

**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 6, 2023
10:15 AM
Hybrid Meeting**

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 11:15 A.M., MAY BEGIN EARLY
(PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT
www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR CALL 360.778.5010); AGENDA
REVISED 6.5.2023**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Todd Donovan
Carol Frazey
Kathy Kershner

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Committee Chair Kathy Kershner called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Todd Donovan, Carol Frazey, and Kathy Kershner

Also Present: Tyler Byrd, Barry Buchanan, Ben Elenbaas, and Kaylee Galloway

Announcements

Council "Consent Agenda" Items

Frazey stated she would like to consider Consent Agenda item number two separately and *moved* to recommend Consent Agenda item numbers 1 and 3-6 for approval by consent.

Kershner asked about Consent Agenda Item number six (**AB2023-371**) and whether we have major re-route issues with that culvert replacement.

Councilmembers voted on those Consent Agenda items (see motion and votes on individual items below).

1. [AB2023-345](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center to provide eviction prevention resolution services, in the amount of \$69,000

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

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

2. [AB2023-363](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and the Lighthouse Mission Ministries for the provision of kitchen equipment and room furnishings in the amount of \$750,000

This item was considered separately (see below).

3. [AB2023-366](#) Request authorization for a Letter of Understanding between Whatcom County and the Fraternal Order of Police, Matt Herzog Memorial Lodge #24, to amend the Collective Bargaining Agreement for the period January 1, 2022 - December 31, 2024

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

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

4. [AB2023-367](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a Collective Bargaining Agreement between Whatcom County and General Teamsters' Local Union 231 Master Collective Bargaining Unit for the period January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2025

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

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

5. [AB2023-352](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Washington Traffic Safety Commission for Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) overtime funding, in the amount of \$3,000.00

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

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

6. [AB2023-371](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal loan and grant agreement between Whatcom County and Whatcom County Drainage Improvement District 7 in support of the Atwood Road Culvert Replacement project in the amount of \$500,000

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

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

Council "Consent Agenda" Items Considered Separately

2. [AB2023-363](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and the Lighthouse Mission Ministries for the provision of kitchen

equipment and room furnishings in the amount of \$750,000

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

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

Aye: 1 - Kershner

Nay: 1 - Frazey

Abstain: 1 - Donovan

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2023-378](#) Request approval of letter of support for Mental Health Court

Donovan moved that the Request for Motion be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL.

Bruce Van Glubt, District Court Administrator, affirmed that he put this letter together for the support of the Mental Health Court and stated it is a team of District Court, District Court Probation, and the Health Department that are working to put this application together.

Donovan's motion that the Request for Motion be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

Special Presentation

1. [AB2023-368](#) Presentation from PFM Financial Advisors on Municipal Financing, Debt Capacity and Bonding

Steve Oliver, County Treasurer, stated they wanted to have this introductory presentation because of some potential capital projects that the County is considering that may require some long-term debt financing, and it has been decades since the County has taken on any significant amount of debt.

Clerk's note: Councilmember Donovan took over as the chair because Kershner had to step out of the meeting but she came back momentarily.

Duncan Brown, PFM Financial Advisors LLC, read from a presentation (on file) and was joined by Matt Schoenfeld, PFM Financial Advisors LLC. He stated they are not a bank but are an advisory firm and have a fiduciary responsibility to their clients. They provide input and recommendations for

a financing or funding plan and manage the process of any attached debt transaction. He spoke about what municipal financing is, reasons for using debt to finance capital projects, types of debt issued by Washington counties, the bond issuance process, partners that would be involved as part of the financing team for the County when it comes time for a bond issue, authorizing the issuance of County debt, what debt capacity is, a snapshot of the County's statutory debt capacity, the County's outstanding debt and what it is servicing, credit rating and how Whatcom County compares to other counties, how upcoming County projects figure in to its credit ratings, and considerations for developing funding plans.

Donovan asked when the Council would know how much the upcoming County projects will add up to and how much that would go against what the County's capacity is, and at what point it affects our potential credit ratings.

Brown stated the kind of thing they are charged with working on is thinking about the interplay of some of these projects and the repayment plans, and thinking about them in the context of Moody's (credit) rating methodology.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, spoke about project plans they will bring forward toward the end of the year and early next year, and stated they will have more information on the bonding interest and other things.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

2. [AB2023-365](#) Report from the Emergency Medical Services Department

Mike Hilley, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Manager, read from a presentation (on file). He spoke about 2022 accomplishments and 2023 projects, statistics, and budget allocations. He answered questions about the chart showing EMS dispatch calls for suspected overdoses in each day of May, the change in the average number of overdose calls in the last few years compared to that in 2010 through 2018, who he reports to, and whether he is a part of the Executive's staff or whether he is Council-directed. He stated his immediate boss is Tyler Schroeder, the Deputy Executive.

Galloway asked if he could give an update on where we are at with the reimbursement to the City of Bellingham for their EMS services and the allocation of the \$5 million that Council approved twice. She asked whether there have been delays, challenges, or barriers to getting those funds out to our emergency services departments.

Hilley stated all of the Basic Life Support (BLS) allocation and monies

have been received by the fire departments. The only remaining fire department that is waiting for a check is Fire District 5 in Point Roberts. They have a different contract and it had to be negotiated differently. It has already been through Council and he is expecting to get it signed and back from the fire district hopefully this week.

Galloway stated she wants to make sure the County is being timely in its disbursements and asked whether there are policy needs that the Council could address to encourage the efficient and effective movement of those funds. She stated she would like to reaffirm her commitment and desire to expand our community paramedic program and stated she would like to put forward a budget proposal that would increase to another three to five community paramedics.

Hilley stated he feels the same way and has been getting a lot of requests regarding that from the county's fire departments.

This agenda item was REPORTED.

Items Added by Revision

1. [AB2023-372](#) Resolution adopting an amendment to the Unified Fee Schedule increasing the fees at the Birch Bay Lynden and Cedarville drop box facilities

Donovan moved that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL.

Kershner summarized the request to increase the fees.

Ted Carlson, Sanitary Service Company (SSC), answered why the recycling fee seems proportionally much higher than the increase for garbage and stated the main reason for that is just the change in the commodity market for recycling.

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

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:16 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Kathy Kershner-via email 6/30/2023

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Kathy Kershner, Committee Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

SIGNED COPY ON FILE