

Whatcom County Council Public Works & Health Committee

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



Committee Minutes - Final

Tuesday, February 7, 2023

1:20 PM

Hybrid Meeting

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 2:20 P.M.; MAY BEGIN EARLY
(PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON AT 311 GRAND AVENUE SUITE 101, SEE REMOTE
JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR CALL
360.778.5010)**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Carol Frazey
Kaylee Galloway
Kathy Kershner

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Committee Chair Kathy Kershner called the meeting to order at 1:20 p.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Carol Frazey, Kaylee Galloway, and Kathy Kershner

Absent: None

Also Present: Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, and Ben Elenbaas

Announcements

Special Presentation

1. [AB2023-117](#) Briefing from the Health Department's Communicable Disease and Epidemiology Division

The following people presented and answered questions:

- Cindy Hollinsworth, Health Department
- Zac Doobovsky, Health Department
- Nicole Miller, Health Department
- Erika Lautenbach, Health Department Director
- Lela Riherd, Health Department
- Greg Thompson, Co-Health Officer

They answered whether we have programs to get vaccines to people that are without housing, why there has been a 24 percent decrease in vaccine compliance rates for children in Whatcom County, whether the Health Department is offering any sexual health programs such as birth control as part of the needle exchange program, and whether the service can be added in some capacity (even an hour a week) until the Way Station opens.

Kershner thanked Hollinsworth for her service since she is retiring.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2023-105](#) Discussion regarding Whatcom County Code 10.34, Ferry Rates
Elizabeth Kosa, Public Works Department Acting Director, briefed the Councilmembers on a draft of proposed code changes (on file).

She answered whether multi-ride passes would be valid for up to 60 calendar days of the adopted date of the ordinance plus three months after the rate change takes effect, why they would give that three month grace period and not just let the rate change be the rate change and allow people to use their cards as credit for purchasing the new card at the new rate, how that 60-day/three month time frame would work if they update the fares annually, how people would get credit for an old punch card, and whether the dolphins would now be capital or operating expense under the proposed definitions.

Rich Hudson, Senior Master of the Whatcom Chief Ferry, answered whether the record keeping for crediting old punch cards would be a burden for staff.

Galloway stated she likes the idea of being able to use an existing card as credit toward a new card, but suggested the language in Section 10.34.020 Subsection M be made more clear.

Kosa continued the briefing and she and Randy Rydel, Public Works Department, explained the total expense (operating costs and maintenance expenses) equation and what things they subtract off the top from the total operating and maintenance expense before they figure what needs to be covered by the 55 percent fare box recovery rate and the Road Fund.

Kosa stated they are going to ask the Council to postpone the fare increase and the public hearing until they find out if they are able to get American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and if they do code changes, both of which could change what the fare model would look like.

Galloway suggested adding clarification language to Section 10.34.020 Subsection H or Subsection N that travelers under age 12 are free fare.

Donovan asked whether this committee recommended this be held until March 7 and whether the committee should recommend to the Council that it be held to a particular date. Kershner stated it was held until March 7, 2023 because the Administration wanted time to get back to us on whether or not ARPA was a potential funding source.

Kosa stated when they find out the answer to the funding question on the seventh there is a lot of work to be done and she recommends they hold it past the March seven date to give Public Works time to work on the fare model and code changes.

Rydel answered questions about the proposed added language in Section 10.34.030 which states, “The fare box recovery rate shall be applied to the adjusted total operating expenses,” and whether it is a policy change.

Galloway asked whether the language in Section 10.34.030 regarding an annual review of ferry system services would also include an annual update presented to Council by Public Works or the Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee (LIFAC) with their recommendations.

Kosa answered questions about the 75 percent floor and ceiling of the year-end balance for triggering fare changes, and whether there is a reason why we do not do annual increases based on inflation or at a fixed percentage.

Galloway thanked Public Works for their leadership and asked whether LIFAC would send their recommendations and feedback before they consider this again.

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 2:23 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Kathy Kershner-via email 2/10/2023

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Kathy Kershner, Committee Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

SIGNED COPY ON FILE