

Whatcom County Council Public Works & Health Committee

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



Committee Minutes - Final

**Tuesday, December 5, 2023
1:30 PM
Hybrid Meeting**

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 1:50 P.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE
REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR
CALL 360.778.5010), AGENDA REVISED 12.5.2023**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Carol Frazey
Kaylee Galloway
Kathy Kershner

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Committee Chair Kathy Kershner called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Carol Frazey, Kaylee Galloway, and Kathy Kershner

Also Present: Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, and Ben Elenbaas

Announcements

Special Presentation

1. [AB2023-779](#) Report from the Public Works Department

Elizabeth Kosa, Public Works Department Director, reported and answered why there was only one bid for the North Lake Samish Bridge project last year (before the second round of bids this year), how long Mt. Baker Highway will be closed for Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) work in 2024, whether the constant status of recruitment in the engineering division for going on 4 years is an issue of pay or of the labor market, and whether the design of the new ferry is considered complete or whether it is still in progress.

Kershner spoke about making sure they do not put urban growth areas (UGAs) in flood plains when they consider flood preparedness and Comprehensive Plan updates.

Galloway asked whether Council staff could share Public Works Facebook posts on the Council Office's Facebook page.

This agenda item was REPORTED.

Items Added by Revision

1. [AB2023-839](#) Discussion regarding the Severe Weather Shelter

Galloway introduced the discussion.

Ann Beck, Health and Community Services, briefed the Councilmembers and answered a question about an overdose in the ongoing nightly shelter which did not have a good outcome, what the temperature threshold is for the overnight severe weather shelter and what happens in the daytime, whether there will be a daytime alternative, what it would take to bump the threshold up to 32 degrees and whether we are going to need more capacity

in the nightly shelter, and whether the stakeholder workgroup who decided on the 28 degree threshold could take a look at it again and see if there is capacity for raising it.

Erika Lautenbach, Health and Community Services Director, stated this is a heavy lift for one department, and emergency management has not helped with this. She thinks that long term, that should be a strategy we consider as a policy. The County staff who signed up to help at the severe weather shelter are the same ones who would be called if there was flooding or some other type of emergency.

Kershner suggested that all the partners come together and look at this holistically, including the City of Bellingham.

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Strategic Initiatives Special Programs Manager, answered whether we have done a call-out for staffing to the other departments in the County and to the City of Bellingham staff.

Councilmembers and staff discussed building staffing capacity and why people are allowed to not accept medical treatment as happened at the nightly shelter.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:16 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Kathy Kershner-via email 12/11/2023

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Kathy Kershner, Committee Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

SIGNED COPY ON FILE