

# **Whatcom County Council Public Works & Health Committee**

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



## **Committee Minutes - Draft Minutes**

**Tuesday, June 9, 2026**

**1:30 PM**

**Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers**

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 1:50 P.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE  
REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT [www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil), OR  
CALL 360.778.5010)**

### **COUNCILMEMBERS**

Elizabeth Boyle  
Barry Buchanan  
Ben Elenbaas  
Kaylee Galloway  
Jessica Rienstra  
Jon Scanlon  
Mark Stremler

### **CLERK OF THE COUNCIL**

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

## **Call To Order**

Committee Chair Elizabeth Boyle called the meeting to order at 1:30 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

## **Roll Call**

**Present:** 7 - Elizabeth Boyle, Barry Buchanan, Ben Elenbaas, Kaylee Galloway, Jessica Rienstra, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremler

## **Announcements**

## **Special Presentation**

1. [AB2026-447](#) Presentation from the Health and Community Services Department on the Whatcom Kids First Subsidy Program budget

Sarah Simpson, Health and Community Services Department, read from a presentation (on file) updating councilmembers on the Whatcom Kids First Subsidy Program, that a contract has been awarded to Aidkit Inc. to develop and implement a localized child care provider rate augmentation and family subsidy program, what we are providing to the community through the program, and that Health and Community Services' original recommendation to move their subsidy eligibility threshold from 75 to 85 percent of the state median income (SMI) and to provide a rate augmentation for children 0-3 had to be adjusted because the State did not move their subsidy threshold up to 75 percent as was planned.

She answered if they have calculated how much it would cost if they were to cover up to the 85 percent and how many kids that would serve, and stated it was a significant amount (around \$1 million or more) and would serve fewer kids than expected (150-200). She discussed with councilmembers how much families might get in the state program depending on their income, caution in using some of the Healthy Children's Fund balance for the purpose of raising the threshold and that it may be better used for capital expenses or other things down the road, that the next capital request for proposal is not planned yet but will hopefully be in the next six months, that they are talking about narrowing the implementation plan strategies as they align the new plan with the budget cycle, that this program falls under the strategy of making child care more accessible, that Aidkit will hold the work of promoting the State's Working Connections Child Care program, and that Council is inviting Simpson to come back in July to have a more thorough conversation about the status of the Health Children's Fund.

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office, and Simpson answered if they

need a motion from the Council and stated this is an update to the Council letting them know that this is how they Plan to administer the program, and they will bring the contract forward when it is ready, hopefully within the next two months.

Boyle thanked Scanlon for asking about the numbers (the possibility of a higher threshold) and stated she would have concerns about going much higher than the nearly \$3.5 million final recommended yearly cost since \$4.5 million would be nearly half of their annual budget.

Councilmembers and Simpson discussed if the Healthy Children’s Fund might get reimbursed for funding that went out to assist families with children during the flood since a disaster was declared, two related contracts that have since been fully executed, who will be helping Aidkit in their work, and the types of families that fit into the 60-75 percent threshold which they will be supporting. Simpson stated she will get a more accurate number for the cost of raising the threshold to 85 percent of the SMI as discussed earlier in the meeting.

**This agenda item was PRESENTED.**

**Items Added by Revision**

There were no agenda items added by revision.

**Other Business**

There was no other business.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:54 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

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Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

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Elizabeth Boyle, Committee Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger