

RESOLUTION NO. _____

REQUIRING ADDITIONAL PUBLIC NOTICE OF PROPOSED ~~WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL ACTION TO INCREASE TAXES~~ TAX MEASURES AND SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Council is elected to represent the people of Whatcom County and serve in their best interests; and

WHEREAS, public participation in the legislative process enables Council to make well-informed decisions and ensures that government remains responsive and accountable to the people; and

WHEREAS, Council is committed to fostering an open and transparent public process that actively encourages participation and feedback from community members; and

WHEREAS, Council periodically considers legislation that, if adopted, would increase taxes within Whatcom County; and

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Council periodically acts in other legal capacities established by state law, including but not limited to serving as the Board of Supervisors of the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District and other governing bodies, and in those capacities may levy taxes, establish fees, or take other legislative actions authorized by law; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County provides essential public services including road construction and maintenance, law enforcement, prosecution, public defense, courts, emergency medical services, public health, flood control, and other services relied upon by county residents; and

WHEREAS, taxes, fees, grants, and other public revenues authorized by law are the primary means by which Whatcom County public services are funded; and

WHEREAS, tax increases can have a significant impact on the financial wellbeing of the people of Whatcom County, particularly those who are most vulnerable; and

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Charter 2.30 and the Whatcom County Code at 2.02.120 requires proposed ordinances or summaries thereof, the location where copies are filed and times the proposed ordinances are available for inspection be published upon introduction and again upon enactment; and

WHEREAS, the Washington Open Meetings Act at Chapter 42.30 RCW requires any legislative act must occur at a meeting that is open to the public and advanced notice of the meeting Agenda be made available to the public as also reflected at Whatcom County 2.02.045; and

WHEREAS, Council wishes to further increase the visibility of potential tax increases within Whatcom County in order to ensure that community members have ample opportunity to learn about the proposed tax and provide informed input.

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Council routinely conducts public hearings regarding proposed ordinances and other legislative actions that may affect county laws, taxes, fees, budgets, land use, or public services, and timely public notice of those hearings promotes informed public participation; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Whatcom County Council that Council Office staff shall provide additional public notice when:

1. A proposed ordinance, resolution, or other legislative action that would levy, modify, repeal, or submit to the voters a tax is first included on a publicly posted Council agenda; or
2. The Council schedules a public hearing on any matter.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the additional public notice required by this resolution shall be provided at the same time the applicable Council agenda is first made available to the public and shall include:

~~of all Whatcom County ordinances, resolutions, or other agenda items that will result in an increase in taxes within Whatcom County if the policy is enacted prior to the meeting at which the agenda item will first be considered, as follows:~~

1. Posting on a County Council-managed webpage dedicated to this purpose;
2. Posting on all County Council social media accounts;
3. Submitting via press release to Whatcom County news outlets.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, these additional notice provisions are meant to supplement legally required notice provisions set forth in state law and local code.

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2026

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Cathy Halka, Clerk of the Council

Kaylee Galloway, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Kimberly Thulin 7/6/2026 via email (KO)

Civil Deputy Prosecutor