

**PROPOSED BY: DONOVAN**  
**INTRODUCTION DATE: NOVEMBER 19, 2019**

**ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**LIMITING THE 2020 GENERAL PROPERTY TAX LEVY**

**WHEREAS**, in his October 18, 2019 Budget Memo to the Council, the County Executive recognized a "structural gap of General Fund revenues not keeping up with inflation and population growth"; and

**WHEREAS**, the Executive recognized that this structural gap is "a cause of long-term financial concern;" and

**WHEREAS**, the Executive recognized that the County's Fund Balance, while appearing healthy now, is in decline; and

**WHEREAS**, Council has approved the Executive's request for additional, highly needed FTE for the 2019-2020 biennial budget, funded from the General Fund, without provisions of addition of General Fund revenues; and

**WHEREAS**, Council has approved additional, highly needed FTEs in previous biennial budgets from the Executive, funded from the General Fund, without provisions of addition of General Fund revenues; and

**WHEREAS**, Council has approved additional expenditures, not requested by the Executive, for highly needed for services for homeless youths, and for winter shelters; and

**WHEREAS**, the Administration had recognized that dedicated fund balances, such as the Behavioral Health Fund, are also in decline; and

**WHEREAS**, critical services from dedicated funds, such as counseling for at-risk youths, have been reduced, while the Executive and Council have limited capacity to fund such services with dedicated fund dollars; and

**WHEREAS**, the addition of needed FTE via the General Fund in 'good' economic times, without adequate revenues, likely requires elimination of FTE when the economy goes sour during a recession; and

**WHEREAS**, the need to provide public services and public safety remain regardless of future economic downturns; and

**WHEREAS**, a local government has little control over budget drivers such as inflation and population growth; and

**WHEREAS**, Whatcom County has not taken the minimum, 1% increase in property tax revenues in decades; and

**WHEREAS**, the 1% increase in property tax revenues likely does not keep pace with inflation; and

**WHEREAS**, the County Assessor has estimated that taking the 1% allowable increase would cost a \$300,000 dollar valued property about \$4.00 per year.

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** That Whatcom County adopt a budget that includes the 1% allowable increase in property tax revenues for the General Fund.

**ADOPTED** this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rud Browne, Council Chair

WHATCOM COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
APPROVED AS TO FORM:

WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

\_\_\_\_\_  
Civil Deputy Prosecutor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jack Louws, County Executive

( ) Approved      ( ) Denied

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_