

RESOLUTION NO. _____

ESTABLISHING A PROCESS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COVID-19 INTERIM ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN TO RESPOND TO THE ECONOMIC CRISIS WITHIN WHATCOM COUNTY CAUSED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant hardship to our local economy which in turn has led to substantial unemployment, and

WHEREAS, in previous localized emergencies Whatcom County has been able to rely upon the financial resources of the State and Federal governments to recover, however as COVID-19 is a global problem future State and Federal government funding is uncertain as it is being stretched to the limit, and

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County agencies and departments have done an excellent job at reducing the rate of new infections from COVID-19, managing the increased demand for social services, procuring supplies of essential Personal Protective Equipment, and will continue to have to devote considerable resources to these needs for the foreseeable future, and

WHEREAS, additional resources now need to be identified and dedicated to the challenge of leading the community onwards to economic recovery, and

WHEREAS, the County, the City of Bellingham and the Port of Bellingham have an established Regional Economic Partnership (REP) agreement where the Port serves as the state-designated Associate Development Organization (ADO) responsible for promoting and encouraging economic growth within Whatcom County, and

WHEREAS, the purpose and goals of the REP and ADO include:

- Retain and attract livable wage jobs and to assist businesses, entrepreneurs, and other local organizations to thrive
- Partner to create a thriving community for all
- Provide expertise in financing, planning, and technology to help start, develop, or grow business
- Promote Whatcom County as a great place to live, work and do business-
- Connect businesses with economic development services and skilled workforce resources
- Help enhance and grow cross border trade opportunities with Canada,
- Work collaboratively with our local and regional partners to create a vibrant community of higher education learning, prosperous agricultural lands, high tech businesses, marine manufacturing, and local food processing

WHEREAS, local government officials, businesses, non-profits and the community need a COVID-19 interim economic recovery plan to be developed and available as rapidly as possible, to be replaced by a long-term, detailed strategy once State and Federal recovery funding has been defined and secured, and

WHEREAS, while the County does not have any significant untapped local financial resources, the county is blessed with considerable human capital and economic acumen within our community, which can be drawn on to assist the ADO in the immediate development of a COVID-19 Interim Economic Recovery Plan (CIERP).

1 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:**
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- 3 1. The ADO should be appointed as the primary lead agency responsible for the research and
4 development of an COVID-19 Interim Economic Recovery Plan as outlined in Exhibit A, and
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6 2. As time is of the essence, the ADO shall immediately form a panel of experts (Exhibit A)
7 drawn from the local community to augment and complement the existing ADO staff, and
8
9 3. The ADO should report any new information which could have a moderate or material
10 impact on the county's economic recovery to Incident Command, the County Council,
11 County Executive, Port of Bellingham, the Mayors, Tribal Chairs and Health Department, and
12
13 3. The ADO should provide updates, ideally every week, to the community on the status of
14 economic recovery efforts, and
15
16 4. If technical resources and analysis are required to assist in the development of the CIERP in
17 excess of resources available to the ADO, the ADO may provide Whatcom County Council a
18 detailed request of funds for that purpose, not to exceed \$50,000.
19

20 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, by the Whatcom County Council acting
21 as the Whatcom County Health Board that the Whatcom County Health Department is encouraged
22 to do the following:
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- 24 1. Add the strategies outlined in Exhibit B to its existing plans in support of the County's
25 economic recovery, and
26
27 2. Support the efforts of the ADO to produce the CIERP as rapidly as practical, and
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29 3. Maintain responsibility for messaging and communications, through the Incident Command
30 Joint Information Center, to the press and community related to the health and social
31 service aspects related to the COVID-19 crisis, and
32
33 4. Report any new information which could have a moderate or material impact on the
34 county's economic recovery to Incident Command, the County Council, County Executive,
35 Port of Bellingham, the Mayors, Tribal Chairs and ADO, and
36
37 5. Provide updates to the ADO, ideally every week, on the status of the Health Department's
38 contributions to the economic recovery efforts, to be included in ADO's weekly reports to
39 the community.
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41 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, to help reduce the future costs to the
42 County of responding to COVID-19 strategies 2(a) and 2(b) in Exhibit B should be added to
43 Incident Command's existing plans.
44

45 **ADOPTED** this _____ day of _____, 2020.
46

47
48 ATTEST: WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
49 WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

50
51 _____
52 Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

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51 _____
52 Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

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54 APPROVED AS TO FORM:
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56 _____
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58 Civil Deputy Prosecutor
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3 **EXHIBIT A**
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5 ADO Deliverables:
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7 The goal will be to use a panel of experts recruited by the ADO to develop a comprehensive picture
8 of the County's economic recovery needs and a plan to address them.
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10 The ADO will provide recommendations to policy makers in our cities and county as to what actions
11 our community can take, consistent with the Governor's orders that will have the greatest positive
12 impact with the least amount of resources in the shortest amount of time.
13

14 The recommendations from the ADO and its Expert Panel will be advisory only and it will be up to
15 policy makers to decide what action to take.
16

17 The deliverables should include, but are not limited to:
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- 19 1. **Immediate response** - the ADO is encouraged to work with the Health Department and
20 the member organizations of Team Whatcom to develop a program to promote safe
21 reopening of businesses. The purpose is to improve consumer confidence by rapidly
22 positioning our community as regional leaders/active partners in disease transmission
23 prevention and safe social activities.
24
- 25 2. **Impact analysis** (within 30 days) - Through extensive outreach, establish and quantify the
26 sectors of the economy affected:
27 a. Businesses expected to see a return of demand and thus recover in due course (e.g.
28 Auto repairs)
29 b. Businesses likely to recover with limited assistance (e.g. breweries and specialty
30 manufacturing)
31 c. Sectors likely to find recovery challenging (e.g. restaurants, retail, donor funded
32 non-profits and higher education)
33

34 As some impact analysis has been done, the focus may be more on ensuring all key
35 sectors are identified, including the critical inter-relationships between them.
36

- 37 3. **Local actions available** - Local government finances are also under considerable stress
38 and can't be relied upon to provide funds to improve the business climate. Therefore, the
39 focus on locally sourced assistance should be in the form of human capital drawn from
40 within our community. Some examples of how this could be used may be:
41 a. Mentorship matching
42 b. Business management education
43 c. Cash flow management
44 d. Local collaboration
45 e. Promotion of "buy local" policies
46 f. Resource sharing
47 g. Resiliency training
48 h. Local medical supply manufacturing and reuse technologies
49
50
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1 The Expert Panel:
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3 It is proposed that this could comprise of 9-13 volunteers. The panel should reflect the diversity of
4 the County, including diversity of race / ethnicity, gender, and economic background. Ideally, it
5 should include individuals who have previously successfully led their respective organizations
6 through an economic downturn, and also include senior managers of for-profit and non-profit
7 organizations, representation from organized labor, service sector workers, sole proprietor
8 businesses, a representative from the EOC with a business background, and employees of the Port
9 of Bellingham acting under state statute in its role as the County's Associate Development Office.

10
11 This group could be augmented with representatives from different sectors who will be sought out
12 to contribute to their respective industries. If practical, the team could collaborate and leverage
13 resources with similar groups in Skagit, San Juan and maybe Island Counties to build a more
14 regional response.

15
16 Commitment & Governance guidelines:
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- 18 • Meetings should be held online in compliance with the requirements of chapter 42.30 RCW,
19 the Open Public Meetings Act, or in-person when permitted under state rules.
- 20
21 • Members of the group are encouraged to participate in a least two out of every three
22 meetings
- 23
24 • Members may be added or removed by a 2/3rds majority vote of the Expert Panel
- 25
26 • A chair and vice chair should be appointed at the first meeting
- 27
28 • Meetings shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order as necessary
- 29
30 • If decisions are not unanimous, minority reports can be included upon request

31
32 Additional principals:
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34 Recognizing that uncertainty causes businesses to conserve cash and delay rehiring, while certainty
35 and optimism bring business investment and job growth, the team should seek ways to increase
36 local employers' and employees' confidence in the future.

37
38 Recognizing that every adversity in life provides opportunity, the team should look for ways this
39 disaster can be leveraged to make our economy and community stronger and more resilient in the
40 future.
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EXHIBIT B

Health Department deliverables:

The Health Department's critical role in helping our economy recover should include:

- Disease prevention education and enforcement as businesses reopen
- Establishing and promoting best practices to reduce the County government's contribution to the cost of providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to third parties
- Developing a program to provide information to businesses regarding best practices for preventing COVID-19 transmission