

Whatcom County Council Committee of the Whole

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



Committee Minutes - Final

VIRTUAL MEETING - ENDS NO LATER THAN 12:15 P.M.

Tuesday, October 13, 2020

11:10 AM

Virtual Meeting

COUNCILMEMBERS

Rud Browne
Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan
Ben Elenbaas
Carol Frazey
Kathy Kershner

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Council Chair Barry Buchanan called the meeting to order at 11:15 a.m. in a virtual meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Rud Browne, Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, Carol Frazey, Ben Elenbaas and Kathy Kershner

Absent: None

Special Presentation

1. [AB2020-411](#) Report and request for a motion by the County Council Committee of the Whole to send final draft Countywide Planning Policy amendments to the cities for review and approval

Matt Aamot, Planning and Development Services Department, briefed the Councilmembers and answered if there is anything new in the packet or new policies since they last discussed this, whether there were any changes in policies concerning the adjudication process, and the timeline for the whole process.

Byrd moved approval. The motion was seconded by Frazey.

Kershner suggested a friendly amendment to the wording of the motion as follows: move that County Council Committee of the Whole to send final draft Countywide Planning Policy amendments to the cities for review and approval.

Byrd accepted the friendly amendment.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Browne, Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

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

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2020-219](#) Discussion and update on strategies and other items related to COVID-19 (Council and Health Board)

The following people spoke and answered questions:

- Erika Lautenbach, Health Department Director
- Scott McCreery, Whatcom Unified Command Incident Commander

- Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
- Karen Frakes, Prosecuting Attorney's Office
- Kathleen Roy, Health Department
- Tyler Schroeder, Executive's Office

Lautenbach and McCreery updated Councilmembers on the plan to create a longer term and more sustainable structure for the joint response to the COVID-19 crisis by moving the Incident Command to be within the Health Department and described the impacts on the organizational structure.

Councilmembers and the speakers discussed the duration of response and the timeline for how long the Health Department anticipates the structure will be in place, whether the County needs to start looking at permanent funding and staffing models for long term management of COVID-19, whether needed funding is something they should anticipate including in next year's budget should State or Federal funding not be available to fill the needs, how this plan aligns with the Whatcom County Code and Charter and the need for more guidance on that, concerns that having it in the Health Department can address all aspects (including financial concerns) of the crisis and whether they could also work with the Business and Commerce Advisory Committee to build out a more strategic plan, whether the Executive Board should exist or have decision-making capacity if the Unified Command is part of the Health Department, and having more conversation before making a decision.

Sidhu stated it would be an operational change as opposed to a change to a department.

Buchanan stated he would like to see Karen Frakes and the Executive's Legal Counsel sit down and look at the Whatcom County Charter with the proposed changes and come up with some guidance.

Sidhu agreed that he and legal counsel could sit down and have that discussion and then get back to the Council and he and Councilmembers discussed whether Councilmembers should also be a part of those conversations.

Kathleen Roy shared a document on the screen (on file) and updated Councilmembers about CARES Act funding. She stated the Health Department is looking for a commitment to the budget so they can start drafting contracts. Councilmembers, Roy, Schroeder, and Lautenbach discussed what a commitment to the budget means and a concern that they would be giving money to the Whatcom Business Alliance.

Councilmembers concurred that the Health Department could move forward.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

- 2. [AB2020-345](#) Discussion of proposed Cherry Point amendments

Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council, updated the Councilmembers on a proposed date and time for a work session.

Councilmembers discussed the list of anticipated topics for discussion and who should be able to attend and participate in the work session.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

The County Council approved these minutes on October 27, 2020.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

SIGNED COPY ON FILE