

# **Whatcom County Council Committee of the Whole**

**COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
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## **Committee Minutes - Draft Minutes**

**VIRTUAL MEETING - MAY BEGIN EARLY;  
ENDS NO LATER THAN 5 P.M.**

**Tuesday, November 24, 2020**

**2:40 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 2:41 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

## Committee Discussion

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

Erika Lautenbach, Health Department Director, presented information on the screen and updated the Councilmembers on the following:

- Growth of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and testing
- Trends of COVID-19 cases, hospitalization, testing, and test positivity in both Whatcom and other counties
- A new single winter testing site in Lynden
- Whatcom County Health Department Testing prioritization

She answered questions about whether the Health Department will be able to keep up with the need for testing at one facility, where the breaking point is of the trends and what the plan is if we hit it, whether there is data that suggests that the virus is spreading in businesses that have recently been closed by government restrictions, whether it would be possible to issue and communicate data on transmission scenarios, whether the marketing campaign through Western Washington University has started and whether it should be targeted to a different audience, what parents can expect regarding sending children back to school, the status of County staff being back at work and whether any could be used to support the Health Department, the limiting factors on testing at the moment and whether there is anything the County can do to make the testing process more efficient, whether there is any alternative location to the single Lynden testing site, whether the Health Department is billing health care insurance for people getting tested but paying for people who do not have it, whether there has been an outbreak in the homeless population or concern about cases in the tent encampment site at Bellingham City Hall, whether family practitioners are still testing, whether there is a website that would guide people to the most appropriate testing site, whether people who will be traveling get a document to let them know if their test was positive or not, limiting who can be tested by the Health Department, and what is needed from the

Council at this time.

Anne Deacon, Health Department, answered whether base camp is full and why the population in the tent encampment is not being asked to go to base camp.

Buchanan shifted the discussion to the housing aspect of this agenda item.

Anne Deacon, Health Department, updated the Councilmembers on co-locating shelter services with isolation and quarantine at the Byron Street facility and the need to have two separate operations in order to qualify for reimbursement from FEMA. They are looking at costs to accomplish the task, how they will pay for it, and whether it is a good return on the investment since there would only be 15 rooms that could be used for shelter. She answered why quarantined guests at the Byron Street facility are treated differently than other people that test positive for COVID-19 by having a perimeter fence and a facility consultant, whether the County is requiring them to be there, and who is using the facility for isolation.

Buchanan updated Councilmembers on a recent Homeless Strategies Workgroup discussion about tiny home pallet shelters.

Tyler Schroeder, Executive's Office, spoke to the Councilmembers about procurement and administrative details they have been working out with the City of Bellingham. Once the site and operator are found and a plan is developed, they would be able to use those emergency preparations and emergency contracting methods to purchase sheltering for those locations. He answered whether there is a closing date on the Request for Quotations (RFQ) for an operator for safe encampments, the funding that can be utilized for the shelters and how the County can get money for reimbursable expenses.

Councilmembers continued to discuss the item, recommendations of the Homeless Strategies Workgroup, and moving forward in two phases of getting something on the ground in the short term then following up to provide longer term temporary housing. Councilmembers concurred that they will come back to this discussion later.

**This agenda item was DISCUSSED.**

2. [AB2020-484](#) Discussion of the County Executive's recommended 2021-2022 Biennium Budget  
This item was not discussed.

**This agenda item was DISCUSSED.**

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

Eddy Ury, Re Sources, started introductions of participants but in the interest of time, Buchanan asked that he skip the introductions. He briefed the Councilmembers and shared the Joint-Stakeholder Proposed Revisions on the screen:

**Approximate Timestamp: 01:56:51**

The following people discussed the document with Councilmembers and answered questions including whether there is consensus in the group on the proposed revisions and an update on discussions about greenhouse gas emissions:

- Eddy Ury
- Pam Brady, BP
- Tim Johnson, Phillips 66

**Approximate Timestamp: 02:02:37**

Councilmembers and the following people discussed what work still needs to be done by the Stakeholder group:

- Eddy Ury
- Brad Brown, Philips 66
- Matt Aamot, Planning and Development Services Department

**Approximate Timestamp: 02:07:44**

Councilmembers and the following people discussed possible dates for at least one more work session on December 8th or another day that week or the next week:

- Eddy Ury
- Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

**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 5 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

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Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

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Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

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Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription