

Whatcom County Council Committee of the Whole

**COUNTY COURTHOUSE
311 Grand Avenue, Ste #105
Bellingham, WA 98225-4038
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Committee Minutes - Draft Minutes

VIRTUAL MEETING - ENDS NO LATER THAN 5 P.M.

Tuesday, September 29, 2020

3:25 PM

Virtual Meeting

COUNCILMEMBERS

Rud Browne
Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan
Ben Elenbaas
Carol Frazey
Kathy Kershner

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Council Chair Barry Buchanan called the meeting to order at 3:25 p.m. in a virtual meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Rud Browne, Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, Carol Frazey, Ben Elenbaas and Kathy Kershner

Absent: None

Announcements

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2020-219](#) Discussion and update on strategies and other items related to COVID-19 (Council and Health Board)

Tyler Schroeder, Executive's Office, briefed the Councilmembers on updated allocations of CARES Act dollars for the County and the City of Bellingham and contract amounts for how the money will be spent. He highlighted an additional amount of \$4.5 million in CARES Act dollars for local government operations with recommended budget and buckets for the Council to consider.

Erika Lautenbach, Health Department Director, updated the Councilmembers on the following:

- The Public Health portion of the additional \$4.5 million dollars: The funds are retroactive to March 27, 2020 but must be spent by the end of the year. Almost half of the money will stay in Whatcom County government.
- The housing and human services response: They want to make sure they are also supporting behavioral health providers.
- Use of the allocation for school technology.
- A recent outbreak at a long-term care facility in Whatcom County and whether they know how the outbreak happened.
- Work with Steve Bennett from Western Washington University on a social marketing campaign geared toward younger people.

Dr. Steve Bennett, Western Washington University, briefed the Councilmembers on the social marketing campaign and what they learned from a Whatcom County survey.

He and Lautenbach answered questions about how to best get messages out, how to fund messaging efforts, how to help people understand how to

practice non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPI) with friends and family, whether there is a bench mark or baseline data for the rate of anxiety and depression in youth prior to COVID-19, and whether spending money to tell people that our response is the right response will make a statistical difference in the outcome.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, asked Dr. Bennett to describe similar past campaigns.

Bennett answered whether there is data for the exact sources of confirmed cases.

Kershner spoke about using CARES Act dollars on measures that will help us get back to normal such as getting County staff working forty hours a week again without furloughs.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

2. [AB2020-345](#) Discussion of proposed Cherry Point amendments

Councilmembers discussed an emailed request for more time to work on the amendments, getting the greenhouse gas mitigation standards back in, getting clarity on the refinery language, dealing with all the suggested changes at one time, inviting the Pipeline Safety Trust to the conversations and scheduling a public work session with the interested parties to work on the suggested amendments.

Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council, answered whether they could schedule such a work session.

Elenbaas moved that the Council gather their concerns for Cherry Point amendments and then schedule a work session and invite all interested parties to join. The motion was seconded by Browne.

Councilmembers discussed the motion, when concerns for consideration would need to get submitted to the Clerk of the Council and whether all concerns have already been submitted.

Matt Aamot, Planning and Development Services Department, stated staff would like the group to look at the definition of fossil fuel transshipment facilities in Exhibit B, page 32, Section 20.97.160.3; restoring the definition of facility emissions in the Zoning Code (Section 20.97.124.1); and a question about the connection between change of use and the zoning scheme of permitted uses, conditional uses, and prohibited uses.

Councilmembers discussed Aamot's questions with him, having more time to submit additional comments, maintaining a public process, and whether to set a deadline to submit comments.

Donovan listed the concerns that are currently on the table.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Donovan, Elenbaas, Frazey, Kershner, Browne, Buchanan, and Byrd

Nay: 0

Browne moved to extend an invitation to the Pipeline Safety Trust. The motion was seconded by Byrd.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Buchanan suggested a friendly amendment that it just be a recommendation that the group includes them.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Browne accepted the friendly amendment.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Elenbaas, Frazey, Kershner, Browne, Buchanan, Donovan

Nay: 0

Out of the Meeting: 1 - Byrd

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

3. [AB2020-382](#) Discussion regarding Council Office contracts for 2021

Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council, briefed the Councilmembers.

Councilmembers discussed whether Council meetings should still be aired on BTV-10.

Cathy Halka, Council Legislative Analyst, briefed the Councilmembers on the options for Hearing Examiner services. She answered what the requirements are for being the Hearing Examiner and why the person is not an elected official.

Karen Frakes, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, answered a question about the requirement that the Hearing Examiner be an attorney.

Halka stated she is looking for feedback on whether the Council Office

should bring forward a contract amendment including a five percent reduction in pay for Hearing Examiner services for the 2021 year.

Donovan suggested they move forward with a contract amendment as described in the packet and Councilmembers (except for Elenbaas) concurred.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription