

Whatcom County Council Water Work Session

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



Minutes - Draft Minutes

**Tuesday, May 17, 2022
10:30 AM
Virtual Meeting**

VIRTUAL MEETING - VIEW ONLINE

COUNCILMEMBERS

Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan
Ben Elenbaas
Carol Frazey
Kaylee Galloway
Kathy Kershner

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Council Chair Todd Donovan called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. in a virtual meeting.

Roll Call

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

Absent: None

Announcements**Water Resources Update**

Gary Stoyka, Public Works Department, stated that discussion on the second and third agenda items will need to be postponed because of a staff family emergency.

Stoyka stated the idea of the Solutions Table Charter was discussed at the April 28th Watershed Management Board meeting and the Lummi Nation stated at that meeting that they are not interested in participating in the Solutions Table at this time but may be interested in participating a year from now when the Department of Ecology is anticipated to file the adjudication for the Nooksack Basin. At this moment, the Solutions Table is on hold but the Administration is still interested in moving forward. They will talk with the other parties and see if they can make some progress on some items in the short-term and keep working on getting people to come to the Solutions Table.

He asked if the Council still wants to have a public hearing to talk about the membership on the Solutions Table as discussed at the last work session in April, knowing that this item is now postponed. He answered how long the hold might be.

Kershner stated she would think they should postpone any kind of hearing on membership of the Solutions Table at this point and no other Councilmember answered that they disagreed.

Stoyka answered whether the funds dedicated to the Solutions Table will be lost and stated grant funds from the State might be used. They also have grant funds for technical studies and plan to keep moving forward on those.

He gave the following other updates:

- Drainage Based Management is still moving forward. They are wrapping up the South Fork process and are about to embark on the Bertrand /Schneider discussion.
- They have issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the next phase of the Groundwater Model and have a consultant under contract.
- They plan to issue an RFP for a ground water/surface water interaction study.
- Work continues on water use efficiency through the Whatcom Water Alliance. They have a live website for a rebate program for people to install water-saving devices. He answered whether the Whatcom Water Alliance website is available to everyone.
- The next Watershed Management Board Meeting is in June (he will find the exact date).
- They are still working on the centralized data management data hub and are getting closer to pulling all the data together.
- The next Water Work Session is scheduled for June 14.

Update on November 2021 Flood Mitigation Project

This item was not discussed.

Overview of Everson Flow Split Design Charrette in April

This item was not discussed.

Discussion with WRIA 1 Planning Unit

The following people spoke:

- Ander Russell, WRIA 1 Planning Unit
- Henry Bierlink, WRIA 1 Planning Unit
- Chris Elder, Public Works Department
- Dan Eisses, WRIA 1 Planning Unit

Discussion included: The last Planning Unit meeting and their discussions regarding adjudication and the Solutions Table, what the role of the Planning Unit would be if a Solutions Table was convened, whether there was any sentiment in the caucuses of the Planning Unit that they would want to go forward without the tribes participating or whether it is better to wait for the tribes, whether they would lose the caucuses' support for the Solutions Table if it is "put on ice," the perspective on waiting for adjudication from the Environmental Caucus and from the Agricultural Caucus, and all of the work of the Planning Unit being part of the solutions.

Other Business

Stoyka stated the exact date of the next Watershed Management Board meeting he mentioned earlier is June 30th and stated he will work to get the flood-related items from this meeting re-scheduled.

Frazey asked that he tell Paula Harris that they are thinking about her.

Stoyka answered whether these work sessions might be used to discuss other water-related issues such as Lake Whatcom watershed, water infrastructure, comprehensive planning, debriefing the Lake Whatcom Policy Group meeting in June, impacts to forestry, Lake Whatcom Overlay District, or culverts and inventory. Stoyka gave a history of the work sessions.

Jon Hutchings, Public Works Department Director, stated it would be useful if Council could give Public Works their priorities for what they would like to discuss.

Kershner stated she had asked Councilmembers to let the Council Clerk know if there are any topics they would like Public Works to address and the deadline for submission of those ideas is tomorrow.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Todd Donovan, Council Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription