



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Whatcom County Council

FROM: Council Staff

RE: Ordinance to Amend WCC 2.03 Advisory Groups

DATE: November 12, 2024

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This ordinance amends WCC 2.03 Advisory Groups based on feedback from the County's advisory groups and recommendations from Council staff. These edits do not remove any Open Public Meetings Act requirements but do address smaller fixes to improve operating efficiencies for advisory groups and management of the groups by County staff and Council.

Below is a summary of the changes made to WCC 2.03 by this ordinance.

### **2.03.020 Terms**

Edits move language providing that appointments for members filling an incomplete term will be made for the balance of that term from subsection (B) to subsection (A). (B) remains to indicate that terms expire on January 31 of the specified year. These edits are a housekeeping change.

Edits to (C) allow the Council to designate new term dates for advisory group members in order to ensure staggered term end dates. Over time, advisory group term end dates may migrate for a variety of reasons, resulting in many or all term end dates within one advisory group falling on the same date. To address these challenges, (C) was edited to allow Council to adjust or extend the term of specific positions as necessary as long as the term does not violate the WCC or state law.

### **2.03.025 Removing members**

Language was edited to allow the Council to remove a committee member if the member no longer meets the position's residency requirements.

### **2.03.050 Appointment of members**

This section was amended to require all advisory group vacancies to be listed on the County's website – which is the current practice – not just those serving an "administrative or legislative function."

### **2.03.080 Listing vacancies on the county website**

This section changes the annual appointment process for new year vacancies. This change will allow the Council staff and Executive's staff to manage their respective annual vacancies in the same way that they currently manage vacancies throughout the rest of the year – separately. Until 2023, all annual vacancies were required to be published in the local newspaper of record, at cost to the Council Office. Due to the adoption of Ordinance [2023-082](#), the Council Office is no longer required to publish these vacancies, so there is no longer a reason for the Council Office to manage the Executive's new year vacancies.

### **2.03.090 Qualifications**

New language clarifies that a member of an advisory group may live in Whatcom County at least part time (not just full time) and adds language that those who do not live in Whatcom County or who move out of Whatcom County may be removed from their position. Enabling language for individual advisory groups may require different residency requirements

### **2.03.100 Quorum and voting**

Language around meeting and voting quorums is amended to support the functioning of advisory groups. Changes include the following:

1. Language is added to prohibit groups with more than 51% of seats vacant from meeting and functioning.
2. A quorum for the purpose of holding a meeting and voting is redefined as over half of the number of filled voting positions, not all positions. This change is suggested to allow committees with hard-to-fill seats to continue meeting and voting.
3. Edits allow recommendations to the county council and/or county executive by advisory committees to be approved by a majority of voting members present at the meeting, not a quorum of committee members.