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WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
Special County Council Meeting

February 20, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

Council Vice-Chair Todd Donovan called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, Washington.

ROLL CALL

Present: Barbara Brenner, Barry Buchanan, Todd Donovan, Carol Frazey, and Satpal Sidhu.
Absent: Tyler Byrd and Rud Browne.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

1. DISCUSSION REGARDING OPERATION OF THE EMERGENCY SHELTER IN THE GARDEN LEVEL CONFERENCE ROOM (AB2019-142)

The following staff answered questions:

- Jack Louws, County Executive
- Bill Elfo, County Sheriff

Louws reported on the City's authorization to open the warming shelter at the Civic Center Garden Room, operations of the warming center since it opened, capacity and attendance, current weather outlook, the status of local and state emergency declarations, interlocal agreements for emergency operations, and cost and staffing impacts so far.

Councilmembers and staff discussed the opportunity to hire a staff to continue operations, security at the facility, working with the City of Bellingham and with the City and County departments of emergency management, the possibility of allowing non-County staff to take possession of the building during off-hours to run a shelter, and how long they can operate under the current emergency model.

Mike Parker, Opportunity Council Homeless Service Center Director, spoke about his role, strengths and challenges, the services provided by the Homeless Service Center, following best practices, and operations procedures.

Jim Peterson, HomesNOW, spoke about the continued need for the shelter service and answered questions.

Councilmembers discussed making sure they announce the closing date at least a few days before closure and systemic problems in the country that cause homelessness.

Kelli Linville, Bellingham Mayor, answered questions and spoke about whether the City can reopen its shelter at Maritime Heritage Center; the City's current efforts to house the homeless; the City Council's upcoming meeting on Monday to reconsider the

1 emergency provisions that allow the County's shelter; developing viable alternatives on
2 a non-emergency basis; the upcoming closure of the women's shelter at Fountain
3 Church; defining clear reasons for opening and closing the shelter; and the City's
4 support of the County shelter.

5
6 ***Buchanan moved*** to keep the warming center open until the morning of March
7 1 at 7:30 a.m.

8
9 The motion was seconded.

10
11 Councilmembers and Mayor Linville discussed City and County collaboration on
12 developing a plan for future cold weather events.

13
14 The motion carried by the following vote:

15 **Ayes:** Brenner, Buchanan, Donovan, Frazey, and Sidhu (5)

16 **Nays:** None (0)

17 **Absent:** Byrd and Browne (2)

18
19 The following people spoke:

- 20 • Amy Glasser
- 21 • *(inaudible)* Woods, submitted handouts
- 22 • *(No name given)*
- 23 • *(inaudible)* Mansfield
- 24 • Carl Cummings
- 25 • Autumn *(No last name given)*

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27
28 **OTHER BUSINESS**

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30 There was no other business.

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33 **ADJOURN**

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35 The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

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37 The County Council approved these minutes on March 12, 2019.

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40 ATTEST:

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46 Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

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WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Todd Donovan, Council Vice-Chair

Jill Nixon, Minutes Transcription