

**Whatcom County  
Council Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee**

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



**Committee Minutes - Final**

**Tuesday, January 13, 2026**

**1 PM**

**Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers**

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 1:35 P.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE  
REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT [www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil), OR  
CALL 360.778.5010)**

**COUNCILMEMBERS**

Elizabeth Boyle  
Barry Buchanan  
Ben Elenbaas  
Kaylee Galloway  
Jessica Rienstra  
Jon Scanlon  
Mark Stremler

**CLERK OF THE COUNCIL**

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

## Call To Order

Committee member Barry Buchanan called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. in a hybrid meeting.

## Roll Call

**Present:** 7 - Elizabeth Boyle, Barry Buchanan, Ben Elenbaas, Kaylee Galloway, Jessica Rienstra, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremler

## Announcements

### Special Order of Business

1. [AB2026-005](#) Nomination and appointment of Committee Chair  
*Galloway moved* and Scanlon seconded to appoint Buchanan as chair of the committee.

Elenbaas nominated Councilmember Stremler.

Buchanan was appointed by the following vote:

**Buchanan:** 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

**Stremler:** 2 - Elenbaas and Stremler

Stremler stated he would be interested in being vice chair and Scanlon withdrew himself for consideration.

*Galloway moved* and Scanlon seconded to appoint Boyle and Stremler as vice chairs.

The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

**Nay:** 0

**This agenda item was APPOINTED.**

Appointed Buchanan as Chair and Boyle and Stremler as Vice Chairs.

### Committee Discussion

1. [AB2025-873](#) Discussion on Behavioral Care Center model  
Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office, read from a presentation (on file) regarding the following location options for a behavioral care center and estimated cost considerations of each:

- Division Street campus (remodel of work release center)
- Division Street (new construction)
- La Bounty (new construction)

Decision points are:

- Services to occur co-located at the behavioral care center
- Whether it should be an in- or out-of-custody facility
- Location

She spoke about next steps and work that is ongoing. She and Councilmembers discussed that all the options they are presenting now are out-of-custody models, that the agreements with the cities have flexibility regarding in- or out-of-custody but do talk about co-location with the jail so they would propose an amendment if the Finance and Facility Advisory Board and Council affirm the Division Street location, feedback from the cities about the possibility of an out-of-custody model, whether operating costs are documented for having both an out-of-custody facility while also providing good care in-custody and that the two would be separate, that there would be behavioral health care within the jail itself even if they did not have a behavioral care center because there are people who will not qualify to go off-site, and that the unanimous recommendation for a location is a new build at Division Street.

Hannah Fisk, Health and Community Services, answered whether operating costs are different for the different location options, and stated there is not a difference unless they are sized differently.

Scanlon spoke about the Division Street new-build option, that it would be helpful for the community to be able to open a center sooner rather than later, that transportation will be an issue no matter what, and that it would be good to hear from the Prosecuting Attorney's Office on how they would treat this facility.

Rienstra stated a new build on Division Street seems to align with the data around investment in behavioral health as a preventative measure for incarceration, and that being able to open sooner would allow them to start that work sooner.

Adam Johnson, STV, spoke about the schedule difference (time for construction and cost) between La Bounty and Division and that it is because there is more site work that would need to happen at the La Bounty site.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, spoke about the work center and other uses for it in the meantime, and it possibly being a part (in the long run) of creating Division Street as a mental/behavioral health campus. He answered questions about the use of the building and stated no decisions have been made and it depends on the need.

**This agenda item was DISCUSSED.**

### **Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council**

1. [AB2026-015](#) Request for motion to establish full term lengths for Justice Project Oversight and Planning (JPOP) Committee members

Jill Nixon, Council Office staff, stated the Council has not established term lengths for appointed members of the Justice Project Oversight and Planning (JPOP) other than the initial two- and three-year staggered terms.

***Buchanan moved*** that they follow the guidelines they have set for the Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force (which are four-year terms) and have the JPOP be on staggered four-year terms.

The motion was seconded by Scanlon.

The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremmler

**Nay:** 0

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

Motion approved to have the JPOP be on staggered four-year terms.

### **Items Added by Revision**

There were no agenda items added by revision.

### **Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:36 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

**Barry Buchanan-via email 1/26/2026**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

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Barry Buchanan, Committee Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger

SIGNED COPY ON FILE