

Whatcom County Council Public Works & Health Committee

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



Committee Minutes - Final

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

1 PM

Hybrid Meeting

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 2:30 P.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE
REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR
CALL 360.778.5010)**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Carol Frazey
Kaylee Galloway
Kathy Kershner

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Committee Chair Kathy Kershner called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Carol Frazey, Kaylee Galloway, and Kathy Kershner

Also Present: Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, and Ben Elenbaas

Announcements

Special Presentation

1. [AB2023-242](#) Presentation by Support Officers of Whatcom County

Kendra Cristelli, Support Officers of Whatcom County Executive Director, presented about support officers and what they do. She answered whether there are other communities with an organization like this, and stated there are but not to the same degree.

Buchanan told a story about an experience he had with the program and thanked the speaker.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

2. [AB2023-226](#) Presentation from Health and Community Services Response Systems Division

The following Health and Community Services Response Systems Division (RSD) staff presented about the division and their respective programs:

- Malora Christensen, Response Systems Division manager
- Ashley Smith, GRACE Program supervisor
- Tommy McAuliffe, LEAD Program supervisor
- Robin Willins, Mental Health Court Program manager
- Lacey McCarley, Special programs manager and nurse practitioner
- Jon Dukes, Alternative Response Team (ART) and Co-Responder Program

Ground-Level Response and Coordinated Engagement (GRACE) program Smith presented. Donovan stated he thinks it is today that the City of Bellingham's Ordinance goes into effect where people can be arrested for public use of controlled substances and there is no space in the jail but they are citing that maybe the LEAD and GRACE program can pick up serving these individuals. Smith and Christensen answered whether they have a

sense how much more capacity we need in these programs to deal with that and how much room there is to take more people. Smith answered how the GRACE program gets funded, and whether it is funded with the County and just the City of Bellingham or with all the cities.

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) Program

McAuliffe presented and he and Christensen answered how the LEAD program services are funded, and who the program focuses on compared to the GRACE program.

Mental Health Court Program

Willins presented and answered whether there is more capacity in the Municipal Court than in District Court, whether Drug (Recovery) Court is a different path than Mental Health Court, and how the program is funded.

RSD Nurse Practitioner Program

McCarley presented and Christensen answered how the program is funded.

Alternative Response Team (ART) and Co-Responder Program

Dukes presented and he and Christensen answered how these programs are funded, whether this is the program that will be going to seven days a week soon, and whether there has been any conversation around proactive outreach and creating relationships with housing providers or local small businesses. Dukes gave examples of current proactive outreach efforts.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, spoke about the name change of the Health Department to Health and Community Services and how this work represents that name.

Kershner thanked the presenters.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2023-228](#) Request approval to send a letter regarding proposed legislation to increase truck size and weight

Galloway introduced the presentation.

Josh Collins, Coalition Against Bigger Trucks, spoke about the background of the organization and the issue, what is being proposed at the Federal level, how the change would affect local roads and bridges, and the number of truck-related accidents in Washington state. He answered whether bigger

trucks might equal fewer trucks on the road and thus better safety performance, how many owner operators support this, how much (if any) of his organization is funded by Burlington Northern Railroad, and whether they have factored in and addressed carbon efficiency.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, asked for Collins' contact information so questions could be sent to him.

Galloway moved that the Request for Motion be approved.

Donovan stated the letter says something about the Skagit River bridge that is pretty factually inaccurate. It was a height issue, not a weight issue.

Kershner moved to hold this in committee and get the letter clarified.

Collins answered whether the timeline is okay for holding this item and stated there would be enough time.

Kershner stated they will get Collins' contact information and they can ask him questions offline.

Kershner's motion that the Request for Motion be RECOMMENDED TO HOLD IN COMMITTEE carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Frazey, Galloway, and Kershner

Nay: 0

2. [AB2023-254](#) Resolution adopting 2022 Whatcom County Comprehensive Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan

Frazey moved that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL.

Jennifer Hayden, Health and Community Services, answered whether there are any changes in this plan for Point Roberts and stated there are not.

Frazey's motion that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Frazey, Galloway, and Kershner

Nay: 0

3. [AB2023-294](#) Resolution adopting the Food System Plan created by the Whatcom County Food System Committee

Riley Sweeney, Food System Committee Chair, briefed the Councilmembers and spoke about feedback received on the plan in the last

two weeks.

Kershner stated the Council got an email with feedback on the plan from Whatcom Family Farmers and the Farm Bureau (sent by Fred Likkel) and asked whether the Food System Committee is going to incorporate some of the feedback they received.

Sweeney stated some of their concerns can be addressed in the implementation, some were more aimed at statewide issues as opposed to county issues, but some were valid and could be implemented into the plan with a few friendly amendments.

Galloway moved that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL.

Sweeney went through the concerns presented in the aforementioned email and described a proposed amendment in section 1.3.2 of Goal 1: Objectives & Actions of the Food System Plan (on file) concerning fair scheduling language.

Kershner moved to amend the Food System Plan to strike the word “farm” from section 1.3.2 as follows:

1.3.2 Adopt a fair scheduling ordinance (i.e., City of Seattle), designed by essential ~~farm~~, food, and hospitality workers, to make schedules and breaks more consistent with routines that sustain healthy and safe lives for workers

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Frazey, Galloway, and Kershner

Nay: 0

Sweeney described a proposed amendment in section 2.3.6 of Goal 2: Objectives & Actions of the Food System Plan (on file) concerning the plan seeming to prioritize organic farmers over the rest of our famers in terms of putting them first for water rights.

Kershner moved to amend the Food System Plan to strike the word “organic” from section 2.3.6 as follows:

2.3.6 Create a local water exchange system that coordinates the lease and sale of water rights as they are freed up; prioritize the

water rights for local and **organic** food producers and keep the cost accessible

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Galloway, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

Sweeney continued the address the other concerns in the letter.

Kershner asked whether taking some of the language (regarding sequestering carbon) from the letter and including it in the plan would be beneficial and Sweeney stated that would be an easy addition.

Kershner stated she would like to work with the Farm Bureau and the Food System Committee to address the concerns and marry more of them up in the plan.

Sweeney answered what the impetus was behind developing this food plan.

Councilmembers discussed whether there was any will of the Public Works and Health Committee to hold this item in order to get some of the comments incorporated into the plan, sending it back to the Food System Committee to work with people engaged in these farm groups (Rob Dhaliwal , Fred Likkel or Dillon Honcoop) to get the wording right and then having it come back to Council with full support of everyone in the room, whether a motion to hold could have a time certain, when the Food System Committee meets next, whether the committee would work with Fred Likkel and Rob Dhaliwal on the concerns that they have expressed and any other feedback they have gotten to make sure the plan is as inclusive as it can be so they get buy-in, and whether two weeks would be enough time to get everyone in a room together.

Kershner moved to table until the first meeting in June.

Councilmembers discussed the timing, and whether Elenbaas could be looped in to the scheduling of the meeting with the farm representatives.

Ali Jensen, Food System Committee staff, stated the next meeting of the Food System Committee is Tuesday, the 23rd of May.

Kershner amended her motion to recommend to hold this item in committee until the first meeting in June (June 6).

Councilmembers discussed the motion to hold.

Kershner's motion that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED TO HOLD IN COMMITTEE until the first meeting in June carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Frazey, Galloway, and Kershner

Nay: 0

MOTION SUMMARY:

Motion approved to recommend amending the plan to strike “farm” from Goal 1.3.2

Motion approved to recommend amending the plan to strike “organic” from Goal 2.3.6

Motion approved to recommend to Hold in Committee until the first meeting in June.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:51 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Kathy Kershner-via email 4/28/2023

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Kathy Kershner, Committee Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

SIGNED COPY ON FILE