

Whatcom County Council Special Committee of the Whole

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



Committee Minutes - Draft

Tuesday, April 1, 2025

9 AM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 9:55 A.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE
REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil OR
CALL 360-778-5010)**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan
Ben Elenbaas
Kaylee Galloway
Jon Scanlon
Mark Stremmler

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

Call To Order

Council Chair Kaylee Galloway called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, Ben Elenbaas, Kaylee Galloway, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremler

Announcements

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2025-277](#) Discussion of councilmember policy priorities and council meeting procedures
Galloway introduced a discussion about potential changes to the way items are introduced and referred to committees. Under the current order of operations, an item gets introduced and then it is scheduled in the relevant policy committee at the next meeting, which makes a recommendation to the Council for action at the evening meeting. If substantive changes are needed, an item must be reintroduced. Galloway stated that her recommendation would be to hear items in committee prior to introduction.

Galloway moved to change the order of operations so that they hear (agenda) items (ordinances and resolutions requiring an ordinance-like process) in committee prior to introduction.

Byrd seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Byrd asked for clarification regarding what agenda items need to be introduced.

Cathy Halka, Clerk of the Council, stated that ordinances require introduction, as do some appointments and resolutions. The official path is to introduce, then, at the subsequent meeting, schedule the item for discussion in committee and action at the evening meeting. However, there is sometimes a deviation from this path so that items are discussed in committee prior to introduction.

Galloway clarified that her intention is to standardize the process for ordinances and resolutions, not appointments.

Elenbaas asked whether an official change to code is necessary.

Halka stated that she does not recommend making a change to code but rather an administrative change to be reflected in the meeting minutes.

Councilmembers discussed the process for scheduling time-sensitive items.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremmler

Nay: 0

Councilmembers discussed proposed changes to Whatcom County Code (WCC) 2.02, including ending regular evening Council meetings at 10 p.m.

Elenbaas stated that he does not support changes to WCC 2.02, and suggested changes could be internal policies and expectations rather than changes to code.

Galloway spoke about suggestions for potential changes to Open Session, such as limiting speakers to two rather than three minutes, requiring sign up, and limiting Open Session to two or three hours.

Councilmembers discussed the proposals.

Galloway asked whether councilmembers wanted to continue discussion of changes to meeting procedures or move to discussion of councilmember priorities.

Stremmler stated that he introduced the proposal to add a new section to WCC 2.02 because he hears from the public how much they appreciate councilmembers attending meetings in person and because comments are sometimes made that probably don't need to be made about councilmember meeting attendance.

Councilmembers discussed meeting attendance policies, including remote participation.

Galloway stated she wanted to give councilmembers an opportunity to think about individual and collective priorities. She suggested that councilmembers continue to organize the priority list (on file) and submit additional items to the Clerk.

Byrd stated that the first quarter of 2025 is already done, and by the time they get through the list, they will be halfway through the year. He suggested identifying two or three items now that councilmembers can focus on for the next few months.

Scanlon stated that Council should focus solely on budget during the mid-biennium review rather than trying to accomplish many other items.

Galloway stated her interest in holding regular, informal policy discussions in the future.

Byrd suggested councilmembers rank items on the priority list prior to the next meeting.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

Motion approved 7-0 that they change the order of operations (for agenda items) so they hear items (ordinances and resolutions that require an ordinance-like process) in committee prior to introduction.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:57 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Kaylee Galloway, Council Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Jenna Gernand