

Whatcom County Council Public Works & Health Committee

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



Committee Minutes - Draft Minutes

Tuesday, September 24, 2024

1:10 PM

Council Chambers - Hybrid Meeting

**HYBRID MEETING (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE REMOTE JOIN
INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR CALL
360.778.5010) - AGENDA REVISION 9.20.2024**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Kaylee Galloway
Jon Scanlon
Mark Stremler

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

Call To Order

Committee Chair Jon Scanlon called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Kaylee Galloway, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremmler

Also Present: Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, and Ben Elenbaas

Announcements

Special Presentation

1. [AB2024-618](#) Update from Whatcom County Health and Community Services Department on winter and severe weather shelter planning

The following staff read from a presentation (on file) and answered questions:

- Ann Beck, Health and Community Services
- Chris D’Onofrio, Health and Community Services

Beck updated the Councilmembers on the status of personnel and volunteers to act as temporary on-call shelter workers, communications, logistics, work with a realtor to find potential severe weather shelter sites, and partnerships with other agencies throughout the county who are providing additional beds.

D’Onofrio answered why the former drop in center is off the table as a usable site, and whether the Lighthouse Mission will have more beds in their updated facility. The mission has additional space where they could expand for severe weather, but they do not have enough staff to provide that supervision. The drop-in center was uncomfortable having a lot of new activity in the neighborhood as they are opening.

Beck answered questions about whether the County has considered acquisition of space (and not just being a tenant), and stated that takes quite a while and would not be accomplished by this winter. She answered how the community can help, and stated they would like to hear from anyone who has a space they might want to use to offer shelter. She answered whether volunteer opportunities are posted yet, and stated they would let people know when they are. She spoke about conversations they are having with the City of Bellingham about how they might be able to offer support

and will be posting a request for proposal (RFP) for a winter shelter operator. She answered questions about the Ferndale Community Services' shelter operation, the start and end date they would like to see for a severe winter shelter, what things have to be in place at a facility in order to be used as a severe weather shelter, whether Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) is open to adding a bus service to a shelter location, how far in advance they decide to open the shelter, and how they are communicating the need for a facility with the entire county. She stated they are working with a realtor and rely on word of mouth, and noted that they would also pay rent for a space.

Donovan spoke about services that WTA has been able to provide in the past.

Galloway thanked them and their team for their work.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

2. [AB2024-620](#) Update from the Whatcom County Health and Community Services Department on the operations plan for Fentanyl Executive Order

This item was withdrawn.

This agenda item was WITHDRAWN.

3. [AB2024-626](#) Presentation of the Child and Family Well-Being Task Force Report

The following task force members reported on the work that the task force does, their feedback and recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan, and their focus on updating their governance structure:

- Colton Kaltenfeldt, Task Force Co-Chair
- Allison Bishop
- Karla Anderson

Bishop read from the report (on file) regarding their recommendations for Comprehensive Plan chapters seven (Economics), three (Housing), and ten (Environment). For Chapter seven, they are calling on the Council to include language that makes it a priority of the County to minimize regulatory hurdles that would hinder the growth of childcare spots, invest in resources to develop a stronger behavioral health support system, and develop policies that encourage the development of food access in rural parts of the county. For Chapter three, they are recommending that the County incentivize the integration of childcare centers into multi-family housing developments utilizing Federal tax credits. For Chapter ten, they

are making recommendations concerning more comprehensive testing for childhood lead exposure.

Anderson read from the report regarding developing updated governance structures in the task force. She spoke about new subcommittees they are establishing, the creation of bylaws and looking at how they can balance public transparency with task force efficiency, and exploring their establishing ordinance's mandate that they follow Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) requirements.

Kaltenfeldt spoke about the question of OPMA requirements, a recent change by the Council in the definition of quorum as it relates to advisory bodies which bases a quorum on all possible spots as opposed to spots that are currently filled, and the importance of the Comprehensive Plan recommendations.

Donovan spoke about getting a list of advisory groups that are subject to OPMA requirements and what the quorum rules are for other committees.

The speakers and Allison Williams, Health and Community Services, answered questions about the positions on the task force that they are having trouble filling and other ideas to help them make quorum.

Scanlon stated he would like to have more discussion (probably in Committee of the Whole) about OPMA requirements for advisory boards.

Galloway spoke about the "Advisory Board Assessment Report" (on file) and requested that it also be included in that discussion.

This agenda item was REPORTED.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

Ann Beck, Health and Community Services, answered whether they have asked the Port of Bellingham if they have any facilities that could be used as a severe weather shelter, and stated she believes there was a conversation with them about a potential building but it did not work out.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:56 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Jon Scanlon, Committee Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription