

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

VIRTUAL MEETING - MAY BEGIN EARLIER/LATER THAN 2:30 P.M.

Wednesday, August 5, 2020

2:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

COUNCILMEMBERS

Rud Browne
Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan
Ben Elenbaas
Carol Frazey
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 2:30 p.m. in a virtual meeting.

Roll Call

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

Absent: None

Announcements

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2020-334](#) Resolution establishing County Council budget goals and guidelines

Byrd and Frazey briefed the Councilmembers on their proposed substitute Resolution (on file).

Kershner moved that the substitute Resolution be approved. The motion was seconded by Byrd.

The following people spoke about the status of County revenue, how it relates to revenue projections, and how that should affect budget formation:

Tyler Schroeder, Executive's Office
Brad Bennett, Administrative Services Department
Satpal Sidhu, County Executive

Councilmembers and staff discussed the percentage of budget reductions that would be necessary, whether the Administration has considered whether there are departments that can cut more than 20 percent and departments that should not cut 20 percent, looking at layoffs if budget reductions need to be made beyond ten percent, whether the County could reach out to representatives in Olympia to ask them to take action to release restrictions on some of the siloed funds so that they could be used in other ways, what projections documents the Administration is working from and whether those have been updated since June.

Councilmembers and staff discussed the motion and the proposed substitute Resolution.

Browne moved that the substitute Resolution be amended with his proposed changes as presented to Councilmembers via an email.

Buchanan moved to hold the motion until tonight and to forward the substitute Resolution to the Council without a recommendation. The motion was seconded by Frazey.

Buchanan's motion that the substitute Resolution be FORWARDED TO COUNCIL WITHOUT A RECOMMENDATION carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Browne, Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Frazey and Kershner

Nay: 1 - Elenbaas

Absent: 0

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2020-219](#) Discussion and update on strategies and other items related to COVID-19 (Council and Health Board)

Tyler Schroeder, Executive's Office spoke.

Clerk's note: Health Department staff was no longer present at the meeting so Councilmembers discussed what questions they would like answered or information they need. They included:

- How many tests we will be able to do
- Meeting information for a group of local physicians and other health agencies which meets on Mondays and considering whether this group could be used as an additional advisory body

2. [AB2020-234](#) Discussion regarding goals, guidelines, and approach to updating current and future budgets

Clerk's note: Councilmembers briefly discussed this item and what to do going forward but stopped when Health Department staff joined the meeting.

1. [AB2020-219](#) Discussion and update on strategies and other items related to COVID-19 (Council and Health Board)

Clerk's note: Health Department staff returned to the meeting.

The following staff spoke:

Erika Lautenbach, Health Department Director
Greg Stern, Health Officer

Lautenbach addressed questions and spoke about the following:

- The Health Department's social marketing campaign
- The next steps of the Health Department and Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) in their work with businesses
- Coordinating with Skagit County for doing low barrier COVID-19 testing
- A community health assessment done by the Health Department and other partners which looks at all the factors that impact our community

Stern spoke about the Health Department's work with the school superintendents and the recently released guidelines for whether to open schools to in-class instruction in the fall. He and Lautenbach answered questions about whether distance learning is a recommendation from the Health Department or a medical order, whether there was discussion about adequate school staffing levels, and whether there was discussion about the scenario of a child who is exhibiting symptoms but a parent has no choice but to send them to school.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

2. [AB2020-234](#) Discussion regarding goals, guidelines, and approach to updating current and future budgets

Councilmembers spoke about next steps and continuing discussion on this tonight or having another work session.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription