

Whatcom County Council Public Works & Health Committee

**COUNTY COURTHOUSE
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Committee Minutes - Final

Tuesday, February 25, 2020

1 PM

Council Chambers

COUNCILMEMBERS

Todd Donovan
Carol Frazey
Kathy Kershner

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Committee Chair Carol Frazey called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, Washington.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Carol Frazey, Todd Donovan and Kathy Kershner

Absent: None

Also present: Rud Browne, Barry Buchanan, and Ben Elenbaas

Special Briefing from the Health Department Concerning Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The following Health Department Staff gave an update on the Coronavirus (COVID-19):

- John Wolpers
- Mark Raaka
- Cindy Hollinsworth

They briefed the Councilmembers and answered questions about recently updated guidance documents from the Center of Disease Control (CDC) which include travel advisory updates for a couple of different countries and how to prepare for a potential pandemic. The Health department has a pandemic response plan that was used for the 2009 H1N1 outbreak which they are in process of updating. They are working with other agencies and looking at internal staffing capacity for expanded response needs.

They answered questions about coordination between agencies at the local level and who is taking direction from the CDC on potential non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPI) such as social distancing to slow down transmission, and how local government is being proactive and providing guidelines to agencies and the community.

Kershner requested that the Health Department come up with guidelines that can be shared with the public.

Discussion continued about educating the public on preventative and emergency preparedness measures, what authority the Health Department has for instructing pharmacies to accelerate a person's next prescription to ensure that they have an adequate supply on hand in the event of a pandemic situation, and what the treatment protocol looks like now or how it might look if there is an outbreak.

Special Presentation

1. [AB2020-096](#) Presentation regarding pipeline safety

Carl Weimer, Pipeline Safety Trust Executive Director, submitted and read from a presentation (on file). He highlighted the measures that local governments can take to lower pipeline incidents. He answered questions about whether Washington State has unregulated lines; how the Pipeline Safety Trust is funded and whether they offer grants to young engineers to help fund new inspection tools; how many of the significant pipeline incidents in Washington State within the last decade were due to human error as opposed to negligence; whether it's common for local governments that their first responders are prepared with gear to respond to an incident, whether they are trained to use the gear, and whether there are grants to pay for it; whether the regulations passed a decade ago which require people to call before excavation and to communicate with pipeline companies before adding developments have been effective; whether there are recommended buffers between pipelines and development; and whether there is leaking in the distribution pipelines in Bellingham.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

2. [AB2020-097](#) Update on the Lummi Island ferry

The following Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee (LIFAC) members submitted and read from a presentation (on file):

Rhayma Blake
Patricia Dunn

They highlighted the possibilities of funding the 30 million dollar project. The LIFAC recommendations are:

1. Maximize CRAB (County Road Administration Board) grant
2. Apply FHWA Ferry Grant to new ferry
3. Create a Capital Fare Surcharge
4. Create Ferry District and enact limited-time tax

Roland Middleton, Public Works Department, stated Public Works is in support of the LIFAC's recommendations and also recommends the formation of a work group with membership including two representatives from the Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee (Patricia Dunn and Rhayma Blake), two representatives from the Public Works Department (Jon Hutchings and Randy Rydell), Tyler Schroeder from the Executive's Office, and two representatives from the Council (Todd Donovan and Ben Elenbaas). He answered questions about funding sources and the timeline

for the steps needed to get the necessary funds; when a ferry district would need to be formed and how it would need to be formed depending on whether it's a countywide district or a limited area district; and whether the Lummi Nation has agreed with putting in a larger dock.

Cassandra Durkin, KPFF Consulting Engineers representative, answered questions about how they determined a projected 56 percent increase in ferry ridership.

Middleton continued answering questions about how much a mile-long road between ferry docks would cost; how to get the county residents on board with supporting a countywide ferry district; whether Birch Bay Watershed and Aquatic Resources Management (BBWARM) contributes to funding; and what the differences would be between this proposal and other project funding mechanisms.

Kershner moved to forward to the full Council the Public Works Department's recommendation to establish a work group with membership as described by Roland Middleton.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

Councilmembers and the presenters discussed whether the time frame should be to set up a ferry district and then figure out a funding mechanism later or set up a district and a funding mechanism at the same time, and looking at other options for the funding mechanism instead of a countywide ferry district.

Jon Hutchings, Public Works Department Director, wrapped up the discussion by stating he looks forward to working with the Council to find a solution.

This agenda item was PRESENTED AND A MOTION WAS APPROVED.

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2020-094](#) Resolution amending the membership of the Homeless Strategies Workgroup
Committee chair Frazey gave a background on the group and an update on the suggested membership changes.

Kershner moved that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR

APPROVAL by the full Council.

Cathy Halka, Legislative Analyst, answered questions about adding a representative of the developmental disability population and added clarification on the purpose of the group which is to respond to the immediate need for shelter as opposed to long term housing needs which are covered by the Whatcom County Housing Advisory Committee. She also stated that the law enforcement representation will change to two members.

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

Aye: 3 - Frazey, Donovan and Kershner

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:41 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Carol Frazey, Committee Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

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