

Whatcom County Council

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



Minutes - Draft Minutes

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

6 PM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

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

COUNCILMEMBERS

Elizabeth Boyle
Barry Buchanan
Ben Elenbaas
Kaylee Galloway
Jessica Rienstra
Jon Scanlon
Mark Stremler

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

COUNTY COUNCIL

CALL TO ORDER

Council Chair Kaylee Galloway called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. in a hybrid meeting.

ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Elizabeth Boyle, Barry Buchanan, Ben Elenbaas, Kaylee Galloway, Jessica Rienstra, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremler

FLAG SALUTE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

There was no report.

MINUTES CONSENT

Scanlon moved to accept the minutes consent items. The motion was seconded by Boyle (see votes on individual items below).

1. [MIN2026-047](#) Committee of the Whole Executive Session for May 26, 2026

Scanlon moved and Boyle seconded that the Minutes Consent be APPROVED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

2. [MIN2026-048](#) Committee of the Whole for May 26, 2026

Scanlon moved and Boyle seconded that the Minutes Consent be APPROVED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

3. [MIN2026-049](#) Regular County Council for May 26, 2026

Scanlon moved and Boyle seconded that the Minutes Consent be APPROVED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

4. [MIN2026-050](#) Special Committee of the Whole for May 19, 2026

Scanlon moved and Boyle seconded that the Minutes Consent be APPROVED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

OPEN SESSION

The following people spoke:

- Adam Bellingar
- Alan Lifson
- John Westerfield
- Bill Rudd
- Doug Revelle "Yoshe"
- Karen Weed
- Ryan Bowman
- Dave Edelman
- Leah Clark
- Lynn Breakey Clark
- Wendy Czopp
- Indigo Olson
- Ian Dempsey
- Brooks Anderson
- Ron Tongol
- Lyle Sorenson
- Maureen Cleveland
- Natalie Chavez
- Richard Verbree
- Steve Powers
- Bill Stewart
- Cally Huttar
- Marissa (last name not stated)
- Jae Trent
- Brook Eolande
- Rachel Budelsky
- Patrick Alesse
- Dan Warwick
- Lindsey McDonald
- Matthew Goggins
- Stacey Dailey

Hearing no one else, Galloway closed the Open Session.

CONSENT AGENDA

(From Council Finance and Administrative Services Committee)

Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and **moved** to approve Consent Agenda items one through 16. He gave examples of what the Consent items are for. Councilmembers voted on those items (see votes on individual items below).

1. [AB2026-421](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Washington State Department of Health to cover tuberculosis medications for patients who are underinsured or uninsured, in the amount of \$0

Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Interlocal be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

2. [AB2026-423](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Nel/Son Distributing, DBA Nelson Reisner, to provide for the purchase of fuel to be used in Whatcom County fleet vehicles, in the amount of \$850,000

Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

3. [AB2026-424](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Cowden Brother's Trucking, LLC for the disposal of waste produced by Maintenance and Operations vector trucks and street sweepers, in the amount of \$288,000

Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

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4. [AB2026-425](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Birch Bay Water & Sewer District for water main relocation as part of the Drayton Harbor Road Landslide Repair Project, in the amount of \$75,000
- Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Interlocal be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:**
- Aye:** 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler
- Nay:** 0
5. [AB2026-428](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the City of Lynden for the Hannegan Levee Rehabilitation Project (NSK-03-26), in the amount of \$64,280 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)
- Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract (FCZDBS) be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:**
- Aye:** 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler
- Nay:** 0
6. [AB2026-429](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a cooperation agreement between Whatcom County and the United States Army Corps of Engineers for repairs to the Hannegan Levee along the left bank of the Nooksack River (Project No. NSK-03-26), in the amount of \$64,280 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)
- Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract (FCZDBS) be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:**
- Aye:** 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler
- Nay:** 0
7. [AB2026-433](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement amendment between Whatcom County and Washington State Health Care Authority for the Medication for Opioid/Alcohol Use Disorders (MOUD/MAUD) program grant, in the amount of \$200,000
- Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Interlocal be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:**
- Aye:** 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

8. [AB2026-435](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement amendment between Whatcom County and Washington State Department of Health to increase funding for the 2025-2027 Consolidated Contract, specifically the Maternal & Child Health Block Grant, in the amount of \$47,392 for a total amended agreement amount of \$11,334,197

Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Interlocal be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

9. [AB2026-436](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Clean Earth Environmental Solutions, Inc. to authorize a three-year extension of services, ensuring the uninterrupted transportation and disposal of moderate-risk waste from Whatcom County's Disposal of Toxics Facility, in the amount of \$367,500 annually, and for a total amended contract amount of \$1,452,500

Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

10. [AB2026-437](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Kulshan Supported Employment to extend the contract for one year, providing supported employment and community inclusion services to eligible individuals with developmental disabilities, in the amount of \$1,889,779 for a total amended contract amount of \$3,478,552

Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

11. [AB2026-439](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Max Higbee Center to extend the contract for one year, allowing the continuation of supported employment and community inclusion services for eligible individuals with developmental disabilities, in the amount of

\$69,603 for a total amended contract amount of \$113,483

Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

12. [AB2026-440](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement amendment between Whatcom County and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, for extra duty overtime patrols, in the amount of \$35,000

Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Interlocal be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

13. [AB2026-441](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services (DVSAS) to extend the contract for six months, allowing the continuation of funding for personnel and other costs necessary to operate and maintain three safe shelters in Whatcom County, including a 21-bed house for women with children and two other houses for single women, in the amount of \$65,526 for a total amended contract amount of \$353,448

Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

14. [AB2026-445](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to award Bid #26-30 and enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Everett Ship Repair for the Drydock Repair and Maintenance of the Whatcom Chief Ferry in the amount of \$1,061,069.56

Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Bid Award be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

15. [AB2026-446](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an agreement between

Whatcom County and the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services for reimbursement of a percentage of Superior Court Commissioner time when working civil court cases involving Child Support Title IV-D of the Social Security Act, not to exceed an amount set each year by award letter from the Department of Social and Health Services

Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

16. [AB2026-452](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Pacific Power Group to perform generator preventative maintenance, in the amount of \$80,235

Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and moved that the Contract be AUTHORIZED BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

OTHER ITEMS

(From Council Finance and Administrative Services Committee)

1. [AB2026-408](#) Request authorization for the Whatcom County Council to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Whatcom County Executive for the adoption of Whatcom County Administrative and Personnel Policies for the Council Office

Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and **moved** that the Memorandum of Agreement be AUTHORIZED.

Scanlon stated this work stems from a study that Council funded of County human resources practices and is the first step, in partnership with the Executive's Office and HR team, to coordinate all of our HR policies and practices across the different offices.

Scanlon's motion that the Memorandum of Agreement be AUTHORIZED carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

2. [AB2026-416](#) Request for motion to approve the updated 2026-2027 Criminal Justice Treatment

Account Plan

Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and ***moved*** that the Request for Motion be APPROVED.

He stated this is approving the plan for the next two years which helps the County receive State funding to help with local programs for behavioral health and substance abuse treatment around the jail and within our court system.

Scanlon's motion that the Request for Motion be APPROVED carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

3. [AB2026-448](#) Resolution requesting authorization to make an application and enter into a grant agreement with the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office for funding through the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Act Program for renovation of the Lagoon Bridge and other bike and pedestrian accessibility improvements at Silver Lake Park

Scanlon reported for the Finance and Administrative Services Committee and ***moved*** that the Resolution be APPROVED.

Scanlon stated this will bring the bridge back to Silver Lake Park and the idea is that it will be ADA accessible. It is also to improve the trail around that part of the lake. He spoke about the funding, and that there will be public outreach so people can give input on the design of the bridge.

Scanlon's motion that the Resolution be APPROVED carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

Enactment No: RES 2026-023

CONFIRMATION OF EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS TO ADVISORY GROUPS

1. [AB2026-414](#) Request confirmation of the County Executive's reappointments of Jana Finkbonner and Jodi Sipes to the Northwest Senior Services Advisory Board

Rienstra moved and Scanlon seconded that the Executive Appointment be CONFIRMED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

ITEMS ADDED BY REVISION

There were no agenda items added by revision.

INTRODUCTION ITEMS (see actions below separately)

Galloway stated that Introduction item number 1 (**AB2026-403**) is a substitute ordinance and stated she would like to consider Introduction item number 3 (**AB2026-431**) separately so they can consider some amendments.

Stremmer stated he would like to vote on all the introduction items separately (see motions and votes on each individual item under the INTRODUCTION ITEMS CONSIDERED SEPARATELY header.

1. [AB2026-403](#) Ordinance imposing an interim moratorium on the acceptance or processing of applications and permits for the establishment of new or expansion of existing civil detention facilities
2. [AB2026-413](#) Receipt of Whatcom Clean Water Program annual report
3. [AB2026-431](#) Ordinance amending Whatcom County Code Chapter 5.20, Fireworks, to strengthen fireworks regulations by limiting the days fireworks are allowed and prohibiting fireworks during burn bans
4. [AB2026-442](#) Ordinance amending the project budget for the 2015 Girard Street Building Improvement Fund, request no. 1
5. [AB2026-450](#) Ordinance amending the 2026 Whatcom County Budget, request no. 9, in the amount of \$7,941,775

INTRODUCTION ITEMS CONSIDERED SEPARATELY

1. [AB2026-403](#) Ordinance imposing an interim moratorium on the acceptance or processing of applications and permits for the establishment of new or expansion of existing civil detention facilities

Rienstra moved and Scanlon seconded that the SUBSTITUTE Ordinance Requiring a Public Hearing be INTRODUCED FOR PUBLIC HEARING.

Elenbaas stated he would move to add a table to the document and referred to a table displayed on the screen representing U.S. Immigration repatriation statistics by fiscal year for the last 20 years (there was not a second).

Councilmembers discussed the substitute ordinance and the data presented, that the moratorium has to do with land use, that they made changes in the substitute based on feedback they received, that Council's jurisdiction on this issue is only over unincorporated Whatcom County, that these issues

have been active for some time across administrations, that this would not impact the County's current efforts around construction of a new jail, behavioral care center, or other sort of expansion of services for facilities for behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment, and that County code already allows us to build a jail under an essential public facility but that these types of facilities are not defined in the code.

Rienstra's motion that the SUBSTITUTE Ordinance Requiring a Public Hearing be INTRODUCED FOR PUBLIC HEARING carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas, and Stremler

2. [AB2026-413](#) Receipt of Whatcom Clean Water Program annual report

Elenbaas moved and Buchanan seconded that the Document(s) be RECEIVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

3. [AB2026-431](#) Ordinance amending Whatcom County Code Chapter 5.20, Fireworks, to strengthen fireworks regulations by limiting the days fireworks are allowed and prohibiting fireworks during burn bans

Galloway moved and Boyle seconded that the Ordinance Requiring a Public Hearing be INTRODUCED FOR PUBLIC HEARING.

Galloway asked that they introduce the ordinance to allow for public process, and she spoke about amendments she would like to make.

She spoke about Whatcom County Code (WCC) 5.20.095, Period of use (on page 9) and stated she would like to add "and limitations" to the section title and then add a sentence as subsection C that reads:

Consumer fireworks are prohibited from being used or discharged within 100 feet of homes, buildings or other structures at risk of fire.

Elenbaas stated he believes the public comment they received was that it should say 150 feet from buildings they do not own (the point being the buildings they do not own) and Galloway stated it is still the taxpayer dollar that is funding the fire engine and potential response to a fire event. They also discussed that people may live on smaller parcels and not have the ability to be 100 feet from a structure that they do not own.

Galloway spoke about a second amendment to WCC 5.20.105 which would add a stage 2 ban on outdoor burning as a special circumstance and as a compromise, and would add language that gives some authority (on a “may” basis rather than a “shall” basis) to the fire marshal in extenuating emergency conditions to prohibit the discharge of consumer fireworks.

Councilmembers discussed moving this original version (without the amendments) forward in order to hear from the public, the possibility of introducing the original version as well as a version (under a new agenda bill file) with the suggested amendments incorporated, a desire to hear from law enforcement and fire about how the ordinance might be enforced and what impact it might have on them, and doing more research on effective ways of dealing with the consequences of fireworks through public education and behavior change in addition to this.

Galloway's motion that the Ordinance Requiring a Public Hearing be INTRODUCED FOR PUBLIC HEARING carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas, and Stremmler

ITEM ADDED AS ANOTHER VERSION OF AB2026-431 (with amendments as presented)

[AB2026-475](#) Ordinance amending Whatcom County Code Chapter 5.20, Fireworks, to strengthen fireworks regulations by limiting the days fireworks are allowed and prohibiting fireworks during burn bans

Galloway moved and Boyle seconded that the Galloway version of the Ordinance Requiring a Public Hearing be INTRODUCED FOR PUBLIC HEARING (with the amendments to **AB2026-431** as presented).

Scanlon stated he thinks it would be helpful to have outreach with the tribes and have a conversation with them about what the impact might be.

Elenbaas agreed that they should hear from the tribes.

Galloway's motion that the Ordinance Requiring a Public Hearing be INTRODUCED FOR PUBLIC HEARING carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas, and Stremmler

4. [AB2026-442](#) Ordinance amending the project budget for the 2015 Girard Street Building Improvement Fund, request no. 1

**Scanlon moved and Boyle seconded that the Ordinance be INTRODUCED.
The motion carried by the following vote:**

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

5. [AB2026-450](#) Ordinance amending the 2026 Whatcom County Budget, request no. 9, in the amount of \$7,941,775

Scanlon moved and Buchanan seconded that the Ordinance be INTRODUCED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER ITEMS, AND COUNCILMEMBER UPDATES

Councilmembers gave committee reports and added an agenda item for consideration (see **AB2026-476** below).

ITEM ADDED BY COUNCILMEMBER DURING MEETING

AB2026-476 Resolution honoring the life, service, and legacy of Kevin Hester

Elenbaas read a proposed resolution into the record honoring the life, service, and legacy of Kevin Hester, Mayor of Nooksack, who passed away earlier today, and councilmembers made minor friendly amendments.

Donnell Tanksley, Sheriff, answered if Hester was Chief Civil Deputy and stated he was at the time that he retired.

Scanlon stated he really liked working with Hester and Tanksley thanked the Council for doing this.

Elenbaas's motion that the Resolution be APPROVED carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

Enactment No: RES 2026-024

OTHER ITEMS, AND COUNCILMEMBER UPDATES CONTINUED

Boyle read remarks regarding a special gathering she and Councilmember Rienstra recently attended for Setting Sun Circle (formerly Children of the Setting Sun) as it recognized its new home located near the Swe'lus family ancestral home that existed pre-treaty in downtown Bellingham. On Friday

evening, the Swe'lus family brought back the place's original name (Xw'otqwem) with a ceremony on the creek supported by Setting Sun Circle and the Lummi Nation. She presented a hand made box (made by students at Lummi Nation High School) which is ceremoniously returning the name of Maritime Heritage Park and which she and Councilmember Rienstra received on behalf of the County.

Buchanan spoke about Maritime Heritage Park and its connection to the tribes.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Kaylee Galloway, Council Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger