

Whatcom County Council Committee of the Whole

**COUNTY COURTHOUSE
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Bellingham, WA 98225-4038
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Committee Minutes - Draft Minutes

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

2:15 PM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

**AGENDA REVISED 3.7.2025 - HYBRID MEETING - MAY BEGIN EARLY -
ADJOURNS BY 4:30 P.M. (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
Kaylee Galloway
Jon Scanlon
Mark Stremmler

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

Call To Order

Council Chair Kaylee Galloway called the meeting to order at 2:16 p.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, Ben Elenbaas, Kaylee Galloway, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremler

Announcements

Special Presentation

1. [AB2025-118](#) Update from County Executive's Office on 2025 state legislative session

The following people updated the Councilmembers on progress of the legislative session:

- Jed Holmes, Executive's Office
- Josh Weiss, lobbyist
- Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office

They answered questions about what the County and community have done to communicate with the State about programs that may be impacted locally by proposed budget cuts, getting support from the community to contact legislators about those impacts, that there is currently no indication for when the Supreme Court will make their decision about potentially funding case load standards, how often Office of Financial Management (OFM) projections are released, how the uncertainty around the Federal budget makes this session unique, and that the legislature will likely wait until next January to do a budget supplemental and true up at that time what has happened with revenue forecasts.

This agenda item was REPORTED.

2. [AB2025-205](#) Presentation from the County Administration on Jail Health Services

Jill Boudreau, Executive's Office, read from a presentation (on file), following up on a memo (on file) sent to Council a couple weeks ago regarding the fact that Northwest Regional Council (NWRC) is terminating nursing services on June 30, 2025. She spoke about the need to hire a Healthcare Authority FTE (Corrections Health Program Manager) and options for providing other services.

She and Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office, answered questions about what is keeping NWRC from continuing, the request for proposal (RFP) and

transition processes, and how other counties are able to spend less per person.

Galloway stated her inclination is that they should get started with the RFP as soon as they can and then analyze costs of the different options once they have a better sense those.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2025-210](#) Discussion with STV on design build procurement and policy priorities

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office, stated they are here to lay out what the particulars of the qualifications based procurement process look like from a logistical and timeline perspective, and they want to talk about how they can use this process to integrate community values and the Council's priorities.

The following representatives from STV read from a presentation (on file) regarding a breakdown of the milestones that will happen during the procurement process for the jail and behavioral health care center:

- Ashley McClaran, Principal-In-Charge / Engagement Lead
- Adam Johnson, Project Manager / Main point of contact

McClaran stated they are working with outside legal counsel to develop a progressive design-build (PDB) construction contract and at same time are drafting a request for qualifications (RFQ).

Johnson spoke about the RFQ and request for proposal (RFP) processes in which they score and narrow down responders.

Councilmembers and the speakers discussed a concern about finding people qualified to respond to a proposal without telling them how much money we have or what our needs are, that it is typical to have a designer on board before they get to very detailed plans or cost estimates, that the capacity assessment is a concurrent process with procurement, concerns that doing an RFQ and RFP will make the process longer, that narrowing down to a few contractors may give them no incentive to be competitive in pricing, why they seem to be starting from ground zero and not using previous designs and that those will still be used as a starting point, how detailed the RFQ will be and align with specific goals already set by Council, who is reviewing and has final approval of the RFQ draft, seeing different design models with their costs so they can decide what they need, how they

determine whether a firm is competent to do the job, and that this process is about how they are going to get to their chosen team in order to then move forward.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

2. [AB2025-081](#) Discussion relating to population and employment projections for the County as a whole, Urban Growth Areas, and the Rural & Resource Lands associated with the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update

Galloway explained that this and the next agenda item (**AB2025-224**), added by revision, are related. This item has a draft resolution for discussion from Donovan and one from Scanlon (on file). The next item would be the lever for them to potentially take action on the multi-jurisdictional resolution.

Donovan stated his resolution version has been woven into Scanlon's version so they can ignore the "Donovan discussion draft 2.25.25" draft, and the Executive's Office has said that they would like to keep it separate from the non-binding multi-jurisdictional resolution.

Councilmembers discussed that the hope is to get the cities' input on Scanlon's draft first before Council takes final action, that it is not intended to be up for approval today but just for discussion, and that it broadens the scope to general Comprehensive Plan priorities or concerns that Council wants the Planning Department to be working on and communicating with them on.

Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office, stated from the Executive's perspective, they are hoping the Council will take action on the population numbers tonight understanding that they are preliminary. Then Council can provide direction to the Executive and Planning to share the draft of the additional guidance resolution with the cities to get their feedback.

Scanlon stated he would like to see the guidance resolution on the agenda for March 25th.

Donovan moved that Council ask that the Planning Department shop this draft to the cities while Council continues to add input to it.

The motion was seconded by Scanlon.

Councilmembers and Pennucci discussed the timing for the resolution and cities' input, that they can then determine if they are ready to have a final draft for the 25th or if they need to have deeper discussion on it, and giving the cities the opportunity to discuss the draft in their council meetings

which may take more than two weeks.

Donovan restated his motion to have Planning and Development Services Department (PDS) or staff get this (Scanlon's draft) to the cities for feedback while Councilmembers can also provide feedback, with a goal that by March 25th maybe they would have something.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, Stremler, and Byrd

Nay: 0

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

Motion approved to have Planning and Development Services Department or staff get this (Scanlon's draft) to the cities for feedback while Councilmembers can also provide feedback, with a goal that by March 25th maybe they would have something.

Items Added by Revision

1. [AB2025-224](#) Non-binding multi-jurisdictional resolution regarding population, housing and employment allocations

Galloway spoke about conflicting feelings around this resolution.

Donovan moved and Buchanan seconded to hold.

Councilmembers discussed that one of the reasons they are trying to do a parallel process (see **AB2025-081**) is to address concerns that have been raised about the allocations, waiting until after they get the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to decide, whether or not the projections should be lowered, and whether the intention would be to take up both this and the guidance resolution at the same time at a future meeting.

Scanlon asked about how delaying this resolution for two to four weeks would impact the cities.

Rollin Harper, Sehome Planning, stated their funding for this work ends June 30th, and the planners cannot bring their draft Comprehensive Plan chapters forward and begin their public process without the population numbers.

Alex Putnam, City of Everson, stated it has been hard to work on the Comprehensive Plan any further without the projection numbers and they are also trying to finalize their capital facilities plans.

Carson Cortez, City of Sumas, stated it is really hard to finalize any capital facilities plans without the projection numbers to look into the future with.

Councilmembers discussed that they are hearing that the cities would like something from the Council, that if infrastructure they plan for does not get used now it will get used in the future, and doing something in the Comprehensive Plan that enables people to build homes that are not in a floodplain.

The motion to hold failed by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Donovan and Buchanan

Nay: 5 - Byrd, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Byrd moved and Scanlon seconded that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL.

The following people answered when they will get the EIS:

- Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office
- Mark Personius, Planning and Development Services Department Director

They stated they think they will get it in April, but hopefully earlier.

Councilmembers discussed the motion, still having policy concerns, and that they will have a lot more opportunities to weigh in on it.

Byrd's motion that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Buchanan, Byrd, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

Abstain: 1 - Donovan

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:17 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Kaylee Galloway, Council Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger