

**Whatcom County
Council Finance and Administrative Services Committee**

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



Committee Minutes - Draft Minutes

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

10:20 AM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

**AGENDA REVISED 3.7.2025 - HYBRID MEETING (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON,
SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil
OR CALL 360.778.5010)**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

Call To Order

Committee Chair Todd Donovan called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, and Barry Buchanan

Also Present: Ben Elenbaas, Kaylee Galloway, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremler

Announcements

Council "Consent Agenda" Items

Buchanan moved to recommend approval of Consent Agenda items one through thirteen.

Stremler stated he had questions on Consent Agenda Item #1 (**AB2025-186**).

Consent Agenda Item #1 (AB2025-186)

The following people spoke:

- Sarah Simpson, Health and Community Services
- Charlene Ramont, Health and Community Services

They answered questions about how the contractor makes sure retail gift cards are not spent on things they should not be.

Clerk's note: This item was discussed again at the end of the regular agenda below.

Councilmembers voted on the Consent items (see votes on individual items below).

1. [AB2025-186](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement amendment between Whatcom County and Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families in the amount of \$8,840, for a total amended agreement amount of \$827,677.20

Buchanan moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

THIS ITEM WAS DISCUSSED AGAIN BELOW.

2. [AB2025-192](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Axon Enterprises, Inc. in the amount of \$229,668.06

Buchanan moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

3. [AB2025-195](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Aha! Childcare & Family Learning Center to increase kindergarten readiness for enrolled children at a licensed childcare facility, in the amount of \$106,773

Buchanan moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

4. [AB2025-197](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a lease agreement between Whatcom County and Whatcom County Fire District 19 to lease the property located at 9186 Mt Baker Highway, in the amount of \$1.00 per year

Buchanan moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

5. [AB2025-199](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement amendment between Whatcom County and Washington State Health Care Authority to provide funding for the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) Program in the amount of \$40,262, for a total amended agreement amount of \$1,216,096

Buchanan moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

6. [AB2025-200](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Sustainable Connections to provide funding for the Food Recovery Program in the amount of \$11,667, for a total amended contract amount of \$113,542

Buchanan moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

7. [AB2025-201](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Lifeline Connections to provide behavioral health services in the Whatcom County Jail, Work Center, and for Court Involved Youth in the amount of \$211,000, for a total amended contract amount of \$3,402,810

Buchanan moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

8. [AB2025-204](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an Interlocal Agreement between Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham for Correctional Services

Buchanan moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

9. [AB2025-206](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a loan and grant agreement between Whatcom County and Habitat for Humanity for the acquisition of property that will allow for the construction of at least 40 affordable homes in the amount of a \$231,000 grant and a \$469,000 loan for a total of \$700,000

Buchanan moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

10. [AB2025-207](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement amendment between Whatcom County and Mount Baker School District to provide funding for renovations necessary to construct a school-based health center in the amount of \$55,000, for a total amended agreement amount of \$85,000

Buchanan moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

11. [AB2025-209](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement amendment between Whatcom County and Washington State Department of Health to provide funding for various public health services in the amount of \$53,403, for a total amended agreement amount of \$5,318,686

Buchanan moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

12. [AB2025-214](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Ferndale School District to increase kindergarten readiness for students ages 3-5, in the amount of \$149,000

Buchanan moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

13. [AB2025-215](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Cozy Bears Early Learning to increase kindergarten readiness and expand licensed childcare capacity, in the amount of \$43,500

Buchanan moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

Special Presentation

1. [AB2025-216](#) Report from the Information Technology Division

Perry Rice, Administrative Services Department Information Technology Manager, read from a presentation (on file). He answered questions about the Financial System upgrade, the new WhatcomCounty.Gov Domain, and using a communication mechanism such as Microsoft Teams to help advisory committees communicate.

This agenda item was REPORTED.

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2025-198](#) Discussion of proposed ordinance temporarily amending the funding limit of cash flow loans from the Road Fund to North Lake Samish Bridge No.107 Replacement Fund -3905 from \$2,000,000 up to \$6,656,262.32 for a term not to exceed two years

The following people read from a presentation (on file), and discussed the item with Councilmembers:

- Elizabeth Kosa, Public Works Department Director
- Julia Green, Public Works Department
- Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office
- Doug Ranney, Public Works Department

They discussed that they potentially may never see the reimbursement funds expected from the Federal Government to pay the construction costs between now and August in order to complete the North Lake Samish bridge replacement project, the County's process for paying the contractor, that staff will come back and update the Council if they receive an indication that they will not get reimbursed so they can consider different choices, what the contingency is if the Federal funds never show up, why this project has to be completed and the legal consequences of not doing so, that the decision today is just about cash flow and that they would need to have another conversation about finding other funding sources to cover the cost of this project if they are still not reimbursed in another thirty days, that delaying the project too long would potentially mean the Council cannot stay within permitting timelines, and the idea of partnering with other jurisdictions on an advocacy and potentially a legal strategy to deal with the Federal funding issue.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

2. [AB2025-222](#) Discussion of the Ordinance amending the 2025 Whatcom County Budget, request no. 3, in the amount of \$1,751,265 (SEE NOTE ON TITLE IN SUMMARY STATEMENT)

Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office, stated they discussed two weeks ago a new process whereby they would be bringing the supplemental budget ordinances to committee for discussion prior to their introduction. She referred to the documents attached to the file and stated she is here for questions.

Scanlon stated the Birch Bay incorporation feasibility study contract will be before the Council on March 25, 2025.

Pennucci answered a question about the Parks Headquarters HVAC and Tenant Improvements Project and stated it is not associated with the Plantation Rifle Range.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

THIS ITEM WAS DISCUSSED AGAIN BELOW.

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2025-046](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the Attorney General of Washington for cy pres funding, in the amount of \$125,000

Donnell Tanksley, Sheriff, followed up on questions that were asked when they previously discussed this item on January 14th of this year. He stated he has a list of other sheriff's offices and police departments in the state that have applied for and received the funding and what they intend to use that funding for. He addressed other comments and questions from the January meetings.

Councilmembers and Tanksley discussed how the amounts for the different categories of funding were determined and that they were presented by the Sheriff's Office to the Attorney General's Office, a bill in the State legislature that would require people to obtain a permit for the purchase of firearms, that the difference in the agenda item since the last time they discussed it is the addition of the firearm safety classes, and that this funding will help expand the Sheriff Office's storage capacity for property and evidence and ensure that we have enough home and vehicle storage.

Donovan moved that the SUBSTITUTE Interlocal be RECOMMENDED

FOR AUTHORIZATION. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

Abstain: 1 - Byrd

Items Discussed Again

1. [AB2025-186](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement amendment between Whatcom County and Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families in the amount of \$8,840, for a total amended agreement amount of \$827,677.20

Ann Beck, Health and Community Services, answered earlier questions about making sure the gift cards are being used how they were intended, and stated they are given to the County's own nurse family partnership nurses. They get the funds from the State and the gift cards are used to help meet basic needs. The nurses have a long-standing relationship with the those they work with, so they are well-versed in what issues might be there for the families. If there was ever a concern, they could go with the family to the store with the gift card.

2. [AB2025-222](#) Discussion of the Ordinance amending the 2025 Whatcom County Budget, request no. 3, in the amount of \$1,751,265 (SEE NOTE ON TITLE IN SUMMARY STATEMENT)

George Roche, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, stated after the discussion earlier in this meeting they discovered there needs to be an amendment made before the ordinance is introduced tonight.

Randy Rydel, Administrative Services Department Finance, stated the amendment is in the title. The title has \$265,000 more of budget authority than what they are actually requesting. The document showing the summary of the budget is all correct. The amount in the title should be \$ \$1,485,889.

Roche stated that Council staff is working on making that amendment to the item (**AB2025-220**) for tonight's introduction.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Todd Donovan, Committee Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger