

Whatcom County Council Finance and Administrative Services Committee

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



Committee Minutes - Final

**Tuesday, April 29, 2025
9:15 AM
Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers**

**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

Clerk's note: There were technical issues at the beginning of the meeting so the discussion begins at about 10:04 in the recording.

Committee Chair Todd Donovan called the meeting to order at 9:25 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 Stremmer

Announcements

Council "Consent Agenda" Items

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

Stremmer stated he had questions on Consent Agenda item numbers 3-6 and stated he has asked if Council could get an update and presentation on any actual work that has been done to help with the Nooksack River and flooding issues.

Elizabeth Kosa, Public Works Department Director, stated they will be able to do a presentation sometime in June.

Councilmembers discussed what committee that should be scheduled in.

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

1. [AB2025-322](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and AMS Print and Mail Specialists for the design, production, and distribution of primary and general election local voters' pamphlets in the amount not to exceed \$90,000

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

2. [AB2025-324](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a Federal Aid Project Prospectus and Local Agency Agreement between Whatcom County and the Washington State Department of Transportation for the Martin Road/Anderson Creek Bridge No. 250 Replacement Project, in the amount of \$512,000

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

3. [AB2025-325](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Herrera Environmental Consultants to continue supporting the Floodplain Integrated Planning (FLIP) Process, in the amount of \$590,829 for a total contract amount of \$2,998,369 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

4. [AB2025-326](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the US Geological Survey (USGS) to develop and assess non-contact methods for measuring discharge in the Nooksack River during high-flow events, in the amount of \$222,698 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

5. [AB2025-327](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the University of Washington to assess the Nooksack River's morphodynamic response to potential channel and floodplain modifications, in the amount of \$114,000 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)

Buchanan moved that the Contract (FCZDBS) be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following

vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

6. [AB2025-329](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the City of Ferndale to establish the responsibilities of the Flood Control Zone District and the City of Ferndale in designing the Ferndale Levee Improvement Project to a 90% level, acquiring right of way, and permitting, in the amount of \$430,000 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

7. [AB2025-331](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and the Northwest Natural Resource Group for development of a forest management plan in the Lake Whatcom Watershed, in the amount of \$12,063 for a total amended contract amount of \$145,123

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. [AB2025-332](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement amendment between Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham for partnership in the development of a forest management plan in the Lake Whatcom watershed, in the amount of \$12,063 for a total agreement amount of \$53,358

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. [AB2025-335](#) Request approval for the County Executive to authorize all County departments to use Washington State Contract #22823 for as-needed equipment rentals through December 31, 2026, with the award to any one vendor in a fiscal year not to exceed

\$100,000

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

10. [AB2025-338](#) Request approval for the County Executive to enter into an Interlocal Cooperative Purchasing Agreement with the City of Seattle which will allow reciprocal utilization of competitively bid contracts, pursuant to RCW Chapter 39.34 Interlocal Cooperation Act

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

11. [AB2025-339](#) Request approval for the County Executive to authorize the purchase of ClearCount 2.5 ScanStation and ClearAudit Admin Station bundles from Clear Ballot Group, Inc., the sole source for these products, in an amount not to exceed \$50,347.10

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

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2025-303](#) Discussion of the annual allocation of Rural Sales Tax Fund

Jill Boudreau, Executives Office, read from a presentation (on file) and stated a couple weeks ago they started a discussion about the Economic Development Investment (EDI) fund and the idea that they might have proposed target investment allocations.

She and Councilmembers discussed keeping a target reserve balance in the fund and whether there should be a minimum for that, what Boudreau's understanding is on the demand for the different allocation "buckets," the trade off of allocating more this year and starting the next year with a smaller reserve, what it would take to get the housing allowance up to 30

percent, that the EDI Board will not be making decisions at their upcoming meeting in May but will be going over the new structure of calling for applications once a year, and Councilmembers working on other ideas for the future.

Buchanan moved to change the fund reserve and target investment allocations so they are as follows: Fund reserve at 15 percent, housing infrastructure projects at 30 percent, Whatcom County at 30 percent, and Government infrastructure projects at 40 percent.

Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office, stated it would be helpful to have the motion affirmed by the whole body as well so the EDI Board has that guidance from the Council.

Councilmembers and Boudreau discussed the estimated fund balance and dollar amounts in the original staff memo compared to now.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Buchanan and Donovan

Nay: 0

Abstain: 1 - Byrd

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

Motion approved to change the fund reserve and target investment allocations so they are as follows: Fund reserve at 15 percent, housing infrastructure projects at 30 percent, Whatcom County at 30 percent, and Government infrastructure projects at 40 percent.

2. [AB2025-341](#) Discussion on 2025-2026 mid-biennium review with initial budget instructions and draft calendar

Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office, read from a presentation (on file) about what the Administration is thinking regarding the initial budget development for the mid-biennium review, and answered questions.

Councilmembers and Pennucci discussed what they would like to see in regard to public participation, whether Council should consider having a budget committee, the process for Councilmembers to discuss and decide where they might want to take money from one part of the budget to add to a priority somewhere else, and whether updating the County's inventory of services has ever been done.

Randy Rydel, Administrative Services Department Finance Director, stated the inventory of services have been given more priority in the past when the

County is in a time of financial constraint, but has not been the focus as much in recent times.

Pennucci and Rydel answered whether Council could have access to the current inventory of services, and changing the way they show the budget so that councilmembers can see the base budget and not just what is being requested above and beyond it.

Councilmembers and the speakers discussed having budget work sessions in Committee of the Whole before July, why the executive is saying no to across-the-board cuts and how it allows them to evaluate the impact of taking a given cut, that they are facing a situation in which they will have to do less with less, and whether the Council should self-impose deadlines on themselves to get the work done.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2025-290](#) Ordinance amending the project based budget for the N. Fork Road/Kenney Creek Fish Passage fund, Request No. 2

Buchanan moved that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

2. [AB2025-293](#) Ordinance amending the project budget for the Courtroom Audio Visual Systems Upgrade, request no. 1

Byrd moved that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

3. [AB2025-302](#) Resolution amending the 2025 Flood Control Zone District and Subzones Budget, request no. 1, in the amount of \$14,400 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)

Buchanan moved that the Resolution (FCZDBS) be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

4. [AB2025-310](#) Ordinance amending the project budget for the Lookout Mountain Road Repairs Project Fund, request no. 1

Byrd moved that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

5. [AB2025-314](#) Ordinance amending the 2025 Whatcom County Budget, request no. 4, in the amount of \$6,227,211

***Buchanan moved* that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION.**

Scanlon thanked the Administration for providing the fourth quarter financial report. He stated he hopes there is a lot of scrutiny on supplemental budget requests, especially when new requests come through that would be paid with fund balance.

Byrd stated the new format from the Administration for budget items is very helpful.

Donovan stated the form that summarizes by fund is particularly helpful.

Buchanan's motion that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

Special Presentation

1. [AB2025-159](#) Report from the Finance Division

Randy Rydel, Administrative Services Department Finance Director, read from a presentation and the "Fourth Quarter 2024 Financial Report" (on file), and answered questions.

Discussion points included:

- Budgeted tax revenue compared to actual revenue received, lower sales tax revenues that were offset by the unbudgeted Enhanced 911 tax, sales tax predictions, and other revenue highlights
- The variation in non-departmental expenditures between 2022-2024 due to the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, and other expenditure highlights

- What the special funds are that receive sales tax revenue and will require monitoring (affordable housing, homeless housing, public safety)

Aly Pennucci, Executive's Office, answered when the hiring freeze was implemented and when it ended.

This agenda item was REPORTED.

2. [AB2025-319](#) Report from the Facilities Division of the Administrative Services Department
- Councilmembers ran out of time and Donovan stated this presentation would be scheduled for the next Council meeting date.

This agenda item was NOT ACTED UPON.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

Donovan stated he wants to make sure they follow up on scheduling Committee of the Whole discussions on the budget.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:44 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Todd Donovan-via email 5/5/2025

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Todd Donovan, Committee Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger

SIGNED COPY ON FILE