

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

Wednesday, November 5, 2025

8:30 AM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 9:45 A.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE
REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR
CALL 360.778.5010); AGENDA REVISED 11.4.2025**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

Call To Order

Committee Chair Todd Donovan called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, and Barry Buchanan

Also Present: Ben Elenbaas, Kaylee Galloway, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremmer

Announcements

Council "Consent Agenda" Items

Buchanan moved to recommend approval of Consent Agenda items one through 21.

Councilmembers asked questions on some of the consent items.

Consent Agenda Item #2 (AB2025-741)

Ann Beck, Health and Community Services, spoke about the funding mechanism for this year's severe weather shelter. She stated they are bringing forward an interlocal agreement to be able to share some of the costs with the City of Bellingham and she spoke about a daytime warming center that the City is also working on. She answered what the County's projected budget will be, and stated they are expecting around the same (\$450,000) as last year.

Chris D'Onofrio, Health and Community Services, stated they have a new model this year and it is hard to predict expenses, but they could range between \$434,000 to \$517,000.

Consent Agenda Item #16 (AB2025-765)

Lauren Templeton, Planning and Development Services Department, answered how many development rights are being extinguished in this grant agreement, and stated there are 30 and those are part of the 57 development rights that were presented in August.

Stremmer spoke about extinguishing 30 development rights and not putting them somewhere else, and stated it is something the Council needs to address.

Byrd stated he would like to consider Consent Agenda Item numbers 3

(AB2025-742), 6 (AB2025-747), and 15 (AB2025-764) separately.

Consent Agenda Item #18 (AB2025-767)

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office, spoke about what this change is about, and stated the Port of Bellingham had been underspending the contract and remitting money back to the partners, so this removes the City of Bellingham's general fund contribution and lowers the total dollar amount by that figure.

Consent Agenda Item #21 (AB2025-787)- substitute version

Randy Rydel, Administrative Services Department Finance Director, briefed the councilmembers on what the contract is for. It will give them software that will integrate with their accounting software and allow them to bring real-time data from the accounting software into the budgeting software.

Councilmembers voted on Consent item numbers 1-2, 4, 5, 7-14, and 16-21 (see votes on individual items below).

1. [AB2025-740](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Parametrix, Inc. to develop a comprehensive Subwatershed Master Plan as an addendum to the 2008 Lake Whatcom Comprehensive Stormwater Plan, in the amount of \$298,741

Buchanan moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

2. [AB2025-741](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and City of Bellingham to provide partial funding for Whatcom County's 2025-2026 Severe Weather Shelter, in the amount of \$100,000

Buchanan moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

3. [AB2025-742](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement

between Whatcom County and Whatcom Fire Protection District 7 for the provision of the Paramedic Training Program, in the amount of \$345,537

THIS ITEM WAS CONSIDERED SEPARATELY BELOW

4. [AB2025-743](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Marysville Fire District for the provision of the paramedic training program, in the amount of \$136,200

Buchanan moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

5. [AB2025-744](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Camano Fire and Rescue for the provision of the paramedic training program, in the amount of \$55,600

Buchanan moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

6. [AB2025-747](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Geneva Consulting Services to support coordination of the Whatcom Local Integrating Organization (LIO), in the amount of \$291,068 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)

THIS ITEM WAS CONSIDERED SEPARATELY BELOW

7. [AB2025-751](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Compass Health to lease space within the crisis stabilization center for the provision of mental health treatment services, in the amount of \$24,000

Buchanan moved that the Agreement be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

8. [AB2025-752](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement

between Whatcom County and San Juan County to provide Veteran Service Officer services to San Juan County resident veterans, in the amount of \$10,000

Buchanan moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

9. [AB2025-753](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a grant agreement between Whatcom County and the Washington State Department of Ecology to fund administrative support and action projects for the Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee (MRC), in the amount of \$252,000 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

10. [AB2025-758](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Pioneer Human Services to lease space within the crisis stabilization center for the provision of withdrawal management services, in the amount of \$24,000

Buchanan moved that the Agreement be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

11. [AB2025-759](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the Washington State Department of Commerce to receive CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funds in support of public services, in the amount of \$130,000

Buchanan moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

12. [AB2025-760](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Pioneer Human Services to lease space within the crisis stabilization center for the provision of food services, in the amount of \$24,000

Buchanan moved that the Agreement be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

13. [AB2025-762](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Catholic Community Services to provide permanent supportive housing services at Francis Place, in the amount of \$555,446, for a total amended contract amount of \$833,169

Buchanan moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

14. [AB2025-763](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal cost-share agreement between Whatcom County and the Laurel Watershed Improvement District (LWID) for the Neevel Levee Cougar Creek Fish Passage Project, in the amount of \$10,000 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

15. [AB2025-764](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham for the provision of the paramedic training program, in the amount of \$1,008,442

THIS ITEM WAS CONSIDERED SEPARATELY BELOW

16. [AB2025-765](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a grant agreement between Whatcom County and Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office Washington Wildlife and Recreation Forestland Preservation grant program for

the acquisition of a forestry conservation easement on the Canyon Creek Forest property through the Conservation Easement Program (CEP) in the amount of \$500,000

Buchanan moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

17. [AB2025-766](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an agreement between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to pass through CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funds for the delivery of public services to low and moderate income residents in the amount of \$126,500

Buchanan moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

18. [AB2025-767](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an amendment to the Regional Economic Partnership Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between Whatcom County, the Port of Bellingham, and the City of Bellingham to restructure financial commitments for fiscal years 2026-2027, with no change to Whatcom County's financial contribution

Buchanan moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

19. [AB2025-775](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the Washington State Department of Commerce for a grant to Whatcom County through The Local Community Projects Program for Nooksack Water Adjudication Facility Needs, in the amount of \$1,212,500

Buchanan moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

20. [AB2025-777](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a three-year agreement, using the National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO) ValuePoint Master Agreement #AR2474 and State of Washington Participating Addendum #051116, between Whatcom County and Century Link Communications, LLC dba Lumen Technologies Group (CenturyLink) for telecommunication access lines and services, in the amount of \$144,849

Buchanan moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

21. [AB2025-787](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Euna Solutions, Inc. to purchase budget and reporting software for the financial system in the amount of \$441,159.37

Ann Beck shared information about funding for the 2025-2026 severe weather shelter

Buchanan moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

Council "Consent Agenda" Items Considered Separately

3. [AB2025-742](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Whatcom Fire Protection District 7 for the provision of the Paramedic Training Program, in the amount of \$345,537

Donovan moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 1 - Byrd

6. [AB2025-747](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Geneva Consulting Services to support coordination of the Whatcom Local Integrating Organization (LIO), in the amount of \$291,068 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)

Buchanan moved that the Contract (FCZDBS) be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 1 - Byrd

15. [AB2025-764](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham for the provision of the paramedic training program, in the amount of \$1,008,442

Donovan moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION.

Byrd told councilmembers to look at what we pay with this versus what we are charging other jurisdictions. He stated the State has a list of approved schools and curriculum published online and that list is an average of \$20,000 less. He stated they do not need to raise the EMS levy, but need to fix the problem.

Galloway stated her worry is that there is a misconception about this. The program is less like an associate's degree and more like an apprenticeship in that part of the expenses go toward the salaries of individuals in the program who are receiving on-the-job training. Whatcom County has a track record of paramedics who stay for 30 plus years, and they also collect revenue from the program, as it is the only one in the region.

Byrd stated it is atypical from how the rest of the state does it, and we are paying a substantial amount more because we are doing it differently.

Donovan's motion that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION carried by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 1 - Byrd

Special Presentation

1. [AB2025-755](#) Report from Washington State University Extension
This item was withdrawn.

This agenda item was WITHDRAWN.

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2025-757](#) Discussion of an ordinance establishing the Opioid Settlement Fund and establishing a

budget for the Opioid Settlement Fund

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office, stated this is establishing a separate fund to account for revenue and expenditures related to the opioid settlement fund because having it in the General Fund makes it difficult to track and report. She spoke about the process for spending the funds and answered questions about how Council will approve related contracts.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2025-730](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a three-year contract between Whatcom County and Correctional Healthcare Partners Inc. for the provision of jail healthcare and juvenile detention nursing services, in the three-year total amount of \$22,896,000

Donovan stated this is a substitute version.

Buchanan moved that the SUBSTITUTE Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION.

The following people read from a presentation (on file) and answered questions:

- Jill Boudreau, Executive's Office
- Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office
- Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office

They and councilmembers discussed that the Sheriff's Office will be hiring someone to help with oversight of this work and of the contract, that the position is already included in the adopted budget and not proposed to be frozen, that the funding for the contract is coming from a combination of sources and only funding the first year, that the amount coming from the Behavioral Health Fund is the same amount that is currently funding the jail medical services and the increased cost from the added services (included in this contract) is coming from the General Fund, and that this was discussed in the Behavioral Health Advisory Committee when they talked about facilities for criminal justice and aligns with the priorities set by the advisory group.

Buchanan's motion that the SUBSTITUTE Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

2. [AB2025-770](#) Resolution approving the 2026 recommended convention center allocations for tourism-related facilities and activities as defined through RCW 67.28.1816

Buchanan moved that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL.

Galloway spoke about the discussion on this topic at the Whatcom County Tourism Board meeting and about projects that will be funded. She also spoke about a decrease in funding in the next five or ten years because of the annexation of the Holiday Inn by the airport, which provides a lot of funding.

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office, stated the funding mix has gotten more diverse over time, with a lot of revenue coming in through Airbnbs, and she spoke about the allocation for Ferndale Youth Sports.

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

3. [AB2025-782](#) Request authorization for the Whatcom County Executive's Office to enter into a lease agreement between Whatcom County and Ryanna LLC for the lease of office and storage space for the Sheriff's Office at 4600 Ryzex Way, Bellingham

Byrd moved that the Agreement be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION.

The following people briefed the councilmembers and answered questions:

- Rob Ney, Administrative Services Department Facilities
- Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office
- Donnell Tanksley, Sheriff

Ney briefed the councilmembers on the proposal, why the building is good for this purpose, and the details of the lease.

Pennucci discussed with councilmembers that the total annual rent of approximately \$750,000 includes property taxes, insurance, and operating and maintenance costs, and that some of the maintenance budget for the current space will cover expenses beyond the base rent of the new space in 2027 and beyond. She spoke about the total contract amount and that it is a

lower cost to the County over the eight-year life of the contract than building a new Sheriff's Office. She and Ney answered questions about current costs for maintenance.

Donnell Tanksley, Sheriff, spoke about the necessity of this move.

Councilmembers and the speakers discussed benefits to the County, that the hope is to be able to move some activities from the central shop to the new facility, that the target move-in date is hopefully next summer, things the Sheriff's Office can do to mitigate any noise concerns from the neighborhood, a potential option for the Planning Department employees which the Administration hopes to have more details to share about in a few weeks, that they need to have a budget discussion about how they are going to pay for this over the eight years, concerns (though not questioning the integrity of that council member or of the Council in doing this) about how directing money to a former council member might be viewed by the public, and that some insurance companies may offer discounts on homeowners insurance if an officer lives in the neighborhood.

Byrd's motion that the Agreement be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION carried by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Byrd, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

Abstain: 1 - Donovan

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Todd Donovan, Committee Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger