

Whatcom County Council (Special)

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



Minutes - Final

VIRTUAL MEETING - VIEW ONLINE

Tuesday, July 28, 2020

10:30 AM

Virtual Meeting

COUNCILMEMBERS

Rud Browne
Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan
Ben Elenbaas
Carol Frazey
Kathy Kershner

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

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

Roll Call

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

Absent: None

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2020-234](#) Discussion regarding goals, guidelines, and approach to updating current and future budgets

The following people spoke and answered questions during this discussion:

- Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
- Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

Donovan moved to add a goal to maintain public services and staffing levels. The motion was seconded by Frazey.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Elenbaas suggested a friendly amendment to add appropriate level of service and appropriate level of staffing to the motion.

Donovan *did not accept* the friendly amendment but stated he would entertain a friendly amendment to say "Maintain public service and staffing levels within the context of this fiscal crisis."

Councilmembers and Sidhu continued to discuss the motion.

Donovan stated someone could amend his motion to say "Strive to maintain service and staffing levels while recognizing the constraints of the current fiscal crisis."

Kershner suggested a friendly amendment to the motion so it reads: Strive to maintain service and staffing levels while recognizing the constraints of the current fiscal crisis.

Donovan accepted the friendly amendment.

Councilmembers discussed and Donovan restated the amended motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Browne, Buchanan, Donovan, Elenbaas, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 1 - Byrd

Browne moved to remove goals two and three from the document “Budget Goals and Priorities - Byrd” (on file) as follows:

1. Establish two budgets reflecting a 10% and 20% decrease from 2019 revenue.
2. ~~Achieve county wide unemployment rate of 5% or less by end of 2022.~~
3. ~~Achieve a balanced and affordable housing market, with MSI between 5-7 months and vacancy rate between 5-7% by end of 2023.~~

He stated he would like to discuss them as principles. The motion was seconded by Donovan.

Councilmembers and Sidhu discussed the motion.

Browne withdrew his motion and **moved** to retain goals two and three but to amend the language of the goals as follows:

2. Use expenditures to encourage local employment where possible
3. Retain resources engaged in addressing housing affordability

The motion was seconded by Donovan.

Councilmembers and staff discussed the motion.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Buchanan, Donovan, and Browne

Nay: 4 - Byrd, Elenbaas, Frazey, and Kershner

Byrd facilitated a discussion about guiding principles and Councilmembers discussed with Brown-Davis which documents had already been used in previous discussions.

Kershner moved that the list under “Council Suggestions” be adopted along with the examples of guiding principles as listed in “Budget Goals and Priorities - Byrd” (on file). The motion was seconded by Frazey.

Councilmembers discussed the motion and decided which document they should work from. They concurred to refer to the document "Frazey's Additions to Byrd's Priorities" (on file).

Kershner withdrew her motion and ***moved*** to adopt the guiding principles one through eight as listed in the document "Frazey's Additions to Byrd's Priorities" dated 6/16/2020 (on file). The motion was seconded by Frazey.

Councilmembers discussed the budget Guiding Principles and Council Suggestions in the aforementioned document, made changes, and came up with the following list of guiding principles:

1. Children and families first.
2. Is this money being spent efficiently and effectively.
3. Prioritize deferred maintenance projects based on the level of importance.
4. Prioritize projects which leverage third party grant funding.
5. Invest in digital infrastructure.
6. Retain expertise within staffing.
7. Ensure transparency in decisions, information, and data.
8. Prioritize environmentally sustainable solutions.
9. Prioritize funding to address up stream issues that ultimately reduce costs to the community.
10. Be open to new ideas and consider creative approaches and solutions.
11. Prioritize cost sharing and collaboration with other jurisdictions.
12. Work within our authority.
13. Prioritize projects or initiatives working with Whatcom County businesses and agriculture.
14. Reduce unnecessary redundancies within county.

Clerk's note: Donovan and Buchanan left the meeting around 1 p.m.

Kershner withdrew her motion and ***moved*** to approve this amended list as their guiding principles. The motion was seconded by Frazey.

Councilmembers discussed holding the motion until all Councilmembers are present.

Kershner withdrew her motion and Councilmembers agreed to hold her motion until all Councilmembers are present.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTIONS WERE APPROVED.

Other Business

Kershner spoke about the next action steps including inviting a local economist, businesses, and non-profit services agencies to give presentations to the Councilmembers on their various areas of expertise and when that process should start.

Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council, suggested that Councilmember Byrd put the information from today in a Resolution for next week.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:23 p.m.

The County Council approved these minutes on September 15, 2020.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

SIGNED COPY ON FILE