

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

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



Committee Minutes - Draft Minutes

Tuesday, February 25, 2025

10:35 AM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

HYBRID MEETING (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE REMOTE JOIN
INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil OR CALL
360.778.5010)

COUNCILMEMBERS

Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

Call To Order

Committee Chair Todd Donovan called the meeting to order at 10:50 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, and Barry Buchanan

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

Announcements

Council "Consent Agenda" Items

Buchanan *moved* to recommend approval of Consent Agenda items one through eight.

Stremmer stated he had questions on Consent Agenda item number 4 (**AB2025-175**).

Scanlon stated he had questions on Consent Agenda item number 3 (**AB2025-173**).

Consent Agenda item number 3 (**AB2025-173**)

Scanlon stated he is interested in pursuing alternate options for the courthouse security contract and seeing what it would look like to bring the work in-house.

Consent Agenda item number 1 (**AB2025-141**)

Donovan stated that Consent Agenda item number 1 (**AB2025-141**) is a substitute and he has at least four more policies that he is hoping they can get into the scope of work.

Consent Agenda item number 4 (**AB2025-175**)

Stremmer stated they are spending \$386,500 on COVID-19 response but it seems like very little on opioid prevention.

The following people answered questions:

- Malora Christensen, Health and Community Services
- Shamika Brooks, Health and Community Services

Brooks spoke about the funding for COVID-19 and stated it is a continuation of funding from the Department of Health to help stabilize and continue their workforce with public health nurses in their division. There are not any new activities.

Christensen spoke about opioid prevention and stated they have a \$55,000 grant that has allowed them to hire an overdose response and prevention behavioral health specialist.

Brooks answered what syndemic means on item #5 in the staff memo, and stated it is for their services that they provide for disease investigation for HIV and hepatitis C.

Lela Riherd, Health and Community Services, stated it is the syndemic surveillance of hepatitis C, HIV, and the other viral hepatitis diseases related to opioid use disorder.

Byrd spoke about internalizing the courthouse security, and stated he would like to consider Consent Agenda item numbers 3 and 5 (**AB2025-177**) separately.

Stremmer continued the discussion on item number 4 and he and the speakers discussed that the opioid harm reduction proviso is a needle exchange service, why it seems like that is all they are doing to address the problem, and whether more money should go toward prevention.

Donovan stated this gets to the Council's inability to be able to see contracts and programs holistically when things come to them in pieces.

Ann Beck, Health and Community Services, spoke about how they are trying to keep Councilmembers up to date on the fentanyl response plan.

Scanlon spoke about the community health assessment and community health improvement work and conversations he has had with staff. He stated it would be helpful to have an update on that at the next Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) meeting on March 6 and potentially at the next Health Board meeting to hear about the plans for it. He spoke about the funding.

Councilmembers voted on the Consent Agenda item numbers 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, and 8 (see votes on individual items below).

1. [AB2025-141](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Matrix Consulting Group, Ltd. to evaluate human resources policies and procedures

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

2. [AB2025-169](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the Nooksack Indian Tribe to establish responsibilities of each party in regards to the Acme Woody Revetment Repair project, in the amount of \$0 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

3. [AB2025-173](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Pacific Security to provide security services at the Whatcom County Courthouse for \$222,416.14

This item was considered separately below.

4. [AB2025-175](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement amendment between Whatcom County and Washington State Department of Health to provide funding for various public health programs in the amount of \$5,265,283

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

5. [AB2025-177](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to operate the Whatcom Homeless Service Center in the amount of \$342,051, for a total amended contract amount of \$2,697,403

This item was considered separately below.

6. [AB2025-178](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission for Recreational Boating Safety Federal Financial Assistance Grant MLE 325-530, in the amount of \$27,028.24

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

7. [AB2025-179](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an Interlocal Agreement between Whatcom County and the City of Blaine for Correctional Services

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

8. [AB2025-182](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Cascadia Youth Mental Health to support school substance use policies and practices that align with effective prevention strategies in the amount of \$21,640, for a total amended contract amount of \$179,910

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

Council "Consent Agenda" Items Considered Separately

3. [AB2025-173](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Pacific Security to provide security services at the Whatcom County Courthouse for \$222,416.14

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

Aye: 2 - Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 1 - Byrd

5. [AB2025-177](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to operate the Whatcom Homeless Service Center in the amount of \$342,051, for a total amended contract amount of \$2,697,403

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

Aye: 2 - Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 1 - Byrd

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2025-160](#) Ordinance closing the Shallow Shore Culvert Relocation Fund 3917

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

2. [AB2025-162](#) Ordinance amending the project budget for the new Public Health, Safety and Justice Facility, request no. 7

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

He stated it should be clarified that the “Special Purpose Tax Levy - Jail Fund Sales Tax” for \$7,762,651 in the Staff Memo is the county portion because it is not clear.

Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office, confirmed that it is the county portion.

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office, answered whether this is only accounting for the newest two tenths or if it also includes the existing, first one tenth, and stated this is the new two tenths sales tax. She answered if they are creating a new project-based budget or using an existing budget, and stated they are amending an existing project-based budget.

Pennucci stated this project fund was created for the new jail project. They created a new fund that revenue is going into and that is tracking this project.

Buchanan's motion that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR

ADOPTION carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

3. [AB2025-164](#) Ordinance amending the 2025 Whatcom County Budget, request no. 2, in the amount of \$4,751,265

Donovan stated this is a substitute ordinance.

Buchanan moved that the SUBSTITUTE Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION.

Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office, briefed the Councilmembers and read from Appendices 1 and 2 of the Staff Memo (on file).

Donovan stated he hopes, going forward, that there are fewer supplemental budget requests, that they have budgets that are more defined, and that they have a process where supplemental requests would come to Council before the ordinance is introduced so the Council can remove items to have considered separately later.

Pennucci stated having fewer supplemental requests is of interest to the Administration as well, and they intend to provide these reports to Council earlier in the process so that they would be presented alongside the budget supplemental ordinance on the day it is being introduced. That would allow the Council to pull an item out prior to introduction.

Councilmembers thanked the Administration.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, stated it is a work in progress and they would like more input from Councilmembers on what they would like to see. They want requests presented in a way that allows the Council to get the history on the items and to see the how they fit into the total budget numbers.

Scanlon stated he would be interested in having a conversation about the Road Fund at a future meeting.

Randy Rydel, Administrative Services Department Finance, answered when they are getting the first finance report, and stated he hopes to have it in April.

Pennucci and Rydel spoke about the Road Fund budget. Items that were

added back to the Annual Construction Program came forward in the first budget amendment of the year. This report shows how the Road Fund is budgeted but it is not the way it will be spent.

Elizabeth Kosa, Public Works Department Director, stated they had intended on getting the banked capacity and buying back some services, but not without a discussion with Council first. They are waiting on the year-end reconciliation, and when that is done, they will update Council on what they could potentially buy back and projects they will be holding off on to see what is available.

Pennucci spoke about a report that comes out of the Finance Department that tracks each individual supplemental budget ordinance and changes to position control, and stated it can be found on the biennial budget pages of the County website.

Buchanan's motion that the SUBSTITUTE Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

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 11:28 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Todd Donovan, Committee Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger