

Whatcom County Council Public Works & Health Committee

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



Committee Minutes - Draft Minutes

Wednesday, November 5, 2025

10:05 AM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

**HYBRID MEETING - MAY BEGIN EARLY - ADJOURNS BY 10:25 A.M.
(PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT
www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR CALL 360.778.5010)**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Ben Elenbaas
Jon Scanlon
Mark Stremmler

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

Call To Order

Committee Chair Jon Scanlon called the meeting to order at 9:56 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Jon Scanlon, Mark Stremmer, and Ben Elenbaas

Also Present: Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, and Kaylee Galloway

Announcements

Special Presentation

1. [AB2025-771](#) Presentation on most recent progress of Healthy Children's Fund (HCF), how HCF supports in-home child care providers, child care subsidy implementation update and introduction to the draft Implementation Plan

Sarah Simpson, Health and Community Services, read from a presentation (on file) on the Healthy Children's Fund Draft 2025-2026 Implementation Plan.

The following people also spoke and answered questions:

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

Simpson spoke about Healthy Children's Fund (HCF) funding for the food bank (see substitute presentation page nine). She stated over the course of the first four years of HCF spending, they have either contracted or are recommending a total of \$1.5 million to be dedicated to the food bank and food will be available on an amended contract if they would like.

Councilmembers and the speakers discussed the food bank borrowing from its next year's money to meet short term needs, whether there is interest in adding a fourth focus area under "Priority: Supporting Vulnerable Children" in the draft implementation plan to the effect of "basic needs and food access," how much HCF funding the food banks might be able to use toward food once they have met the goals for diapers, wipes, and formula, that Health and Community Services offered a contract amendment to the Bellingham Food Bank to expand their spending to be up to 25 percent of the contracted amount for food but that the food bank wanted to pause and not have a contract amendment at this time, that the Bellingham Food Bank would like to move forward with their originally-requested contract

amendment to extend the contract ending date from February 2026 to June and to not have food on it at this time (during the SNAP upheaval), whether it would have to meet the criteria of ages zero to five if food was involved, and that the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program is not sufficient for providing enough formula for families and can be difficult to access.

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office, stated the County has two contracts with the Food Bank Network through the Bellingham Food Bank-the Healthy Children's Fund contract that they are discussing now, but also a second contract that is funded by the General Fund and Community Priorities Fund. That contract had about \$750,000 a year for 2025 and for 2026, and they have not yet discussed this with the food bank, but would be open to giving them budget authority to spend some of their 2026 money in 2025 if that is something that is needed to get through this SNAP crisis.

Councilmembers and the speakers discussed how the Council should give direction if that is something they would like to do, where the HCF capital and subsidy requests for proposals (RFPs) are in their process, and how they are addressing the promised 5,000 slots for childcare in the next two years.

This agenda item was PRESENTED AND 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 10:28 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Jon Scanlon, Committee Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger