

# **Whatcom County Council Public Works & Health Committee**

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



## **Committee Minutes - Final**

**Tuesday, August 8, 2023**

**10:55 AM**

**Hybrid Meeting**

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 12:30 P.M., MAY BEGIN EARLY  
(PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT  
[www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil), OR CALL 360.778.5010)**

### **COUNCILMEMBERS**

Carol Frazey  
Kaylee Galloway  
Kathy Kershner

### **CLERK OF THE COUNCIL**

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

## Call To Order

Committee Chair Kathy Kershner called the meeting to order at 11:16 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

## Roll Call

**Present:** 3 - Carol Frazey, Kaylee Galloway, and Kathy Kershner

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

## Announcements

## Committee Discussion

1. [AB2023-500](#) Discussion of an ordinance establishing parking restrictions on Samish Way  
Doug Ranney, Public Works Department, briefed the Councilmembers and answered whether the crosswalk will be a flashing crosswalk and stated it will be.

**This agenda item was DISCUSSED.**

2. [AB2023-505](#) Discussion regarding the Public Works Six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the years 2024-2029  
Doug Ranney, Public Works Department, briefed the Councilmembers and stated they plan to introduce this on September 12th. He summarized upcoming key projects on the plan (Exhibit A).

James Lee, Public Works Department, and Ranney answered how many of these bridge and fish passage capital projects are fish passage-specific projects. The project titles that actually say fish passage are the ones they are working on now but there will be a lot of work coming.

Lee and Elizabeth Kosa, Public Works Department Director, answered why Road Funds can be used for fish passage projects and not the Multimodal Capital Construction projects, what the nexus is for what Road Funds can and cannot be used for, and why the proposal for the Birch Bay to Blaine trails is not also on this list. Kosa stated Multimodal Capital Construction is off-right-of-way so it is not eligible for the Road Fund, but having it on this list allows them to go for the funding, and Public Works needs to put it on here so that if the funding is procured, they know they would expend engineer time to help design and possibly construct whatever it is.

Galloway asked whether they could request the Administration to come back with a comprehensive presentation about culverts to be able see how it

fits in to several different contexts so they can have a coordinated response.

Byrd stated former Councilmember Rud Browne had some good ideas about ways they could start working on this so maybe they could touch base with him.

Ranney spoke about next steps on the item.

**This agenda item was DISCUSSED.**

3. [AB2023-525](#) Discussion of an ordinance establishing parking restrictions on Euclid Avenue as Whatcom County Code 10.24.260

Kershner briefed the Councilmembers and stated this is coming forward as a result of complaints received and answered whether they will be putting no-parking signs up. She stated it is a substitute version for introduction tonight because the original ordinance was for an area that was much larger than requested.

Frazezy moved to recommend the ordinance but no motion was necessary at this time.

**This agenda item was DISCUSSED.**

4. [AB2023-527](#) Discussion of an ordinance establishing parking restrictions on Aldrich Road as Whatcom County Code 10.24.265

Kershner briefed the Councilmembers and stated this came forward at the request of the property owner. She answered how long a stretch of road this would apply to and whether the concern is that people are parking vehicles there that they might be living in. She stated she does not know about that, but they are parking at the entrance of the park and there is not really parking along that road. The place they are parking is an indentation to the entrance to the park which is not a parking area.

Cathy Halka, Council Legislative Analyst, stated she learned from the County traffic division and the Sheriff that this area of road really has a shoulder for the most part and should not have parking along it anyway.

**This agenda item was DISCUSSED.**

### **Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council**

1. [AB2023-522](#) Discussion and request for motion related to Behavioral Health Fund opportunities and recommendations (Council acting as the Health Board)

Erika Lautenbach, Health and Community Services Director, briefed the Councilmembers (see memo on file).

She answered what the recommendations are and stated one recommendation is for two years of dedicated funding with a review after one year and the other is three years of dedicated funding. They anticipate they will come back within a year no matter what the Council's decision is.

Donovan stated he agrees with what Lautenbach said about the needs in the schools, but as a county government we seem to be getting very deep into funding schools. He spoke about not having an accounting of equity issues that the McCleary decision tries to deal with, and whether it is the State's job or the County's job to backfill districts. He does not think it is the County's job but they have been doing it for a while.

Galloway stated she agrees with Donovan's assessment. No matter which option they choose they should have an update in a year or so on how things are going and she would like to see some sort of formalized plan for how the school districts plan to secure funding to stabilize these programs beyond year three.

Frazeley spoke about making it clear in the contracts that this is one-time funding only. The items on the proposed plan are all needs. She would like to see the two (one-time capital) programs in red included in the plan. She would like to maybe give \$1 million to expand the Whatcom Early Learning Center and the full funding for the capital for expansion of school-based health centers (SBHC) to include behavioral health. She spoke about funding sources. If they can do the \$2 million for the Meridian School District that would be great and she would like the full amount for the Bellingham School District which is \$427,750.

