

**Whatcom County  
Council Committee of the Whole**

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



**Committee Minutes - Final**

**Tuesday, April 23, 2024**

**10:05 AM**

**Hybrid Meeting**

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 11:05 A.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON,  
SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT [www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil),  
OR CALL 360.778.5010)**

**COUNCILMEMBERS**

Barry Buchanan  
Tyler Byrd  
Todd Donovan  
Ben Elenbaas  
Kaylee Galloway  
Jon Scanlon  
Mark Stremler

**CLERK OF THE COUNCIL**

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

**Call To Order**

Council Vice Chair Kaylee Galloway called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

**Roll Call**

**Present:** 6 - Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, Ben Elenbaas, Kaylee Galloway, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremler

**Absent:** 1 - Barry Buchanan

**Announcements****Special Presentation**

1. AB2024-273 Presentation from P. Michael Murphy regarding Medical Examiner accreditation requirements

Patrick Michael Murphy, MPower USA, read from a presentation (on file).

Tyler Schroeder, Director of Administrative Services, thanked Murphy for his presentation and stated after the last conversation with Council, they thought there would be a lot of value in hearing an outside perspective and industry expert on the background associated with the medical examiner profession. They also wanted to discuss the passing of House Bill 1326 in 2021 which ensures that all counties have a compliant medical examiner or coroner system that meets the standards. The transition to County employment is a step toward meeting that accreditation. He stated they will be considering the Unrepresented Resolution on the May seventh Council meeting to bring Dr. Hunt and the Medical Examiner position in-house, and to identify the wage and employment agreements.

Scanlon stated he met with Dr. Hunt and learned a lot about the work and amount of work she and her office are doing, and about their relationships with the community and the families they serve.

**This agenda item was PRESENTED.**

**Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council**

1. AB2024-275 Discussion and approval of request for Council to send a letter in support of Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) of Washington's application to the U.S. Department of Labor's National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP)

Isidra Sanchez, OIC of Washington Education and Career Services Program Director, briefed the Councilmembers and stated the letter request is in support of their National Farm Workers Jobs program. The program

highlights the services they provide to farm workers and/or their dependents to promote education and/or training and to explore opportunities outside of agriculture.

Galloway stated it looks like the organization has done work throughout Washington state, and it sounds like they are looking to expand into Whatcom County, and she asked what that might look like.

Sanchez stated they currently have a staff member that is located in the WorkSource office in Mount Vernon who supports Skagit and Whatcom counties. So, it would be a continuation of services they are currently providing in the area. She answered what they have done in Whatcom County specifically and whether they would be continuing those programs or expanding them, and stated they would be doing both. She spoke about individuals they have worked and are working with and how they are helping those people. She answered whether they would partner with Bellingham's local WorkSource office, whether they sought out the Council or whether a Councilmember came to them to ask them to present, and whether they work with anyone at the State Farm Bureau. She stated their organization sought out Council and that they do not have a specific individual that they work with at the Farm Bureau.

*Donovan moved* to recommend that the Council approve the letter in a vote this evening. The motion was seconded by Galloway.

Scanlon stated he has some proposed amendments to the letter mostly because he is not familiar with the program, so there are some things he does not feel comfortable stating in the letter.

*Scanlon moved* to delete the first sentence of the third paragraph which reads:

Additionally, we have witnessed OIC of Washington's dedication and effectiveness in addressing our community's needs through their three pillared divisions: Education and Career Services, Supportive Services, Outreach, Recruitment and Data.

Galloway asked whether they should strike the whole sentence or just amend it.

*Scanlon withdrew* his motion.

*Galloway moved* to amend the first sentence of the third paragraph of the

letter as follows:

~~Additionally, we have witnessed~~ OIC of Washington's dedication and effectiveness in addressing addresses our community's needs through their three pillared divisions: Education and Career Services, Supportive Services, Outreach, Recruitment and Data.

Councilmembers discussed the wording of the amendment.

Elenbaas stated he would support the amendment but is hesitant to support the overall motion for probably the same reason Councilmember Scanlon made a motion to amend. He would want more information from the actual farmworkers that he works with in the county to know whether they want the Council to support this or not.

Councilmembers and Sanchez discussed the Councilmembers' concerns, the organization's willingness to strengthen their efforts in the community and reach out to other program partners, finding out more about how the farmworker community feels about it before endorsing the letter, the sense that the grant could help OIC of Washington build more capacity to do more work in Whatcom County, endorsing this group for the grant if there is another group in our community that may be competing for it, supporting the letter if the organization is committed to conducting outreach across our county, and what OIC of Washington is providing for those of the youngest ages here.

The motion to amend carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** 6 - Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 1 - Buchanan

*Scanlon moved* to delete the last sentence in the third paragraph which reads: "OIC's track record of creating a generational impact on rural communities throughout Washington State is unmatched." The motion was seconded by Donovan.

The motion to amend carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** 6 - Donovan, Galloway, Scanlon, Stremler, Byrd, and Elenbaas

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 1 - Buchanan

*Clerk's note:* Elenbaas voted no and then later changed his vote to a yes after Galloway's comments below.

Galloway stated if Elenbaas could forward this to his contacts with the Farm Bureau, locally, or others in his network, to see if they might provide comment or insight before the evening meeting that would be valuable.

The motion to recommend approval of the letter as amended failed by the following vote:

**Aye:** 3 - Galloway, Scanlon, and Donovan

**Nay:** 2 - Elenbaas and Stremler

**Abstain:** 1 - Byrd

**Absent:** 1 - Buchanan

Byrd spoke about his abstention at this time and stated he does not know enough about this group, what they are working on, and the impacts to feel like he can make a decision at this point. Once he has more information from the farmers in the community he would feel more comfortable voting either in favor or against.

**This agenda item was FORWARDED TO COUNCIL WITH RECOMMENDED MOTION(S).**

Motion approved to amend the first sentence of the third paragraph of the letter so that it reads:  
Additionally, OIC of Washington addresses our community's needs through their three pillared divisions:...

Motion approved to amend to strike the last sentence of the third paragraph which reads: OIC's track record of creating a generational impact on rural communities throughout Washington State is unmatched.

Motion failed to recommend the letter to the full Council for approval as amended.

### **Items Added by Revision**

There were no agenda items added by revision.

### **Other Business**

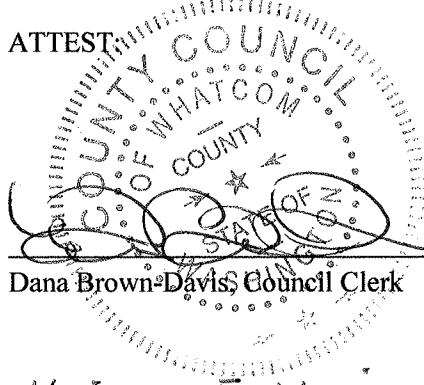
There was no other business.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:54 a.m.

The County Council approved these minutes on May 7, 2024.

ATTEST



Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Handwritten signature of Barry Buchanan in black ink.

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

Handwritten signature of Kristi Felbinger in black ink.  
Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription