

Whatcom County Council Finance and Administrative Services Committee

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



Committee Minutes - Final

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

9:35 AM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

**AGENDA REVISED 1.27.2025 - HYBRID MEETING (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON,
SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil,
OR CALL 360.778.5010)**

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 9:35 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

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2025-126](#) Discussion regarding committee agenda procedures

Donovan stated this discussion is about how they can do work in the committees that might speed things up in the evening meeting.

Cathy Halka, Clerk of the Council, stated the process for scheduling agenda items is attached to this file.

Donovan stated that Councilmembers see what the Executive is sending to them on Thursday before the Tuesday meeting which only gives Council a couple days to talk to staff about items on the agenda. He would like to get more lead time on upcoming items.

Councilmembers discussed the time they have to interact with agenda items before the meetings, maybe holding items they do not get to in committee so staff does not have to be present in the evening, and looking at the threshold for contracts to be approved by the Council.

Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office, spoke about her study of contract thresholds. She stated she could come to the next Finance and Administrative Services Committee meeting with some of that analysis and how it plays out at different threshold levels if Council raises the threshold. She could also talk about additional reporting they could offer on contracts so that Council would continue to have oversight.

Councilmembers discussed using the committee to hold items so it clears space in the evening meetings, meeting with the Administration about upcoming agendas, and maybe incorporating data about outcomes and performance indicators for contracts into the Finance Committee on a regular basis.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

2. [AB2025-130](#) Discussion regarding committee action procedures as described in Whatcom County Code Section 2.02.085 Committee Action

Councilmembers discussed code language in Whatcom County Code Section 2.02.085 that describes actions that can be taken in committee and minority reports, and how Councilmembers make motions in committee.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Council "Consent Agenda" Items

Buchanan moved to recommend approval of Consent Agenda items one through 14.

Byrd stated he would like to consider Consent Agenda item numbers 13 (**AB2025-090**) and 14 (**AB2025-119**) separately.

Elenbaas spoke about the previous agenda item and why he might want staff available in the evening meetings.

Councilmembers asked questions on the following Consent Agenda Items:

Consent Agenda Item #12 (AB2025-088)

Ann Beck, Health and Community Services, answered where the County is on spending, given that the City of Bellingham is going to give the County \$150,000 once the County has expended \$450,000. She stated they do not have those numbers right now but anticipate they will max out their \$450,000. She answered questions about the wording of the contract and explained that the County is utilizing a consolidated homeless grant and the City of Bellingham's contribution is local dollars, so the City wanted to make sure the money coming to the community to serve homeless housing programs was being expended. She spoke about utilization of the severe weather shelter and challenges they are facing.

Consent Agenda Item #3 (AB2025-076)

Malora Christensen, Health and Community Services, stated the funding amount listed in the packet for this item is incorrect.

Cathy Halka, Clerk of the Council, recommended that Council take no action on this item in committee or in council. Council staff will work with Health and Community Services staff to reschedule it for February 11 with the correct information and attachments.

Donovan stated he would like to vote on this item separately so they can hold it.

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

1. [AB2024-866](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Washington State University to continue the jointly shared costs for faculty positions and program support for WSU Whatcom County Extension in the amount of \$282,257 for a total amended contract amount of \$3,542,793.90

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

2. [AB2025-050](#) Resolution cancelling uncollectible personal property taxes

Buchanan moved that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

3. [AB2025-076](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization to provide behavioral health services within the North Sound Integrated Care Network in the amount of \$206,191, for a total amended contract amount of \$3,127,031

This item was considered separately below.

4. [AB2025-077](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a two-year contract between Whatcom County and the Whatcom Council on Aging for staffing and operation of the Bellingham Senior Activity Center, in the amount of \$174,182

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. [AB2025-078](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a two-year contract between Whatcom County and the Jet Oldsters Association of Ferndale for staffing and operation of the Ferndale Senior Activity Center, in the amount of \$174,182

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. [AB2025-079](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a two-year Interlocal Agreement between Whatcom County and the City of Blaine for staffing and operation of the Blaine Senior Activity Center, in the amount of \$174,182

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. [AB2025-080](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a two-year Interlocal Agreement between Whatcom County and the City of Lynden for staffing and operation of the Lynden Senior Activity Center, in the amount of \$174,182

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. [AB2025-083](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Lifeline Connections to provide Mental Health Court case coordination services in the amount of \$15,000, for a total amended contract amount of \$25,000

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

9. [AB2025-084](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment

between Whatcom County and Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center in the amount of \$36,000 for a total amended amount of \$64,000

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

10. [AB2025-086](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an agreement between Whatcom County and Tyler Technologies, Inc. (Tyler) to migrate our Tyler Enterprise Permitting and Licensing (EPL) system to the Tyler cloud and to provide ongoing annual hosting and maintenance in the amount of \$344,215.46 per year starting in 2025

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

11. [AB2025-087](#) Resolution to approve annual petition for refunds paid list consistent with RCW 84.69.020

Buchanan moved that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

12. [AB2025-088](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and City of Bellingham to provide partial funding for the severe weather shelter, in the amount of \$150,000

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. [AB2025-090](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Peace Centers to implement a coordinated system of licensed drop-in childcare within Whatcom County, in the amount of \$499,921

This item was considered separately below.

14. [AB2025-119](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Sustainable Connections in support of their Whatcom Housing Alliance coordination in the amount of \$50,000

This item was considered separately below.

Council "Consent Agenda" Considered Separately

3. [AB2025-076](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization to provide behavioral health services within the North Sound Integrated Care Network in the amount of \$206,191, for a total amended contract amount of \$3,127,031

Buchanan moved to hold until February 11 then ***withdrew*** his motion.

Byrd moved that this item be recommended to table.

Councilmembers voted on the motion and then continued to discuss the item (see vote after the discussion).

Malora Christensen, Health and Community Services, answered whether this contract contains any federal money that is at risk (because of recent Federal actions) or whether the money is already in the hands of the recipient, and stated the substance abuse block grant dollars are Federal block grant funds but they have not heard anything official.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, stated they will share information with the Council when they get it.

Byrd's motion that the Contract be RECOMMENDED TO TABLE carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

13. [AB2025-090](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Peace Centers to implement a coordinated system of licensed drop-in childcare within Whatcom County, in the amount of \$499,921

Donovan moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION.

Byrd stated he was thinking this was a different contract.

Sarah Simpson, Health and Community Services, stated this contract is between Peace Centers and Whatcom County to run a drop-in care center. Peace Centers is an early learning and care program here in the county.

Donovan's motion that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

14. [AB2025-119](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Sustainable Connections in support of their Whatcom Housing Alliance coordination in the amount of \$50,000

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

Aye: 2 - Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 1 - Byrd

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2025-046](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the Attorney General of Washington for cy pres funding, in the amount of \$125,000

This agenda item was WITHDRAWN.

2. [AB2025-089](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to expand and retain childcare slots in Whatcom County, in the amount of \$411,631

***Buchanan moved* that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION.**

Sarah Simpson, Health and Community Services, answered whether there is a mechanism in place that will assess whether the contract resulted in the creation of the stated number of childcare slots, and stated Health and Community Services has contractors report periodically to provide them with results in order for the County to properly evaluate the success of the program.

Byrd spoke about distrust with the Opportunity Council because he has heard from Opportunity Council staff that they are being classified as

working in childcare programs so that their wage is covered by the Federal or State funding they are getting for those programs, even though the staff do not actually do anything in childcare.

George Roche, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, answered whether there is any risk in Council pursuing a discussion about misallocation of funds.

Erika Lautenbach, Health and Community Services Director, stated the Opportunity Council's ledger that they submit to the Health and Community Services Department for reimbursement is down to the level of reporting hours of staff that do the allocated work. They are very detailed.

Simpson stated Council will get a more comprehensive presentation in the Public Works and Health Committee today from the Center for Retention and Expansion of Child Care staff so they can learn more about the program.

Buchanan's motion that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION carried by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 1 - Byrd

3. [AB2025-092](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into the GCB 3207 Public Works Emergency Response Assistance Mutual Aid Agreement between Whatcom County and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)

Donovan moved that the Agreement be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION.

Roland Middleton, Public Works Department, briefed the Councilmembers.

Donovan's motion that the Agreement be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

4. [AB2025-107](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a two year contract between the Bellingham Food Bank and Whatcom County to help address food insecurity in the amount of \$1,445,000

Buchanan moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION.

Scanlon spoke about why the \$50,000 grant from the Washington State

Department of Agriculture was not included in this contract since it was part of the \$1.5 million for which Council advocated for the Food Bank Network last year. He stated it is because the grant was sent directly to the Food Bank Network.

Donovan stated the bulk of this funding is from the Community Priorities Fund, which is the remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars, and only \$276,000 of this comes from the County's General Fund.

Buchanan's motion that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

Buchanan stated he reached out to the executive director of the North Sound Behavioral Health Organization regarding the Federal pause on grants as it relates to Consent Agenda item number 3 (**AB2025-076**), and stated they have an email in to the health care authority and it is pending an answer.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:12 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Todd Donovan-via email 2/24/2025

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Todd Donovan, Committee Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger

SIGNED COPY ON FILE