Kershner stated she had a tour of the Meridian School District project and the \$2 million that is here is about a fifth of what they are asking for. They have received \$4 million from the Federal Government and they are working with the state delegation to get more money. We have also already given them some American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars to begin this project. She spoke about the programs and services that are planned and stated she is supportive of this project.

Donovan asked whether all the requests are recommended in the proposed plan or just the ones that say, "yes," and Lautenbach stated all the ones in green and blue are recommended, but (though it is not that they do not recommend them) there may be other funding sources for the items in red. Their priority was to get the blue and green items in front of the Council so

they could amend those interlocal agreements with each school district so they can hire staff for the school year, knowing that the deadline for making a decision about the capital projects is much longer. Her request would be that, if they want to make a recommendation, they say an “up to” amount so the County can have a little discretion about what funding sources are used, and then those would come back to the Council.

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Strategic Initiatives Special Programs Manager, stated she echos what Lautenbach said about the capital projects, and particularly the Meridian project. The Executive is extremely supportive of it but they need more time to analyze which County funding sources could best support the work. They also might consider waiting to see what the Legislature does before making a firm commitment. But the Executive fully expects to bring another proposal forward with regards to a capital ask on this project. They would request a little more time. She answered whether a recommendation from the Council should not include the capital components of the plan at this time. It would be the Administration’s preference to separate the capital items from the rest of the chart.

Frazey asked, if we separate this out now, whether there are any other funds other than ARPA that could be used for the Options (“Capital for expansion of SBHC to include BH”) capital project and Schott-Bresler stated the best fund for that project would be the Behavioral Health Fund or ARPA. Frazey stated she would like to add the Bellingham School District capital expense to the other recommendations.

***Kershner moved*** that they recommend all the items with the exception of the Meridian School District \$2 million funding package, with the caveat that we fund them for three years and ask for a review after one year.

Galloway stated her plan for amendments would be to request a plan for securing other local or state funding to stabilize beyond year three and to ask that the Administration bring back their plans for how we might fund the Meridian School District's project.

Lautenbach answered whether including the Bellingham School District project would be causing any grief to the Department’s work plan and whether excluding the Meridian project would put the project at risk. The answer to both questions was no.

Kershner’s motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** 3 - Galloway, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

*Galloway moved* that they request a plan for how the school districts plan to secure either levy or other State or Federal funding to stabilize these programs beyond year three.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Frazey, Galloway, and Kershner

Nay: 0

*Galloway moved* that they encourage the Administration to bring back a proposal on how to fund the Meridian School District's expansion of their Whatcom Early Learning Center to include behavioral health services.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Galloway, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

**This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.**

2. [AB2023-485](#) Resolution affirming that affordable housing and homelessness are a public health crisis and requesting updates on county actions (Council acting as the Health Board)

Galloway briefed the Councilmembers on the substitute resolution.

Kershner made a motion to add some strategies in the third Whereas statement that address homelessness and a statement about managing substance abuse as well and Galloway stated she can make an amendment before tonight.

The committee members voted on the amendment but there was not a main motion on the resolution yet.

*Frazey moved* to recommend approval of the substitute resolution.

Kershner moved to amend the substitute resolution to add substance use disorder after "unemployment" in the third Whereas statement but Council staff stated the language in that portion is from the strategic plan.

Councilmembers discussed where the language could go in the resolution.

*Kershner moved* to amend the substitute to ask Galloway to insert language that includes substance use disorder as a contributing factor to Whatcom County's homeless crisis.

The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** 3 - Galloway, Frazey, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

Galloway pointed out two scrivener's errors on the second page of the resolution and stated she would also fix those for tonight.

**Frazey's motion that the SUBSTITUTE Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL WITH PROPOSED AMENDMENT(S) carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Frazey, Galloway, and Kershner

**Nay:** 0

### **Items Added by Revision**

There were no agenda items added by revision.

### **Other Business**

Frazey stated the last two agenda items were from the Health Board and Director Lautenbach has asked us many times to give direction, so maybe we would need a work session or something on how we want to be informed and what the process is.

Kershner stated because they have so many advisory committees that weigh in on so many of the Council's decisions it probably gets difficult for the Health and Community Services Department to make sure the Council is brought in. More and earlier information is always better and it would be good to have a discussion about how we want to go about that. Maybe they could ask the Council chair to include that discussion in the next Health Board or Committee of the Whole.

Galloway stated quarterly Health Board meetings seem infrequent and per the code the Council can act as the public Health Board during regular Council business, so she thinks they should continue to explore how they can be more frequent in their actions. It would also be helpful to have an overview of what is to come.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:26 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

**Kathy Kershner-via email 9/11/2023**

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

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Kathy Kershner, Committee Chair

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Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

SIGNED COPY ON FILE