

Whatcom County Council Committee of the Whole

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



Committee Minutes - Draft Minutes

Tuesday, March 22, 2022

2:30 PM

Hybrid Meeting

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 4:30 P.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON OR
SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil
OR CALL 360.778.5010)**

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 2:30 p.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

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

Absent: None

Announcements

Special Presentation

1. [AB2022-149](#) Presentation by Diane Kamionka, Executive Director of the NW Innovation Resource Center, regarding the Center's work in Whatcom County and the vision for a regional innovation center to help support local entrepreneurs

Diane Kamionka, Northwest Innovation Resource Center (NWIRC) Executive Director, presented and answered a question about the vision for expanding their efforts in Bellingham and Whatcom County and how she sees the Council supporting that work.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, also spoke about the program and the County's support.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2022-192](#) Discussion regarding upcoming Comprehensive Plan review process
Galloway and Frazey briefed the Councilmembers.

Matt Aamot, Planning and Development Services Department, discussed with Councilmembers the timing for when the Council will get information and can start working on priorities for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update, hearing from Business and Commerce Advisory Committee members, how the Councilmembers might add to the scope of work in advance, pursuing a resolution format to outline Council priorities to ensure it is a guiding document rather than a directive, engaging with State Legislators and the City of Bellingham once a resolution is formed, and being careful not to legislate off of false assumptions.

Councilmembers, Aamot, and the following speakers discussed questions about the Comprehensive Plan update and population projections, and

whether Council resolutions about Council priorities would aid in the process and scope of work:

- Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
- Troy Muljat, Business and Commerce Advisory Committee

Galloway requested that Councilmembers send ideas for priorities to the Clerk of the Council.

Aamot answered a question about the timeline for the Buildable Lands Report and the scope of work for the Comprehensive Plan update.

Sidhu stated he would like to have a Comprehensive Plan discussion going on for two and a half or three years to hear from the Council and will make staff available to accommodate for that input.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

2. [AB2022-189](#) Discussion of boards and commissions applications in the Council's online packet
Jill Nixon, Council Office Staff, reviewed the procedures for when and how personal information that is provided on boards and commissions applications is posted online and in the Council packet, and she answered questions.

Councilmembers discussed their preferences on the options for how boards and commissions applications are presented as outlined in the staff report in the meeting packet.

Karen Frakes, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, answered whether the Council can make decisions with information that the public does not see.

Kershner moved that they adopt Option 2 for before a Council meeting and Option 2 for after a Council meeting (as listed in the staff report). The motion was seconded by Elenbaas.

Councilmembers discussed the motion and Nixon answered whether applications have to made be available for those who are appointed to positions, what information would be redacted before a meeting in Option 2, and what happens to applications in Option 2 for after the Council meeting for those not appointed.

Galloway moved to amend the motion to include Option 2 for before a Council meeting and Option 1 for after a Council meeting.

Kershner accepted Galloway’s motion as a friendly amendment to her motion.

Councilmembers and Nixon discussed whether Council staff will still send the complete application to Councilmembers so that they will have contact information, and whether it should be a standard practice or on demand.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, asked about the process for applications for Executive appointments.

Councilmembers and the speakers discussed whether applicant names would be redacted, whether a list of applicants can be exported from the online form submission site, whether they will get more applicants to apply if names are not made public, how citizens would be able to contact individual members of a committee, whether a committee could have a single access email address, whether board and commission members could be given a County-issued email address, whether there could be a directory of applicants or appointed committee members, whether an option could be added to the application form for an applicant to volunteer to share contact information if publicly requested, and how public records requests are handled now when dealing with individuals using private emails.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, and Kershner

Nay: 1 - Frazey

The following options were approved:

Before a Council Meeting - Option 2. Include the applications in the packet with exempted information redacted

After a Council meeting - Option 1. Upload redacted application for all applicants

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

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2021-594](#) Ordinance amending Whatcom County Code Chapter 2.02 (County Council) to define absence and temporary disability

Councilmembers discussed the history of this Ordinance and whether the Council and Executive would like to continue with the ordinance since there is not an active Councilmember who initiated it, and former Councilmember Browne’s desire to make the term “temporary disability” more clear as shown in the added language in Section D of Exhibit A of the “Revised Ordinance for 3.22.2022.”

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, stated this is not something that is related to him but is about the office of the Executive and the office of the Council. He had proposed “periods of less than **30** days” in Section C of Exhibit A as it pertains to the physical “absence” of the Executive and any period greater than **74** hours in Section D as it pertains to “temporary disability.”

Councilmembers discussed the added language regarding “temporary disability,” and also whether the change to 21 days in Section C is based on the Whatcom County Charter or whether changing it to 21 days would mean a charter amendment.

Karen Frakes, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, answered whether changing the language to 21 days would be amending the Whatcom County Charter.

Frazey moved and Galloway seconded that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Todd Donovan, Council Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription