount of \$50,000 for a total amended contract amount of \$250,000

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

5. [AB2025-683](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a lease agreement between Whatcom County and Squalicum Mountain Holdings LLC to lease space on a radio tower on Squalicum Mountain, in the amount of \$135,841

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

6. [AB2025-686](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Northwest Educational Services District 189 to participate in the Youth Cannabis and Commercial Tobacco Prevention Program, in the amount of \$12,000

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

7. [AB2025-687](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Snohomish County to participate in the Youth Cannabis and Commercial Tobacco Prevention Program, in the amount of \$45,000

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

8. [AB2025-689](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and San Juan County to participate in the Youth Cannabis and Commercial Tobacco Prevention Program, in the amount of \$29,000

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

9. [AB2025-690](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a lease agreement amendment between Whatcom County and Lookout Mountain Holdings LLC to add equipment to the radio tower lease, in the amount of \$36,269

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

vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

10. [AB2025-691](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an agreement between Whatcom County and the Whatcom Land Trust to provide funding from the Conservation Futures Fund to fulfill requirements of the Purchase and Sale Agreement for the Whatcom Land Trust to acquire Phase 2 of the Stewart Mountain Community Forest, in the amount of \$200,000

This item was considered separately below.

11. [AB2025-692](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a lease agreement amendment between Whatcom County and SpectraSite Communications, LLC to add equipment to the radio tower lease, in the amount of \$24,969

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

12. [AB2025-695](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Washington Traffic Safety Commission for high visibility enforcement (HVE) traffic safety emphasis overtime patrols, in the amount of \$28,000

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

13. [AB2025-697](#) Resolution amending Resolution 2025-021 to designate the Chair of the Council Finance Committee as an Alternate Director to the Risk Pool Board of Directors

This item was considered separately below.

14. [AB2025-698](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Communications NorthWest to configure, install and provide point to point microwave network installations, in the amount of \$159,224

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

Council "Consent Agenda" Items Considered Separately

10. [AB2025-691](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an agreement between Whatcom County and the Whatcom Land Trust to provide funding from the Conservation Futures Fund to fulfill requirements of the Purchase and Sale Agreement for the Whatcom Land Trust to acquire Phase 2 of the Stewart Mountain Community Forest, in the amount of \$200,000

Donovan moved that the Agreement be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 1 - Byrd

13. [AB2025-697](#) Resolution amending Resolution 2025-021 to designate the Chair of the Council Finance Committee as an Alternate Director to the Risk Pool Board of Directors
- Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office, briefed the councilmembers and stated this is part of the Council's work to ensure that the Council and public are getting information regarding any risk-related settlements. Council is also considering amending the code (see **AB2025-575** in Council) to ensure that council members have a role in the interdepartmental team in the risk pool work as one way to have better coordination between all of the branches. She spoke about the administrative nature of the Risk Pool Board and stated the Administration's recommendation is to move forward with the proposed code changes (AB2025-575), see if that addresses the problem, then revisit this resolution in the future if needed.

***Donovan moved* that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL.**

Pennucci stated this resolution is different than the ordinance on the agenda for consideration tonight, so they might want to reconsider the motion and delay this action.

***Donovan withdrew* his motion.**

Councilmembers discussed tabling this resolution.

Donovan moved to recommend that the Resolution be TABLED INDEFINITELY. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2025-679](#) Discussion of an ordinance amending the project budget for the New Public Health, Safety and Justice Facility, request no. 9

Rob Ney, Administrative Services Department Facilities, stated the request in front of councilmembers is to increase Facilities' budget authority for the Justice Facility Project in the amount of \$2,960,000 for necessary wetland mitigation on the justice facility site. He stated they will do their due diligence now so that, if they come to conclusion on the site, they can proceed forward with the mitigation easement. He stated it would come out of the jail tax levy.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.
2. [AB2025-684](#) Discussion of an ordinance establishing the Silver Lake Lagoon Project Fund and establishing an initial budget for the Silver Lake Lagoon Bridge Fund

Bennett Knox, Parks and Recreation Department Director, briefed the councilmembers on the proposed ordinance.

Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office, stated this is using REET funding and they have prioritized looking at projects that are addressing safety issues. This will address an issue with the bridge as well as try to find a solution to maintain the trail connectivity. While the County is still doing a full review of the capital program, Council will see some projects coming through that are addressing safety issues or priority projects for the departments. The Administration is, however, scrutinizing each one.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.
3. [AB2025-688](#) Discussion of an ordinance amending the 2025 Whatcom County Budget, request no. 11, in the amount of \$517,671

Randy Rydel, Administrative Services Department Finance Director, briefed the councilmembers on the funds being impacted by the request and the dollar amount for each one.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.
4. [AB2025-703](#) Discussion of a resolution amending the 2025 Flood Control Zone District and Subzones Budget, request no. 4, in the amount of \$49,400

Ingrid Enschede, Public Works Department, briefed the councilmembers and stated this has a net zero impact to the Flood Control Zone District budget and she summarized the request.

Clerk's note: Enschede offered a correction to part of her briefing later in the meeting after the vote on AB2024-704.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Items Added by Revision

1. [AB2025-704](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Ferndale Community Services to operate a severe weather shelter in Ferndale, in the amount of \$145,993

The following people answered questions:

- Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office
- Ann Beck, Health and Community Services
- Chris D'Onofrio, Health and Community Services

They discussed with councilmembers that this site in Ferndale was also used for a shelter last winter, and that the cost for this is more than the contract with Lutheran Community Services Northwest because that one is just for a lease, but the County is also providing the operational activities for this one, so most of the funding is for the staff who will be operating the shelter.

D'Onofrio spoke about the amount of the contract and confirmed that most of the funds here (\$103,993) are Commerce Consolidated Homeless Grant dollars.

Councilmembers voted on this item (see motion and vote below), then Ingrid Enschede, Public Works Department, offered a correction to her earlier briefing on **AB2025-703**.

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

Other Business

Stremmer spoke about the use of Road Fund dollars for storm events and stated he spoke to the Executive's Office about what could be done instead

of having that fund be hit so hard.

Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office, spoke about the idea of a risk reserve, that the executive is proposing to create in the Non-Departmental Fund, that could be used for that type of unbudgeted expense. It would help ensure that funds (like the Road Fund), that are stressed in terms of their fund balance, are not left to independently address those issues.

Other Business was discussed.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:51 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Todd Donovan, Committee Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger