

**Whatcom County
Council Finance and Administrative Services Committee**

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



Committee Minutes - Draft Minutes

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

8:55 AM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 9:30 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 9:24 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

Rienstra stated she had a question on Consent Agenda item number 4 (AB2026-199).

Sue Sullivan, Health and Community Services, answered what prompted this request for authorization and if Public Utility District (PUD) numbers 2 and 3 have done similar agreements. She stated PUD number 1 is the only one that she is aware of that has the obligation to provide these services should a water system go into receivership. It was prompted by Resolution 1992-062, a request that the PUD be available as an agent for the county if a water system fails and goes into receivership, as deemed by the courts. They are just preparing in the event that that happens.

Galloway moved to recommend approval of Consent Agenda items one through four. The motion was seconded by Boyle. Councilmembers voted on the Consent items (see votes on individual items below).

1. [AB2026-174](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to award Bid #26-01 and enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Lake Union Drydock Company for drydocking, repair, and maintenance of the Whatcom Chief Ferry in the amount of \$891,918

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

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas, and Stremler

2. [AB2026-190](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and WSP USA, Inc to perform engineering and design services for the Everson-Nooksack Berms Project, in the amount of \$752,159.46 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)

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

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas, and Stremmler

3. [AB2026-192](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement amendment between Whatcom County and Washington State Department of Health to provide funding for various public health services in the amount of \$101,475, for a total amended agreement amount of \$11,229,797

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

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas, and Stremmler

4. [AB2026-199](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Public Utility District No. 1 of Whatcom County to outline the terms and conditions related to the operation and maintenance of water systems by the Public Utility District at the request of and as an agent for Whatcom County

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

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas, and Stremmler

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2026-170](#) Receipt of report on emergency contracts executed pursuant to the December 9, 2025 proclamation of emergency

Randy Rydel, Administrative Services Department Finance Director, read from a presentation (on file) regarding the emergency contracts that were executed under the December 9th emergency proclamation. No action is required from the Council. They are just presenting what would have otherwise come before the Council since that requirement was waived as per Whatcom County Code 3.08.100(A)(6). He spoke about contracts paid by the Solid Waste Fund related to flood-related debris removal, by the Department of Emergency Management Fund for basic needs, staffing and

volunteer coordination, and by Public Works for emergency repairs. He spoke about non-monetary contracts with the Army Corps of Engineers, granting them the ability to conduct \$575,000 worth of emergency repairs at no cost to the County, and the fiscal impact of all the emergency contracts to the County after the use of reserve funds and potential FEMA reimbursement.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

2. [AB2026-180](#) Discussion of ordinance amending the project based budget for the Swift Creek Capital Projects Fund, request no. 3

Scanlon stated there is a substitute ordinance for introduction tonight and there were no questions by councilmembers.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

3. [AB2026-182](#) Discussion of an ordinance amending the project budget for the Eagleridge Stormwater Improvements Project Fund, request no. 1

Scanlon stated the related ordinance (**AB2026-181**) is on the agenda for introduction tonight.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

4. [AB2026-201](#) Discussion of an ordinance closing the Bellingham Senior Center HVAC Replacement Fund

Scanlon stated the related ordinance (**AB2026-200**) is scheduled for introduction tonight and there were no questions by councilmembers.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

5. [AB2026-205](#) Discussion of an ordinance amending the 2026 Whatcom County Budget, request no. 5, in the amount of \$741,113

Scanlon stated the related ordinance (**AB2026-204**) is scheduled for introduction tonight. He referred to the February 24 discussion (see discussion on **AB2026-145** during the February 24 Finance and Administrative Services Committee) regarding the new Charter amendment about the Council receiving financial reports.

Randy Rydel, Administrative Services Department Finance Director, spoke about why this budget request is separate from Whatcom County Budget, request no. 6. He stated it is not normal to have two supplemental budget ordinances in the same Council meeting, but they split it up because they have not reported out to Council on quarter four financials. This ordinance is one that would be allowed to be adopted under the new guidance and supplemental number 6 is one that they believe at this time has no eligible

budget items that could be adopted. It is just in place for when the financial reports have turned over to Council. Both are on the Council's agenda for introduction

Steve Harris, Undersheriff, briefed the councilmembers on request number 5368 ("To fund firearms safety program using grant funds") regarding the settlement funds that are going to go to the Sheriff's Office for the voluntary firearm turn-in program, and that the largest hurdle that they have had to overcome is the acquisition of the gift cards they are going to give out in exchange for the firearms. He answered if this is a problem for other counties as well and whether we are learning from other counties on what they are doing. He stated they are facing the same hurdle. He answered whether there is a value distinction of firearms when they get turned in, and stated they do have designations (dollar amounts) for different types of firearms. He stated if a weapon has intrinsic value or could be used for training purposes they may potentially hold on to it, but otherwise the intent of the program is to destroy most of the weapons that come in.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

6. [AB2026-207](#) Discussion of an ordinance amending the 2026 Whatcom County Budget, request no. 6, in the amount of \$3,920,278

Scanlon stated this ordinance (**AB2026-206**) has items (ones marked with a "C" in the Summary Listing) that could be adopted if they receive the fourth quarter financial report prior to voting on the ordinance, and it is on the Council's agenda for introduction tonight.

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 9:51 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Jon Scanlon, Committee Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger