

**Whatcom County  
Council Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee**

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



**Committee Minutes - Draft Minutes**

**Wednesday, November 6, 2024**

**10:05 AM**

**Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers**

**HYBRID MEETING - MAY BEGIN EARLY (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE  
REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT [www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil), OR  
CALL 360.778.5010)**

**COUNCILMEMBERS**

Barry Buchanan  
Tyler Byrd  
Jon Scanlon

**CLERK OF THE COUNCIL**

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

## **Call To Order**

Committee Chair Barry Buchanan called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

## **Roll Call**

**Present:** 3 - Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, and Jon Scanlon

Also Present: Ben Elenbaas, Kaylee Galloway, and Mark Stremmer

## **Announcements**

### **Special Presentation**

1. [AB2024-759](#) Report from the Prosecuting Attorney's Office

Eric Richey, Whatcom County Prosecuting Attorney, reported on the divisions of the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, and updates on data management in the department, including providing open portals to law enforcement agencies within the community and plans to provide a portal to the city attorneys in Bellingham. They also have a partnership with the Health and Community Services Department to share case management data. He spoke about exploring the possibility of another diversion program for individuals who are deemed incompetent and being held in jail, bail compliance issues that they have been working on, and addressing infrastructure and future planning for space needs. He answered questions about the data portals.

**This agenda item was REPORTED.**

### **Committee Discussion**

1. [AB2024-713](#) Discussion of the Justice Project Oversight and Planning (JPOP) Committee membership

Buchanan stated the Justice Project Oversight and Planning (JPOP) Committee had their first meeting last month and a number of questions arose regarding membership.

Jill Nixon, Council Office staff, read the following six questions from the group (on file) regarding membership and Councilmembers discussed them.

1. Should there be a voting position for the Prosecutor's Office? And
2. Should there be a voting position for the State Department of Children, Youth, and Families?

Councilmembers discussed whether there is a Council representative

position on the committee, and Buchanan stated he is the representative. They discussed adding more members to the group since it is already a large group, and Buchanan stated he does not think it will be an issue at all. Councilmembers concurred that adding these positions is something they are interested in. They discussed how the request came to be.

3. Can they allow some representatives to share a seat/vote (e.g. two reps from one agency attend but get a single vote)?

Councilmembers discussed the request, Byrd stated he believes it is up to the JPOP Committee and the committee chairs to decide, and the Councilmembers concurred. They discussed whether the ordinance would allow an entity to have an alternate and Buchanan stated they allow proxies.

4. Could they allow an open format where JPOP members can invite attendees, but only allow JPOP members to vote?

Councilmembers concurred that the answer for this question would be the same as that for #3 above (it is up to the JPOP Committee and the committee chairs to decide).

5. How to define "lived experience?" There are currently two seats on the JPOP for individuals with lived experience, and one of them is held by a police officer. Should additional lived experience seats be added?

Councilmembers discussed who is currently filling the lived experience positions, how those have been decided in other committees in the past, the opinion that it should be firsthand experience in the last five or ten years related to the subject matter identified, the fact that they are running these questions by the Council because the Council indicated they wanted to approve all JPOP members, and getting a recommendation from the JPOP Committee first.

Buchanan stated it sounds like it would be a good idea to put this on the JPOP agenda for the November meeting and ask for a recommendation on the topic. Byrd asked if they could do that with the other positions too and Buchanan stated they could.

6. How can the JPOP Committee amend its membership to ensure that it "includes a balanced membership that ensures fair representation of BIPOC communities, service providers, and people with lived experience," as required by Ordinance 2023-039.

Buchanan stated it sounds like they would just run a motion up during the JPOP meeting and then bring that back to Council as a recommendation.

Byrd requested that the JPOP include a short explanation of the reasoning for their recommendations.

Scanlon stated it would be interesting to hear what the barriers are and if there is anything the Council can do, such as having a fund that allows members who are not compensated for their time to apply for that.

**This agenda item was DISCUSSED.**

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

1. [AB2024-691](#) Ordinance amending Whatcom County Code Section 5.04.085 EMS technical advisory board

The following people briefed the Councilmembers:

- Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office
- Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
- Mike Hilley, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Manager

Sidhu stated Bellingham Technical College is taking over running the paramedic school. They used to have the instructor as a member of the Technical Advisory Board, but now they are saying to assign that position to Fire District 7.

Hilley gave more detail on the reason for the change.

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

Councilmembers discussed a concern about any particular entity getting over-representation on the ten-member committee, whether a County Council member should sit on this body, and that adding Fire District 7 is potentially adding balance.

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

**Aye:** 3 - Buchanan, Byrd, and Scanlon

**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 10:49 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

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Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

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Barry Buchanan, Committee Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger