

**Whatcom County  
Council Finance and Administrative Services Committee**

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



**Committee Minutes - Final**

**Tuesday, June 21, 2022  
10:05 AM  
Hybrid Meeting**

HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 1 P.M. PLEASE NOTE: WE ARE EXPERIENCING INTERMITTENT DIFFICULTIES WITH OUR MEETING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO VIEW VIA THE "IN-PROGRESS" LINK, SEE ZOOM INSTRUCTIONS AT [whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil](http://whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil).

**COUNCILMEMBERS**

Tyler Byrd  
Carol Frazey  
Kathy Kershner

**CLERK OF THE COUNCIL**

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

## **Call To Order**

Committee Chair Tyler Byrd called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

## **Roll Call**

**Present:** 3 - Tyler Byrd, Carol Frazey, and Kathy Kershner

**Absent:** None

Also Present: Barry Buchanan, Todd Donovan, Ben Elenbaas, and Kaylee Galloway

## **Announcements**

### **Special Presentation**

1. [AB2022-355](#) Presentation from Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc. regarding Unrepresented Compensation Study

Melissa Keeley, Administrative Services Department Human Resources, briefed the Councilmembers.

August Zhu, Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc. Consultant, presented and answered whether the County is ultimately trying to determine the cost of labor and how much it is paying staff, whether they were looking at the cost of living in the area and adjusting the labor and wagers upwards or downwards based on that, what it means to have five job matches in order to conduct statistical analyses, whether a negative minimum comparison on the "Summary of Market Comparison - Pay Range" slide means that the position is under-paid according to the analysis, whether there was a comparison to the private sector as well as the public sector and what organizations were utilized if so, whether there is a reason the County is leading in Annual Cash Out for Vacation and Sick Leave instead of being aligned, whether the total cost of \$166,174 to bring the proposed exempt employees to the closest higher step in a new range is the total cost annually, why employees would need a pay increase if the statistics in earlier slides of the presentation show that the County is leading or aligned with the market, and whether there is anything in here about inflation or how that figures in.

Keeley and Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, answered what the benefits would be to change the salary structure or keep it as it is, whether there are any benefits in our current structure that we would miss in a simplified structure, how much workload would be saved by a new structure, how this

structure would slow down the rate of increase of salary over time, and whether they could see a comparison to the existing structure.

Tyler Schroeder, Executive's Office, stated the value he got out of this effort is that there was not a large change to the overall salary structure that they really had to accomplish. This is the starting of this process as it relates to the 2023-2024 budget. They will be talking about incorporating this change into the Unrepresented Resolution and will be happy to continue to talk to the Council to compare and contrast the two wage tables and talk about actual costs moving forward.

Keeley answered whether this salary structure would be more equitable across all the departments. She stated it is just for unrepresented staff.

Royce Buckingham, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, stated this salary structure and the survey are for a point in time (January 15, 2022) and any increases they are going to do come with a cost of living adjustment later. This is just talking about where we were on that day, whether our chart works, and whether we were competitive at that time. The money that would be spent doing the adjustment here to switch over to this chart can be considered when we do our cost of living adjustment later in the year.

Zhu finished his presentation.

Keeley answered whether the new structure is more simple than the existing structure, what the primary difference is between the two, the frequency of moving through the step increases, and whether unrepresented employees know about this proposal.

Buckingham stated there are a couple members on the committee that represent the County employees and they will be getting information to staff now that the information has been presented to the Council.

**This agenda item was PRESENTED.**

### **Committee Discussion**

1. [AB2022-339](#) Discussion of proposed investment of a portion of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds towards the purchase of food for distribution among County food banks

The following people briefed the Councilmembers:

- Ali Jensen, Health Department
- Mike Cohen, Bellingham Food Bank Director

Cohen answered what the breakdown of the proposed \$500,000 to each food bank would look like, what the timeline is for the Council to approve this and move forward, how much the \$500,000 would increase capacity of what the food bank could do otherwise, whether the food banks have relationships with local farmers, and what percentage is of food the food banks are getting from local resources.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, stated he would like to know how this money would be stretched over two years.

Byrd stated he would like to see more information on where we are at with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) spending, what this might pull ARPA dollars from, and how this will be spent over what period of time.

Kershner concurred with Byrd's comments.

**This agenda item was DISCUSSED.**

### **Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council**

1. [AB2022-317](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Pyramid Communications for public communications for the Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force in the amount of \$88,800.00  
*Frazey moved* that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION.

The following people briefed the Councilmembers:

- Councilmember Buchanan
- Stephen Gockley, Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force Co-Chair

Gockley, Buchanan, and Jill Nixon, Council Office staff, answered what mediums of communications they would use to inform the public about the work the task force has accomplished, what the need is for getting the message out for this particular effort that the County is working on, which fund this is coming out of, whether this communication will be beneficial or prudent, whether the list of target audience groups in "Tasks (Objectives 1 and 2)," item three in the scope of work has some groups missing such as small city residents and county and rural residents, and how this addresses

current health and safety concerns of people in the community.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, answered whether the County's Community Outreach Facilitator is only for Executive communications (not heard on the meeting audio).

Galloway stated that this highlights the need for a dedicated communications staff member for the County Council Office.

Kershner stated it would be really nice if the workplan completion date (December 30, 2022) could be moved up and have something solid that they can start acting on sooner rather than later.

Elenbaas stated he likes the idea of communications staff in the Council Office.

**Frazey's motion that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 2 - Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 1 - Byrd

**Absent:** 0

2. [AB2022-320](#) Ordinance closing the Agate Heights/Estate Bay Lane Stormwater Improvements Fund 365

**Kershner moved that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

3. [AB2022-321](#) Ordinance closing the Northshore Drive/Edgewater Lane Stormwater Improvements Fund 381

**Kershner moved that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

4. [AB2022-322](#) Resolution amending the Flood Control Zone District & Subzones 2022 budget,

request no. 3, in the amount of \$5,250,617 (Council acting as the Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)

***Kershner moved*** that the Resolution (FCZDBS) be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL.

Councilmembers discussed adding a memo in the packet that explicitly states that this is spending in response to an unprecedented flood to help with public communication, the fact that the County is being reimbursed for \$4,693,375 of this so it is really a \$557,242 budget item.

Gary Stoyka, Public Works Department, stated he was available for questions.

**Kershner's motion that the Resolution (FCZDBS) be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

5. [AB2022-326](#) Ordinance amending the project based budget for the North Lake Samish Road Bridge No. 107 Replacement Fund, request no. 1

**Frazey moved that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

6. [AB2022-327](#) Ordinance amending the Shallow Shore Culvert Relocation Fund, request no. 1

**Frazey moved that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

7. [AB2022-329](#) Ordinance amending the 2022 Whatcom County Budget, request no. 9, in the amount of \$15,838,261

**Frazey moved** that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION.

Tyler Schroeder, Executive's Office, briefed the Councilmembers and answered whether the money for the land that is going to be purchased in Ferndale is coming from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

Donovan stated having that information in a memo would be helpful.

**Frazey's motion that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 2 - Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 1 - Byrd

**Absent:** 0

8. [AB2022-344](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement with the Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife for cooperative management of various park properties at Pine & Cedar Lakes, Tennant Lake, and Hovander Homestead Park

***Kershner moved*** that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION.

Christ Thomsen, Parks and Recreation Department, briefed the Councilmembers.

**Kershner's motion that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

### **Council "Consent Agenda" Items**

Kershner stated she would like to remove Consent Agenda items four (AB2022-340) and item fourteen (AB2022-357) from the Consent Agenda and discuss them separately (see discussion, motion, and votes on these items below).

Galloway stated she would like to remove Consent Agenda item eleven (AB2022-352) from the Consent Agenda and discuss it separately. Frazey concurred with this (see discussion, motion, and vote on this item below).

***Frazey moved*** to approve Consent Agenda items one through three, five through ten, thirteen, and fifteen. Councilmembers voted on those items (see motions and votes on individual items below).

Committee members then considered Consent Agenda items four, eleven, and fourteen.

Items four, eleven, and fourteen were considered and discussed separately.

1. [AB2022-333](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement amendment between Whatcom County and City of Bellingham to provide funding to support the GRACE Program in the amount of \$76,800 for a total amended agreement amount of \$356,800

**Frazezy moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

2. [AB2022-336](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a grant amendment between Whatcom County and PeaceHealth to support the GRACE Program in the amount of \$10,000 for a total amended grant amount of \$120,000

**Frazezy moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

3. [AB2022-338](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and the Executive Office of President, Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to be reimbursed for salaries and benefits for two employees in the Prosecutor's Office in the amount of \$188,727.00 for the FY 2023

**Frazezy moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0



4. [AB2022-340](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to administer the Housing and Essential Needs Program, in the amount of \$2,530,694

This item was considered separately from the Consent Agenda.

***Frazey moved*** that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT.

Kershner stated she would like to have an updated comprehensive review of all of the work that the Opportunity Council is doing for us with the housing and homeless issues in our community.

The following people presented and answered questions:

- Greg Winter, Opportunity Council
- Ann Beck, Health Department
- Debbie Paton, Opportunity Council
- Megan Adams, Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) Program Coordinator

They answered why the number of people being served is reduced in this contract from the previous contract, how much of this money goes to people that need it and how much of it is for administering the services, how much of this they are allocating to people who are still homeless or maybe struggling to find permanent homes because of the flooding last fall, whether there are other factors besides inflation that caused the number of households being served to reduce by almost half, and whether the reduction is anticipating less capacity because of costs as opposed to anticipating less need.

**Frazey's motion that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 2 - Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

**Abstain:** 1 - Byrd

5. [AB2022-341](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into the sale of a septic easement for use of park property by Doug and Cathy Angell, in the amount of \$15,477

**Frazey moved that the Agreement be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

6. [AB2022-345](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Tetra Tech, Inc to evaluate and design the Semiahmoo Drive southern outfall, in the amount of \$45,118 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)

**Frazey moved that the Contract (FCZDBS) be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

7. [AB2022-348](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Wilson Engineering, LLC to provide construction assistance services for the Fremont Street Stormwater Bypass project in the amount of \$5,982 for a total amended contract amount of \$45,982

**Frazey moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

8. [AB2022-349](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and the Washington State Department of Transportation for the Birch Bay Drive & Pedestrian Project; CRP 907001 in the amount of \$1,445,087 (STP \$1,250,000; Local \$195,087) for a total amended contract amount of \$7,108,543

**Frazey moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

9. [AB2022-350](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Washington State Department of Ecology to develop a Wiser Lake Cyanobacteria Management Plan, in the amount of \$49,999.50 in Ecology funds with a \$16,666.50 local match

**Frazey moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

10. [AB2022-351](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and YWCA Bellingham to support emergency shelter operations in the amount of \$2,675 for a total amended contract amount of \$45,675

**Frazey moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

11. [AB2022-352](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Catholic Community Services to support permanent supportive housing at Francis Place in the amount of \$328,650 for a total amended contract amount of \$1,119,155

This item was considered separately from the Consent Agenda.

***Kershner moved* that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT.**

Galloway stated if we are incorporating some additional precautions into the 22 North contract is it worth considering those precautions in the Francis Place contract as well in an effort to keep it fair and to increase things like community relations with our downtown neighbors and to

continue to increase support for our most vulnerable tenants.

Ann Beck, Health Department, stated they would be happy to work with Catholic Community Services and come back with some amendments on added language in the contract.

Chris D'Onofrio, Health Department, answered a question about the statement in the memo (on file) that says, "This contract provides partial funding to support 24/7/365 facility-based" programs and whether there are other funders involved in this.

**Kershner's motion that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

12. [AB2022-353](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Whatcom County Fire Protection District No. 14 for fire protection services, in the amount of annual fees based on the current millage rate and the assessed value of improvements on the park properties within the district

**Frazey moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

13. [AB2022-354](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement amendment between Whatcom County and Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission for a recreational boating safety grant increase, in the amount of \$2,500.00

**Frazey moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

14. [AB2022-357](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to support operations at the permanent supportive housing facility 22 North, in the amount of \$242,648

This item was considered separately from the Consent Agenda.

*Frazey moved* that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT.

Kershner stated she would be supporting this.

The following people presented and answered questions:

- Ann Beck, Health Department
- Greg Winter, Opportunity Council
- Wendy Lawrence, Opportunity Council

They answered whether 22 of the 40 units in the building have started the eviction process, what the current operating expense is per unit for the building, the average cost of other properties managed by the Opportunity Council, whether they are currently meeting all Federal and State standards for the building, how many people have successfully moved out of the building, whether the building is performing so poorly that the entire industry on a national level is looking at it and saying that they are not interested in doing any more projects like this, how 708 calls from the building to 9-1-1 from the date it opened to February of this year (as reported by the Bellingham Police Department) compares to other buildings, and whether councilmembers could tour the building.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, stated he invited Northwest Youth Services (who uses twenty units of the building) to attend today but they are not here. It should not be a no-barrier shelter and there should be accountability.

Beck stated it was just the Opportunity Council that was invited because they are the ones who manage the building, but Northwest Youth Services has been involved in the meetings with the City and the County.

Byrd asked whether Council Office staff could coordinate setting up a tour of the building for Councilmembers and asked that the Opportunity Council give notice to all tenants that Councilmembers may enter the day of the tour.

Galloway brought up the resident councilors' wage of \$18.50 an hour and

asked if there is a way to help the Opportunity Council to raise those wages.

See further discussion on this item under Other Business below.

**Frazeys motion that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR  
AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 2 - Frazeys, and Kershner

**Nay:** 1 - Byrd

**Absent:** 0

15. [AB2022-361](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and MHNW 23 Evergreen Ridge LLC (Mercy Housing Northwest) to provide funding for the acquisition of the Evergreen Ridge Apartments for low-income housing in Whatcom County

**Frazeys moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR  
AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following  
vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Frazeys, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 0

### **Items Added by Revision**

There were no items added by revision.

### **Other Business**

Frazeys spoke about AB2022-357 again and stated she feels like it is crossing a line to say that they can go into any unit.

Byrd stated it is part of the lease agreement and they only have to go into a couple units.

Greg Winter, Opportunity Council, stated they will accommodate the request to the best of their ability under existing landlord-tenant laws.

Kershner stated she has reached out to Ann Beck, Health Department, to ask about using some American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for potentially expanding the housing options for people who are still impacted and homeless due to the floods that we experienced in November.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:58 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

**Tyler Byrd-via email 7/18/2022**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tyler Byrd, Committee Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

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