

Whatcom County Council (Special)

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



Minutes - Draft Minutes

Tuesday, June 30, 2026

10 AM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

HYBRID MEETING (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE REMOTE JOIN
INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR CALL
360.778.5010); AGENDA REVISED 6.28.2026

COUNCILMEMBERS

Elizabeth Boyle
Barry Buchanan
Ben Elenbaas
Kaylee Galloway
Jessica Rienstra
Jon Scanlon
Mark Stremmler

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

Call To Order

Council Chair Kaylee Galloway called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Elizabeth Boyle, Barry Buchanan, Ben Elenbaas, Kaylee Galloway, Jessica Rienstra, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremler

Announcements**Committee Discussion**

Galloway read agenda item 1 under Committee Discussion and item 1 under Items Added by Revision into the record. She stated that discussion of the agenda items may take place in executive session pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) and RCW 42.30.110(1)(i), respectively. Executive session will conclude no later than 11:05 a.m. If executive session extends beyond the stated conclusion time, the Council Chair will make a public announcement. Attorneys Present are Kimberly Thulin and Christopher Quinn.

Boyle moved to go into executive session until no later than 11:05 a.m. to discuss the agenda items pursuant to the RCW citations as announced by the Council Chair.

Rienstra seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, Elenbaas, and Stremler

Nay: 0

Councilmembers entered executive session at 10:05 a.m.

At 11:05 a.m., the Council Chair announced that the executive session would extend until no later than 11:45 a.m.

At 11:45 a.m. the Council Chair announced that the executive session would extend until no later than 11:55 a.m.

At 11:55 a.m. the Council Chair announced that they had concluded executive session and would resume the Special Council meeting.

Councilmembers discussed AB2026-498 (see discussion and motion under

that agenda item).

1. [AB2026-498](#) Discussion regarding Council Office staffing [Discussion of this item may take place in executive session (closed to the public) pursuant to RCW 42.30.110 (1)(g)]

Buchanan moved to appoint Kirsten Smith to the position of Whatcom County Council Clerk effective upon the vacancy of the clerk position.

Elenbaas seconded the motion.

Galloway stated that councilmembers are excited about the prospects of the appointment. She thanked Cathy Halka for her service in the clerk role over the years.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, Elenbaas, and Stremmler

Nay: 0

Clerk's Note: Buchanan left the meeting at 11:57 a.m.

Galloway asked what information is still needed for the budget process.

Cathy Halka, Clerk of the Council, stated that submissions are due on July 8. She said she has a list of budget submissions provided at a prior meeting and asked for further guidance related to any staffing changes.

Galloway stated that she feels there are still too many unknowns to make any specific recommendations at this time.

Boyle asked for clarification about the deadline to provide additional information.

Halka stated that July 8 is the deadline, but Council could choose to submit a more generalized budget for staff salaries and benefits. She said the Executive's Office indicated that, for the budget exercise, they are asking departments to identify budget cuts of 10 percent. Halka added that the Executive's Office made it clear that they do not make decisions for the Council.

Councilmembers continued to discuss the budget process with Halka.

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

Motion approved to appoint Kirsten Smith to the position of Whatcom County Council Clerk effective upon the vacancy of the clerk position.

Items Added by Revision

1. [AB2026-502](#) Discussion with Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Christopher Quinn regarding potential litigation [Discussion of this item may take place in executive session (closed to the public) pursuant to RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i)]

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Kaylee Galloway, Council Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Jenna Gernand