

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 27, 2026

9:25 AM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

**HYBRID MEETING - MAY BEGIN LATE - ADJOURNS BY 10:55 A.M.
(PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT
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 Jon Scanlon called the meeting to order at 9:25 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

Council "Consent Agenda" Items

There was a question on the following agenda item:

Consent Agenda Item #7 (AB2026-067)

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office, answered what the increased gallon size of the water storage tank might allow for, and stated they would need to follow up on that.

Galloway moved to recommend approval of Consent Agenda items one through eleven. Councilmembers voted on the Consent items (see votes on individual items below).

1. [AB2026-044](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center for Family Mediation Services, in the amount of \$70,000 for a total amended contract amount of \$135,000

Galloway moved and Scanlon seconded that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

2. [AB2026-052](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham to amend the hourly rate of public safety radio repair from \$125 to \$150

Galloway moved and Scanlon seconded that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

3. [AB2026-056](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a grant agreement between Whatcom County and the Washington State Department of Ecology for Whatcom Marine Resources Committee (MRC) operations and projects, in the amount of \$147,000 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)

Galloway moved and Scanlon seconded that the Contract (FCZDBS) be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremmer

Nay: 0

4. [AB2026-057](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Pacific Security to continue to provide Courthouse screening services, in the amount of \$90,000

Galloway moved and Scanlon seconded that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremmer

Nay: 0

5. [AB2026-058](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Birch Bay Water and Sewer District to coordinate the relocation of a segment of a water line and the construction road culvert, in the amount of \$0 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)

Galloway moved and Scanlon seconded that the Contract (FCZDBS) be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremmer

Nay: 0

6. [AB2026-059](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Pacific Security to continue evening patrol services of outside county buildings, in the amount of \$99,960

Galloway moved and Scanlon seconded that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremmer

Nay: 0

7. [AB2026-067](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the Maple Falls Water Cooperative for water storage tank replacement, in the amount of \$555,300

Galloway moved and Scanlon seconded that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

8. [AB2026-070](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an amendment to an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham regarding the Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission on Sexual and Domestic Violence

Galloway moved and Scanlon seconded that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

9. [AB2026-077](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center for supervised visitation services, in the amount of \$115,000, for a total amended contract amount of \$226,000

Galloway moved and Scanlon seconded that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

10. [AB2026-090](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to grant a utility easement to Puget Sound Energy across park property for underground electrical services to a private residence located off Blue Canyon Road in South Lake Whatcom

Galloway moved and Scanlon seconded that the Agreement be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

11. [AB2026-096](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a Collective Bargaining Agreement between Whatcom County and the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Management Group for the period January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2027

Galloway moved and Scanlon seconded that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2026-097](#) Discussion of an ordinance closing the Northwest Annex Redevelopment Fund Discussion item numbers 1, 2, and 5 (**AB2026-097, AB2026-099, and AB2026-105**) were discussed out of agenda order and together.

Rob Ney, Administrative Services Department Facilities, stated the package they are asking approval for today has money coming from many different sources including the NW Annex project, which they would close out if they purchase a building, from the Hovander Park project, and from EDI and REET money as well. He gave a history of the NW Annex redevelopment project to replace the current 100-year-old building on that site and the process of coming to an agreement with Western Washington University to purchase their administrative services building by Sehome Village. If they move forward with that purchase, they would move the County's Planning Department to the first floor of the building and would have about two and a half years (with Western still occupying the second floor) to figure out what they would do with the second floor. He spoke about the building, parking, and funding sources.

He answered questions about how they would address the storage needs that they were anticipating at the NW Annex site, and stated they would not change the storage until they have figured out what they would do with the NW Annex and looked at the options for the property. He answered questions about parking at the new site and what they can do to give Search and Rescue long term clarity on the NW property.

The following people also answered questions:

- Elizabeth Kosa, Public Works Department Director
- Bennett Knox, Parks and Recreation Department Director
- Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office

- Mark Personius, Planning and Development Services Department Director

They discussed with councilmembers that there is still a need for a round-a-bout at the intersection of Smith and Northwest (though the phasing of it will be different if they are not doing the annex project itself), concerns about the location of the new site in the city limits and what they can do to care for constituents in this transition, and what the impact will be on Hovander Park and the plans there.

Schott-Bresler answered whether the substitute version for **AB2025-104** (ordinance related to discussion item AB2026-105) is the preferred option and stated it is.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

2. [AB2026-099](#) Discussion of an ordinance amending the project budget for the Hovander Park Building Improvements Project, request no. 4

See discussion on this item under AB2026-097.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

5. [AB2026-105](#) Discussion of an ordinance establishing the 32nd Street Property Acquisition Fund and establishing an initial budget for the 32nd Street Property Acquisition Fund

See discussion on this item under AB2026-097.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

3. [AB2026-101](#) Discussion of an ordinance establishing the Glacier Restroom Improvements Fund and establishing an initial budget for the Glacier Restroom Improvements Fund

Bennett Knox, Parks and Recreation Department Director, stated the Council previously voted to approve the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) recommendations and this is an outcome of that. It will improve the restroom facility located in Glacier and which serves the recreating community going up and down the corridor. He stated the project will be implemented over two years.

He and Christ Thomsen, Parks and Recreation Department, answered if it is necessary to have two public restrooms so close together since the Forest Service restrooms are just up the road. They spoke about the Glacier restroom having a continuous stream of visitors and that it is serviced often by the Parks Department, and that the Forest Service restrooms are not open when their visitor center is closed, while the Glacier restrooms are open 24 hours a day.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

4. [AB2026-103](#) Discussion of an ordinance amending the project budget for the New Public Health, Safety and Justice Facility, request no. 10

Rob Ney, Administrative Services Department Facilities, briefed the councilmembers and stated this amount of money would extend them through the end of the validation phase which is around June. At the end of validation, they are going to bring the Council proposals for the size and scope of the jail, and if that is approved, the project would go into the design phase. He answered if there is a place for people to see the financial progress on the project, and stated an information portal will be live soon and will have that information.

Jed Holmes, Executive's Office, stated they have quarterly financial reports that are already posted on the project website.

Ney explained what the validation process looks like and gave the example of remodeling a kitchen and all the decisions that would go into that.

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office, answered what the timing is for decisions on size of the jail. She stated size and budget are part of the validation process, and in the next committee today they are going to do a presentation on what that component of the validation process looks like and give Council some sense of the timeline for decision-making.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

6. [AB2026-112](#) Discussion of an ordinance amending the 2026 Whatcom County Budget, request no. 3, in the amount of \$7,123,065

Randy Rydel, Administrative Services Department Finance Director, briefed the councilmembers on the requests.

Gary Stoyka, Public Works Department, answered whether the request to fund demolition of structures on the Acme Floodplain is the project right along the South Fork of the Nooksack River, and stated it is, and the funds were re-appropriated from last year.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2026-047](#) Resolution accepting the Treasurer's list of petitions for property tax refunds
- Steve Oliver, County Treasurer, briefed the councilmembers, and stated the purpose of this is to provide a public record of the refunds that they have

issued from the Treasurer's Office.

Galloway moved and Rienstra seconded that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL.

Oliver answered whether this is about the same amount that it is every year, and stated it is a little higher, primarily due to the large amount of Board of Equalization value changes.

Galloway's motion that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

Temp Absent: 1 - Elenbaas

2. [AB2026-050](#) Resolution canceling uncollectible personal property taxes

Steve Oliver, County Treasurer, briefed the councilmembers and stated this is a list of taxes which the Treasurer's Office is asking the Council for authorization to cancel. He answered what the general process is for bankruptcy filings.

Galloway moved and Boyle seconded that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

Temp Absent: 1 - Elenbaas

3. [AB2026-066](#) Resolution updating the Whatcom County section of the 2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) project list appendix

Jake Logan, Executive's Office, briefed the councilmembers.

Galloway moved and Scanlon seconded that the SUBSTITUTE Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL.

Bennett Knox, Parks and Recreation Department Director, gave an update on the status and timeline for the Bay to Baker Trail (Kendall to Glacier section). He stated they are in the process of putting together the grant agreement with Washington State Department of Transportation and are looking to come back to Council in March. They are adding this project to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) so that they are eligible for

the grant agreement, and that will kick off an 18-month (maximum) planning process which will involve significant stakeholder engagement. He answered if maintenance is funded separately and spoke about the trail being a multi-modal trail and not just a foot path, which requires a different standard of care.

Galloway's motion that the SUBSTITUTE Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

Temp Absent: 1 - Elenbaas

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:24 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Jon Scanlon-via email 2/21/2026

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Jon Scanlon, Committee Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger

SIGNED COPY ON FILE