

Whatcom County Council Committee of the Whole

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



Committee Minutes - Final

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

3:05 PM

Hybrid Meeting

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 4:30 P.M., MAY BEGIN EARLY
(PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT
www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR CALL 360.778.5010)**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan
Ben Elenbaas
Carol Frazey
Kaylee Galloway
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 3:10 p.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

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

Announcements

Special Presentation

1. [AB2023-234](#) Update from Tom McBride and Ben Bucholz regarding services provided by McBride Public Affairs, LLC

The following people presented:

- Tom McBride, McBride Public Affairs, LLC
- Ben Bucholz, McBride Public Affairs, LLC

They gave an overview of the status of the legislative session and spoke about legislative engagement, House and Senate budgets, eight major projects that are funded in the operating and capital budget proposals, and a couple in the Governor's proposal that made it into the House and Senate. McBride stated they would love to come up and spend time with the Council doing some interim planning.

They highlighted the following current bills that have been moving through the legislative process this session:

Senate Bill 5536 (also known as the "Blake Bill") Concerning controlled substances, counterfeit substances, and legend drug possession and treatment

Tyler Schroeder, Director of Administrative Services, and the speakers answered whether the House version of this bill would preempt local ordinances such as one passed by the City of Bellingham.

Senate Bill 5120 Establishing 23-hour crisis relief centers in Washington state

McBride stated the 23-hour release center funds are in the capital budget.

House Bill 1267 Concerning rural public facilities sales and use tax

Schroeder answered how much longer we would get our Economic Development Investment (EDI) money if the bill does not pass.

House Bill 1181 Improving the state's response to climate change by updating the state's planning framework

House Bill 1792 Modifying timelines and other initial procedural actions in a water rights adjudication

House Bill 1628 Increasing the supply of affordable housing by modifying the state and local real estate excise tax

Frazeley thanked the speakers and asked how often the Council could get these updates during the session, whether Friday Morning Report emails could be sent directly to Council, and whether they and the Council could meet in the fall to discuss the Council's legislative priorities,

The speakers answered questions about the budget process and how the House and Senate conference on versions of bills.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

2. [AB2023-229](#) Presentation from Northwest Youth Services concerning Positive Adolescent Development Program shelter for minors, community engagement plan, and agency update

Jason McGill, Northwest Youth Services, read from a presentation (on file) about the Bloom Program and the role of Northwest Youth Services to partner with young people on how to get them out of poverty by focusing on their wellness and healing through supplying pathways of creativity to help with wellness stability, building community connections for economic and housing stability, and building "love warriors" by creating community platforms that provide a framework for critical thinking. He showed them the program house, gave program updates, and answered whether the program incorporates or accommodates religious faith.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2023-214](#) Discussion on progress to develop the Justice Project Implementation Plan
Buchanan read from a presentation (on file) about the work that is being done on the implementation planning and answered questions. He answered whether polling for preferences on locations and questions on different facilities is done within the Planning Team group or in the general population. He stated it is within the group.

Donovan asked whether they can accelerate the timing of when discussions

of what should go on the ballot will come to Council in order to give them more time.

Galloway pointed out that where the “Potential Plan Projects for 1st Poll” (on file) says, “The proposal has advanced in the Senate capital budget (as of March 23, 2023)” on page three under “Build a 23-hour Crisis Relief Center,” it should say, “the *House* capital budget.” She spoke about whether the section on housing should mention sober housing, and making sure there is a clear strategy for continuing to grow our therapeutic courts.

Kershner stated it is possible they could have a Council work session if they run out of time.

Frazezy stated she does not want to come down to just having two meetings left to discuss what is going to go on the ballot so she likes the idea of having a work session, maybe in May.

Buchanan stated the next update will be on May 9th and there will also be a funding workshop tomorrow (April 12, 2023).

This agenda item was PRESENTED AND DISCUSSED.

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2023-239](#) Request confirmation of the County Executive’s appointment of Elizabeth Kosa as Director of Public Works effective April 12, 2023 pursuant to Whatcom County Code Section 2.75.020

Buchanan moved and Galloway seconded that the Request for Motion be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL.

Elizabeth Kosa, Public Works Department Director, addressed the Councilmembers and stated she is excited for the role.

Kershner stated the effective date is April 12 but Kosa stepped into the role in March, and asked if there is any reason why the effective date is tomorrow and not in March when she took the position.

Tyler Schroeder, Director of Administrative Services, stated he assumes it was to respect Council’s decision-making in regards to confirmation of the Executive appointment.

Kershner moved to amend the motion to backdate this to March 13, 2023. The motion was seconded by Galloway but ***Buchanan accepted*** it as a friendly amendment to his motion.

Buchanan's motion that the Request for Motion be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL with an effective date of March 13, 2023 carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Frazey, Galloway, and Kershner

Nay: 0

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:38 p.m.

The County Council approved these minutes on April 25, 2023.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

SIGNED COPY ON FILE