

Whatcom County Council Special Committee of the Whole

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



Minutes - Draft Minutes

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

9:15 AM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 10:15 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

Council Chair Kaylee Galloway called the meeting to order at 9:17 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

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

Announcements

Special Order of Business

1. [AB2026-003](#) Reorganization of the Whatcom County Council for 2026

Galloway stated they would be organizing their standing committees in each of the committee meetings today so they would be skipping that section for now (since the committees are now all seven members and they will only be deciding chairs).

Clerk's note: One appointment (Health Board) was held (via a vote below) until the Health Board meeting on February 3rd.

Council Chairperson (Acts as Chair of Council acting in other capacities,
Law Library Board, SWISS Exec. Committee, County Finance Committee)

Buchanan moved and Rienstra seconded to appoint Galloway as chair of the Council for 2026.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Council Vice-Chairperson

Stremler moved and Buchanan seconded to appoint Scanlon.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Executive Pro-Tempore (Cannot be on COG)

Scanlon withdrew from consideration.

Scanlon moved and Rienstra seconded to nominate Buchanan and Stremmler and vote for one.

Buchanan was appointed with five votes as follows:

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

Stremmler: 2 - Stremmler and Elenbaas

Standing Committee Chairs (per ORD2025-065 / 7-member committees, 1 chair - 2 vice chairs)

See note above that the chairs were decided in each of the respective committee meetings.

Other Committee AssignmentsLake Whatcom Policy Group

Scanlon moved and Boyle seconded to appoint Galloway and Rienstra.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Galloway asked if councilmembers would be interested in also appointing an alternate for each of the committees. Councilmembers discussed the suggestion and whether bylaws for the committees allow alternates. They appointed alternates for most committees.

Behavioral Health Advisory Committee

Rienstra withdrew from consideration for the lead and amended to be the alternate.

Scanlon moved and Boyle seconded to appoint Buchanan as the lead and Rienstra as the alternate.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Bellingham International Airport Advisory

Scanlon moved and Rienstra seconded to appoint Stremmer (no alternate).

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce

Rienstra withdrew from consideration and Stremmer stated he could serve as an alternate.

Scanlon moved and Rienstra seconded to appoint Boyle as the representative and Stremmer as the alternate.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Business and Commerce Advisory Committee (non-voting)

Scanlon stated he could be the alternate.

Rienstra moved and Buchanan seconded to appoint Stremmer as the lead and Scanlon as the alternate.

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

Nay: 0

Child and Family Well-Being Task Force

Rienstra stated she could be the alternate.

Scanlon moved and Stremler seconded to appoint Boyle as the lead and Rienstra as the alternate.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Climate Impact Advisory Committee Appoint ONE-Non-Voting (**3-year term) AB2022-021

Scanlon moved and Boyle seconded to appoint Galloway (no alternate).

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Council of Governments (COG) Appoint TWO members to serve on the Full Council (cannot be Exec Pro-Tem)

Galloway withdrew from consideration.

Stremler moved and Boyle seconded to appoint Rienstra and Scanlon.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Council of Governments (COG) Appoint ONE of the above two members to also serve on Transportation Policy Board (cannot be Exec Pro-Tem)

Galloway withdrew from consideration as alternate.

Scanlon stated he could be the alternate.

Scanlon moved and Boyle seconded to appoint Rienstra as the lead and Scanlon as the alternate.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Developmental Disabilities Board

Rienstra moved and Buchanan seconded to appoint Boyle (no alternate).

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Drayton Harbor & Portage Bay Shellfish Protection Districts

Elenbaas stated it would be better for him to be an alternate and Scanlon stated he could be the lead.

Boyle moved and Rienstra seconded to appoint Scanlon as the lead and Elenbaas as the alternate.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

EDI Board (changed to 1 CM per AB2024-870)

Boyle stated she could serve as the alternate.

