

# **Whatcom County Council Committee of the Whole**

**COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
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## **Committee Minutes - Final**

**VIRTUAL MEETING - ENDS NO LATER THAN 3:15 P.M.**

**Tuesday, July 7, 2020**

**1:55 PM**

**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 2:30 p.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

## Announcements

## Committee Discussion

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

Erika Lautenbach, Health Department Director, updated the Councilmembers on the following:

- An increased rate of COVID-19 cases in people under 30 and in those 19 and younger, and in the North County
- Concerns about people not effectively isolating and quarantining
- The statewide mask mandate for people and businesses which went into effect today
- Data improvements at the Health Department concerning outbreaks
- A risk assessment tool to be rolled out with weekly data sheets on the current state of cases in the county
- The Health Department working through how to manage County furlough requirements while minimizing impacts

The following people presented an update (presentation on file) on the COVID Employer Support Task Force:

- Chi-Na Stoane
- Holly O'Neil
- Sterling Chick
- Steve Bennett

Don Goldberg, Port of Bellingham, spoke about the role of the Regional Economic Partnership in developing materials and messaging for the task force, working to get buy-in from companies with best practices and how they can be adaptive to what lies ahead.

He and the other presenters answered which group is taking the lead on

communicating to the business community, encouraging peer partnerships among businesses, and tracking which businesses have been contacted and followed up on.

Greg Stern, Whatcom County Health Officer, spoke about the role of testing and other measures in controlling the transmission of COVID-19, an increase in positive cases a day, Whatcom County's testing capacity, how many Whatcom County residents have been tested in Skagit County, requirements and criteria for someone to get tested, and plans for increasing testing capacity.

Lautenbach spoke about the Health Department's work with Whatcom Unified Command, the Medical Reserve Corps and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to establish a drive-through testing site being piloted this Friday at Civic Field; acknowledged the challenges in the community for being tested; and asked that people with issues or concerns about testing contact the Health Department.

Buchanan stated that the chair of the Planning Committee agreed to postpone the Planning and Development meeting for two weeks so this discussion could continue. He opened up the meeting to public comments and no-one spoke.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, and Cathy Halka, Council Office, spoke about how to speak at the meeting.

Lautenbach and Stern answered questions about the staffing requirements for the new testing site, getting clear guidance on who should be tested, who are the partners involved in setting up the Civic Field site, how long someone should wait to be tested after an exposure to account for an incubation period and optimize the accuracy of testing, how many tests they will be able to perform at the Civic Field site, what we are doing now to solve a potential bottleneck caused by the lack of testing supplies, why there is currently not more growth in the number of people in the hospital with the increase of positive cases, why Whatcom County is not sharing location data concerning outbreaks, who will be the leader responsible for getting the pilot testing site up and running by Friday, July 10, whether Peace Health and Family Care Network are partners in the new testing site, whether there is a way to communicate current positive COVID-19 cases as opposed to cumulative positive cases, and why the number of people who have recovered is not included in the website metrics.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, answered a question about the status of the

isolation facility on Byron Avenue, whether it would be a better option to purchase that facility with CARES Act dollars, and involving the Public Works Department to aid in setting up the testing site.

Buchanan opened up the meeting to public comments and the following person spoke:

- Katherine Chambers

Health Department staff answered how many people they have not been able to link to the source of an exposure and whether the Health Department asks a confirmed case if they have been present at a protest.

Sidhu stated that testing tells whether a person has been following the precautions but does not lower the spread of COVID-19.

*Clerk's note: Buchanan stated that he will remove AB2020-263 from this committee agenda but that it will remain on the Council agenda.*

**This agenda item was DISCUSSED.**

2. [AB2020-234](#) Discussion regarding goals, guidelines, and approach to updating current and future budgets

***Donovan moved*** to recommend approval of the proposed Resolution (AB2020-294) (in the packet but not on the agenda) agreeing with the Executive's priorities and adding additional Council priorities. The motion was seconded by Frazey.

***Frazey moved*** to amend the resolution to add the following two bullet items to the "Now Therefore Be It Resolved section:

- Prepare an addendum for the General Fund, and other funds reliant on the General Fund transfers, that includes a prioritized targeted list of cost reduction proposals totaling 20% of the unrestricted revenue
- Prioritized available funding for the benefit of children and families

Councilmembers discussed the motion and the proposed Resolution.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, stated the administration will be flexible but needs suggestions that are not open ended.

Councilmembers and Sidhu continued to discuss the motion.

*Donovan restated his motion and moved* to recommend approval of the proposed Resolution on packet page 198 with an amendment of adding two bullet points as stated above.

The motion that the Resolution be amended carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** 6 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Frazey, and Browne

**Nay:** 0

**Absent:** 1 - Kershner out of the meeting

The motion that the Resolution be recommended for approval as amended carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** 4 - Donovan, Frazey, Browne, and Buchanan

**Nay:** 2 - Byrd and Elenbaas

**Absent:** 1 - Kershner out of the meeting

**This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND A MOTION WAS APPROVED to recommend the amended Resolution for approval.**

### **Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council**

1. [AB2020-263](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to sign a proposed interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the cities relating to interim procedures for amending the Countywide Planning Policies

See clerk's note above. This item was withdrawn from the committee agenda in the interest of time but will remain on the Council agenda.

**This agenda item was WITHDRAWN from the Committee agenda.**

### **Other Business**

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 5 p.m.

The County Council approved these minutes on August 5, 2020.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

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Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

SIGNED COPY ON FILE