

2025-2026 Biennial Budget Administrative Services

SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

Administrative Services

The Administrative Services Department provides quality internal support services to Whatcom County departments and activities to ensure coordinated, accountable, efficient and cost effective use of resources.

Facilities Management

Facilities Management develops, manages, and maintains county buildings and grounds.

Finance

Finance is responsible for accounting, payroll, budgeting, and purchasing.

Human Resources

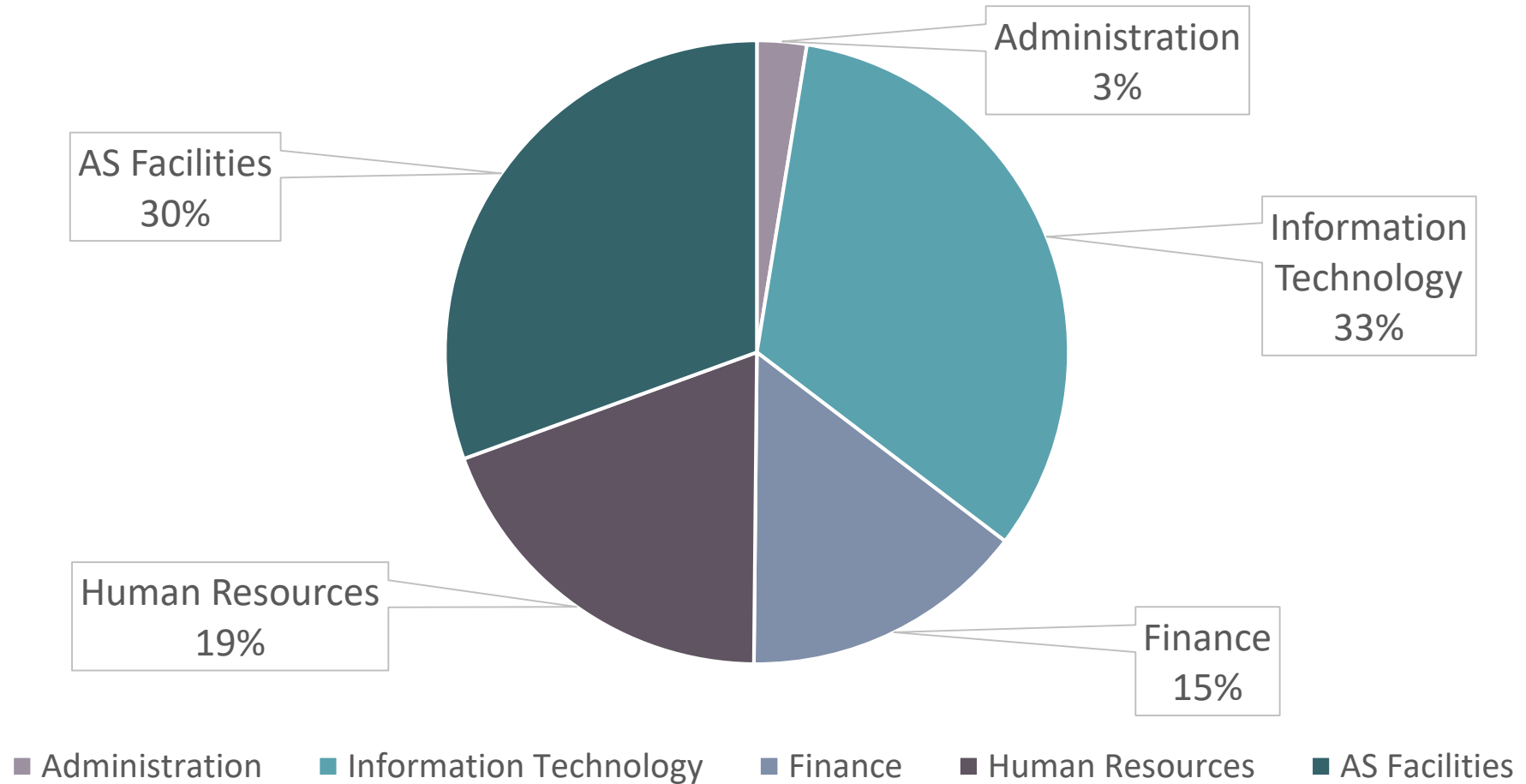
Human Resources is responsible for recruitment and selection, training and development, risk management, performance management, employee and labor relations, benefits and salary administration, and legal compliance.

Information Technology

Information Technology manages computer systems, telecommunications, internet/intranet services, records management, and mail services.



Operating Budget by Division





AS Budget

	Actual 2023	Amended 2024	Budget 2025	% Change '24-'25	Budget 2026	% Change '25-'26
Administration	350	451	581	29%	592	2%
Information Technology	4,245	7,017	7,404	6%	7,030	-5%
Finance	2,443	2,966	3,342	13%	3,277	-2%
Human Resources	3,557	3,122	4,360	40%	4,436	2%
AS Facilities	5,434	6,096	6,900	13%	6,865	-1%
<i>Total Operating</i>	16,030	19,653	22,588	15%	22,200	-2%
<i>Total Capital</i>	704	2,745	2,702	-2%	410	-85%



FTE Changes 2022-2026

	Actual 2022	Actual 2023	Amended 2024	Budget '25 & '26	<i>Change 2022 to 2026</i>
Administrative Services FTE	77.0	80.0	84.5	89.5	12.5
<i>% Change</i>	-	4%	6%	6%	16%

AS: Facilities Division

ROBERT NEY



AS: Facilities 2023-2024 Milestones

- Way Station designed, contracted, and completed in October 2024
- Substantial security upgrades to the courthouse to:
 - Harden entry points
 - Increase surveillance
 - Improvements to courtrooms (ongoing)
 - Move security station to lower level, making the entire courthouse require security checks prior to entry
- Remodeled District Court Courtroom 1
- 2 Major roof projects (1 still on-going)
- Purchase of additional buildings (Unity Street and 400 North)
- Several tenant improvement projects to accommodate the growing County staff



AS Facilities: Notable changes 2025-2026

- 2 FTE: 1 Custodian and 1 Maintenance Worker to support the substantial expansion of the County's building square footage, growing number of employees
- 1 FTE: New Project Manager to assist with the Justice Project
- Increase budget for ongoing maintenance and repair services/cost maintenance increases (e.g., carpets, paint, security equipment, janitorial supplies to accommodate increased cost of goods and services
- One-time funding to repaving the Courthouse south parking lot
- 2 Vehicles to replace surplus vehicles used by facilities staff



AS Facilities: Ongoing Resource Needs

- Additional staff needs:
 - Maintenance staff (3 FTE below national standards *before 2025-26 ASRs*)
 - Custodial Staff (4.5 FTE below national standards *before 2025-26 ASRs*)
 - Administrative staff to support the County's expanding Capital Improvement Program
- Additional Vehicles for staff

AS: Finance Division

RANDY RYDEL AND BRAD BENNETT



AS Finance: By the Numbers

	Actual 2017	Actual 2019	Actual 2021	Actual 2023
Contracts Reviewed	525	705	837	807
Budget Supplementals	219	251	345	509
Purchase Orders Issued	2084	2450	2596	2811
Federal Funding Utilized	\$5.5M	\$8.0M	\$19.5M	\$33.1M
Unique Federal Programs	37	27	37	53
County Staff Maintained	845.50	849.90	867.30	969.40
Finance Staff	12	12	13	16



AS Finance: Notable changes 2025-2026

ASR #2025-7465 Double Fill Finance Director

- In August 2024, Whatcom County hired Randy Rydel from Public Works as Finance Director to replace Brad Bennett. The timing of this transition is notable as we are simultaneously undergoing our biennial budget process and working to implement new financial software (E1) in January 2025. To help facilitate a smooth transition, we request to continue double-filling this Finance Director position into 2025. This will allow adequate attention to the new software's utilization and process improvement opportunities.

ASR #2025-7468 & 7472 New Accounting Staff (2 FTEs)

- Finance has not been able to keep pace with the growth in county operations. The volume of transactions, the level of scrutiny, and the complexity of new ventures have left the accounting department scrambling to maintain an appropriate level of service. These two positions will assist with areas that have experienced a noticeable drop in our level of service. The Budget Analyst will support the departments in improving the overall quality of our financial statements throughout the year. The Accountant II will provide more capacity for researching problems, reconciliations, and troubleshooting. The addition of both of these positions will contribute significantly to year-end reporting and our financial statements.



AS Finance: Ongoing Resource Needs

- **Extra Help:** We are working on sharing the significant institutional knowledge of our more senior staff with the newer cohort of Whatcom County finance staff as we anticipate considerable turnover in the coming years. Our six least senior staff have an average of 2.7 years at the county, while our six most senior staff have an average of 34 years with the county. We plan for position overlap to facilitate training and provide coverage while newer staff get up to speed.
- **Financial Reporting:** The complexity of county operations, in conjunction with financial reporting requirements, is growing each year. Our Audits cover more material and now typically last from April to late September. We are at the point where we need to dedicate an employee to financial reporting.
- **Technology Improvements:** We are working closely with IT to replace our financial software, JDE. While the replacement will be up and running early in 2025, a number of other pieces of software will need replacement shortly thereafter. We know we need to replace budgeting software and would like to introduce electronic timekeeping.

AS: Human Resources Division

MELISSA KEELEY



AS Human Resources: 2023-2024 Milestones

- Unprecedented recruitment and selection resulting in rapid workforce growth
- Key leadership positions replaced:
 - PW Director, Superior Court Administrator, County Clerk, Auditor, Sheriff, Undersheriff, DEM Director, District Court and Probation Administrator, Deputy Executive, Clerk of the Council, Finance Director, Medical Examiner
- All Staff Sexual Harassment Training, PFLAG Training, Mental Health First Aid Training and Leadership Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Training; various other trainings also offered
- Successful bargaining with multiple union groups providing stability and equity
- Risk management work related to various personnel issues, performance management, union grievances, and demands for arbitration
- Technology Enhancements;
 - NEOGOV Onboard – implemented July 2024
 - JDE Upgrade – worked to prepare for transition Jan. 2025



AS Human Resources: ‘ Notable Changes 2025-2026

ASR #2025-7153 Addition of HR Representative FTE

- HR staff is currently at the same level as in 2008. Addition of 1.0 FTE will help us to keep pace with the County’s growth and meet service needs and expectations. Please note this is a step towards meeting minimum staffing requirements and further evaluation is needed for additional staff in the future.

ASR #2025- 7298 NEOGOV Learning Management Software

- With the rapid growth of our workforce, there is an immediate need for an integrated, modern learning management tool to cultivate growth and reduce liability through effective, high-quality training. This tool is a three in one product providing the ability for us to create our own custom content, track training/certifications, and offer an extensive course content library. This product integrates with NEOGOV’s Onboard and Perform products allowing for seamless connection to growth and development throughout the entire employee life cycle.



AS Human Resources: Ongoing Resources Needs

Room for Improvement with Additional Resources:

- Performance Management → NEOGOV Perform and training coming early 2025
- Employee Relations → Additional HR Rep (ASR #2025-7153)
- Training & Development → NEOGOV Learn (ASR #2025-7298)
- Employee Relations → Additional funding to provide specialized support from outside consultants for workplace conflict, one on one coaching, team development, etc.
- Compensation and Organizational Development → for future evaluation and consideration

AS: Information Technology Division

PERRY RICE



AS IT: 2023 – 2024 Primary Accomplishments

Countywide

- Supported Significant Growth of Whatcom County Government - Employees & Space
- Public Website Design Refresh
- New Digital Communications Platform

Criminal Justice

- New Public Defender and Prosecutor Case Management Systems
- Supported Water Rights Adjudication & Justice Projects
- Sheriff Migration to FirstNet Cellular, BodyWorn Camera & Interview Room Upgrades

Land & Infrastructure

- Continued Implementation of New Permit System – Initial Online Permitting
- Scoped Out Environmental Health Implementation in New Permit System
- New Online GIS Viewers: Watershed, Flood Vulnerability, Heat/Smoke Vulnerability

General Government

- Initial Implementation of PeaceHealth Electronic Medical Records System for Health
- Lifecycle Replacement of Assessor Treasurer & Auditor Recording Systems
- Active Support of JD Edwards Financial System Upgrade



AS IT: Challenges

Backlog of Infrastructure Projects

- Infrastructure Projects Deferred to Accommodate Growth of County Government
- Storage System, Backup System, Network Switches, Network Firewall
- Telecommunications System Replacement
- Countywide Replacement of Computers and Upgrade to Windows 11

JD Edwards Financial System Upgrade Implementation

- Project More Complex and Challenging than Anticipated

New Large Projects

- Sheriff Medicaid Demonstration Waiver (EPIC Implementation)
- Sheriff Digital Forensics, Inmate Phone, Jail Commissary, Inmate Tracking, Body X-Ray Scanners
- Public Works Fleet Management
- Moves: Superior Court, IT, Health, Health Partnerships, NW Annex, Justice Center

Staffing

- Growth of IT Staff has Not Kept Up with Overall Growth of County Employees
- Difficulty in Filling Vacant Technical Positions
- IT Staff Have Done a Remarkable Job



AS IT: 2025 – 2026 Biennial Budget Request Summary

Reappropriate Funding for Infrastructure Projects (\$770K One-Time)

- Network Switch and Firewall Replacement

Increase Funding for Lifecycle Computer Replacement (\$200K One-Time)

- Number of Computers have Increased from ~1,200 to > 1,500 Over Past 5-Years

Increase Funding for Annual Maintenance Due to Inflation and Employee Growth (\$130K Ongoing)

- Telecommunications, Network Switches, Backup System, Microsoft, E-Mail Archiver, Video Conferencing

Funding to Continue Permit System Implementation (\$250K One-Time / \$205K Ongoing)

- Migrate Permit System to Cloud and Implement Environmental Health Module

Funding to Support the Operation of the Financial System (\$112K Ongoing)

- Third Party Managed Services & Report Writing Software

Funding to Upgrade Court Audio Video Recording Systems (\$462K One-Time)

- Superior Court

Funding for Staff Adjustments (\$130K Ongoing)

- Various Adjustments, Extra Help, and Reclassifications