Buchanan moved and Scanlon seconded to appoint Stremler as the lead and Boyle as the alternate.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

EMS Oversight Board Representative

Galloway stated they would consider this and the EMS Oversight Board Alternate Representative position together.

Rienstra withdrew from consideration and Elenbaas stated he would like to stay involved with this committee but is OK with being the alternate.

Rienstra moved and Scanlon seconded to appoint Galloway as the lead representative and Elenbaas as the alternate.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

EMS Oversight Board Alternate Representative

See vote on this item above.

Flood Control Zone Committee (Ex Officio)

Elenbaas withdrew from consideration and Stremmler stated he could be the alternate.

Boyle moved and Scanlon seconded to appoint Rienstra as the lead and Stremmler as the alternate.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Forest Advisory Committee (non-voting per AB2025-120)

Elenbaas stated he would like be on this committee and Galloway stated she could be the alternate.

Boyle moved and Buchanan seconded to appoint Elenbaas as the lead and Galloway as the alternate.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Health Board Chair

Councilmembers discussed whether a vice chair is in the Health Board bylaws or in County Code and Elenbaas stated he could be the vice chair.

Scanlon stated he thinks they should take the vote as the Health Board and **moved** to hold this appointment (for chair and vice chair) until the first Health Board meeting (on February 3rd).

The motion was seconded by Boyle.

Scanlon stated he would look into the procedures for potentially appointing a vice chair.

The motion to hold carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force (And Appoint one alternate)

Boyle stated she could be considered as an alternate and Elenbaas withdrew from consideration.

Rienstra moved and Scanlon seconded to appoint Buchanan as lead and Boyle as the alternate.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Intergovernmental Tribal Relations Committee (Appt. TWO)

Elenbaas spoke about why he would like to continue to be on this committee.

Scanlon stated this is an area in which they need some leadership from the Executive's Office.

Galloway stated San Juan County developed a framework for government-to-government relations with their tribes and that might be a starting point to develop something more formal.

Boyle withdrew from consideration.

Boyle moved and Scanlon seconded to nominate Elenbaas, Rienstra, and Scanlon and vote for two.

Rienstra and Scanlon were appointed as follows:

Scanlon: 6 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Rienstra: 5 - Stremmer, Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, and Rienstra

Elenbaas: 3 - Stremmer, Elenbaas, and Scanlon

No alternate was appointed.

Justice Project Oversight and Planning Committee (JPOP)

Boyle stated she would like to be considered for the alternate.

Scanlon moved and Rienstra seconded to appoint Buchanan as the lead and Boyle as the alternate.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Justice Project Finance and Facility Advisory Board

Rienstra moved and Scanlon seconded to appoint Buchanan (no alternate).

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Joint Advisory Workgroup for Justice Project planning purposes
(AB2025-699)

Buchanan stated the request from the Executive's Office is that there be three councilmembers for this committee.

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office, stated that was true. She spoke about the current members and answered questions about the schedule for the committee.

Galloway added herself for consideration, Boyle withdrew from consideration, and Elenbaas stated he could be an alternate.

Rienstra moved and Boyle seconded to appoint Buchanan, Galloway, and Stremler.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

LEOFF Board

Boyle moved and Stremler seconded to appoint Buchanan (no alternate).

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)

Elenbaas and Rienstra spoke about why they would like to be on this committee and Rienstra stated she could be the alternate.

Scanlon moved and Boyle seconded to appoint Elenbaas as the lead and Rienstra as the alternate.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Whatcom County Ferry Advisory Committee - Appoint ONE non-voting attendee

Elenbaas stated he would be fine being an alternate.

Scanlon spoke about a new County ferry caucus for counties that run their

own ferries and advocacy in the State and Federal Legislature.

Rienstra moved and Scanlon seconded to appoint Scanlon as the lead and Elenbaas as the alternate.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Marine Resources Committee

Galloway nominated herself.

Boyle moved and Rienstra seconded to appoint Galloway (no alternate).

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) (AB2023-194)

Rienstra withdrew from consideration.

Boyle moved and Scanlon seconded to appoint Buchanan (no alternate).

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

North Sound Behavioral Health Exec. Committee

Rienstra stated she could be an alternate.

Scanlon moved and Boyle seconded to appoint Buchanan as the lead and Rienstra as the alternate.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Northwest Clean Air Agency

Stremler withdrew from consideration.

Elenbaas spoke about why he would like to be the lead serving on the committee.

Scanlon stated appointing Elenbaas gives him pause because he is regulated by the agency in his work.

Rienstra moved and Scanlon seconded to nominate Galloway and Elenbaas with a vote of one.

Galloway was appointed by the following vote:

Galloway: 4 - Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Boyle

Elenbaas: 3 - Elenbaas, Stremler, and Buchanan

Northwest Regional Council (NWRC)

Boyle moved and Scanlon seconded to appoint Stremler.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Opportunity Council - Appointment not subject to Council annual re-org
(Kaylee Galloway serves on this committee until 1/2028)

Galloway stated she currently serves on this committee and was recently reappointed so her term runs through January of 2028. No other

appointment was made.

Public Defense Advisory

Boyle stated she would like to be considered as an alternate.

Scanlon moved and Rienstra seconded to appoint Elenbaas as the lead and Boyle as the alternate.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Public Health Advisory Board

Boyle moved and Rienstra seconded to appoint Scanlon.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Racial Equity Commission Appoint ONE-non-voting (** 2 year term) AB2022-590

Stremmer moved and Scanlon seconded to appoint Galloway as lead and Rienstra as the alternate.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Solid Waste Advisory

Scanlon moved and Rienstra seconded to appoint Stremler.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

SWISS Alternate Committee Member. Council Chair serves on Exec. Committee

Councilmembers discussed their and other commissioner's involvement on this committee and that more of them could attend.

Boyle moved and Scanlon seconded to appoint Scanlon.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

WSAC Alternate Board Member (The Executive is the active representative, Councilmember is alternate)

Galloway stated she would like to continue as the alternate.

Rienstra stated she could serve as the WSAC Optional Alternate Board Member (see next appointment on the list).

Boyle moved and Scanlon seconded to appoint Galloway to as the WSAC Alternate Board Member (this item) and Rienstra as the WSAC Optional Alternate Board Member (next item).

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

WSAC Optional Alternate Board Member (Res2019-008)

This item was voted on in the previous motion above.

WSAC Legislative Steering Committee

Galloway stated she would like to continue as lead and Rienstra has requested to be alternate.

Scanlon moved and Stremmler seconded to appoint Galloway as the lead and Rienstra as the alternate.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

WSAC Timber Counties Caucus - Optional

Galloway stated she would like to continue as the lead.

Scanlon stated he would be interested in being the alternate.

Stremmler moved and Rienstra seconded to appoint Galloway as the lead and Scanlon as the alternate.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

WSAC Coastal Counties Caucus - Optional

Boyle moved and Rienstra seconded to appoint Galloway (no alternate).

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Scanlon, Stremmler, Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, and

Rienstra
Nay: 0

Whatcom Transportation Authority (appoint 2 councilmembers per bylaw)

Boyle moved and Scanlon seconded to nominate Buchanan, Boyle, Rienstra, and Stremler and vote for two.

Buchanan and Rienstra were appointed by the following vote:

Buchanan: 5 - Stremler, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, and Scanlon

Rienstra: 4 - Boyle, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Stremler: 3 - Stremler, Buchanan, and Elenbaas

Boyle: 2 - Boyle and Rienstra

Whatcom County Tourism Board (AB2023-194)

Boyle stated she could be the alternate.

Buchanan moved and Boyle seconded to appoint Galloway as the lead and Boyle as the alternate.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

This agenda item was NOMINATED AND APPOINTED.

Motion approved to hold on the appointment of Health Board Chair and Vice Chair until the first Health Board meeting on February 3.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:33 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Kaylee Galloway, Council Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger