

# **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, May 27, 2025**

**9:15 AM**

**Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers**

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 10:35 A.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON,  
SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT [www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil),  
OR CALL 360.778.5010); AGENDA REVISED 5.27.2025**

### **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 9:17 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

## **Roll Call**

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

Also Present: Kaylee Galloway, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremmer

## **Announcements**

### **Council "Consent Agenda" Items**

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

Byrd stated he had questions on Consent Agenda item two (**AB2025-374**) and stated it seems it is something they could easily be using AI for.

The following people spoke:

- Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office
- Ann Beck, Health and Community Services

They discussed looking at all available technology, that some situations in which language interpretation and translation services are needed might be in areas where technology may not be available, that they want to make sure there is a certified medical translator if there are medical conversations happening, that they are just not in a place yet where they have figured how work to with AI within those variables, and the term of this agreement which goes to December of this year.

Byrd stated it may be something they could look at prior to the contract's renewal and Beck stated they would love to work with other departments too that might have more insight into how AI would be used at the County.

Donovan stated he had questions about Consent Agenda item eight (**AB2025-391**).

Bennett Knox, Parks and Recreation Department Director, answered whether this contract is finishing the HVAC system and explained why they are still adding to the cost of the project. He stated this is an amount

Council already approved but they had to get the change order in place. It does not change the amount that Council approved at the last Council meeting. He answered why they did a change order.

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

1. [AB2025-359](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and DentALL, PLLC to add extra hours for Jail Dental Services in the amount of \$69,000 for a total contract amount of \$320,600

**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. [AB2025-374](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Glyph Language Services, Inc. to provide language interpretation and translation services for various public health programs in the amount of \$48,329 for a total amended contract amount of \$141,329

**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. [AB2025-375](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and The Arc of Whatcom County to provide developmental disabilities information, education, and family support, in the amount of \$203,882

**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. [AB2025-385](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to provide behavioral health outreach services, in the amount of \$117,849

**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

5. [AB2025-388](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a grant amendment between Whatcom County and the State of Washington Department of Ecology to receive funding for WRIA 1 collaborative water supply planning, in the amount of \$214,400, for a total amended amount 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

6. [AB2025-389](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement amendment between Whatcom County and Washington State Military to rearrange the amounts in the budget categories

**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

7. [AB2025-390](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and FSi Engineers to provide design and engineering services for the Parks Headquarters HVAC and tenant improvements in the amount of \$35,442 for a total amended contract amount of \$237,050

**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. [AB2025-391](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Tiger Construction, Ltd. to complete final mechanical, filtration and ventilation improvements for the Plantation Rifle Range HVAC project in the amount of \$226,476.64 for a total amended contract amount of \$1,393,961.06

**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

9. [AB2025-393](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to award Bid #25-20 and enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Summit Construction Group, Inc. for HVAC replacement and tenant improvements at the Parks Headquarters, in the amount of \$856,256

**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. [AB2025-394](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to provide materials fabrication, testing and inspection; asphalt mix design and verification; preparation of "Record of Materials" documents; test drilling; and other engineering/geologic/testing services, in the amount of \$100,000

**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

### **Special Presentation**

1. [AB2025-415](#) Quarterly Report from the Finance Division

Randy Rydel, Administrative Services Department Finance Director, read from a presentation (on file) on the 1st Quarter 2025 Report (also on file). He spoke about the uncertainty around sales tax collection for 2025 and that they were up for February but down three and a half percent for March (compared to March of 2024). He spoke about an error in which the State gave our sales tax distribution to another jurisdiction and then later corrected it, and he answered questions. He reported on property tax and grant revenue.

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office, answered how spending is going

for the opioid and vape settlements, and stated a million dollars of the opioid settlement money was transferred into the 23-hour Crisis Relief Center project based budget. As they await the future of that project, the rest of the revenue is coming in and the Health Department is working on a spending proposal for the opioid settlement plan.

Scanlon stated he would like to schedule a discussion to talk about that proposal.

Rydel answered questions about grant revenue and the accounting method he is using which matches revenue with eligible expenses. He spoke about savings in the budget from wage lapse (unfilled positions) as of mid-May (see "Correction to Quarterly Report" on file) and answered questions.

Schott-Bresler stated that departments are going to be expected to absorb a number of costs into their 2026 mid-biennium adjustments, and this lapse will help them as they proceed into the next year and think about not filling vacant positions. She and Rydel spoke about other costs coming to departments in 2026 that they will have to absorb.

Rydel spoke about the ending fund balance for 2024 and the jump in cash balance for 2025 after property tax collections in April, and he answered how the projected year-end fund balance translates into a percentage of fund reserve. He spoke about impacts to the Behavioral Health, Ferry, and Road Funds and whether they should be adjusting the budget for the Behavioral Health Fund. He stated some contracts that are yet to be let have not been funded yet with budget authority, so they will be coming back to Council to ask for expenditure authority as opposed to granting all the authority and having to take it away. He spoke about plans for more enhanced financial monitoring and answered questions about how many staff are trained in the new financial management system to be able to see if funds are available for purchase orders and make informed decisions. He stated it is up to department directors to figure out what level of staff is appropriate to be monitoring the budget.

Councilmembers and the speakers discussed that if there are concerns with the budget, Council can make adjustments before the fall review, that Finance will come back with more guidance as they get more concrete information on projections, that Council should maybe check in in a month to see how sales tax revenues did for April, that the 3.5 percent increase in sales tax collection in March compared to March of last year comes out to \$166,000, and scheduling a future discussion on the Behavioral Health Fund.

**This agenda item was REPORTED.**

### **Committee Discussion**

1. [AB2025-377](#) Discussion of a resolution approving the sale of easements on Whatcom County property located at 3645 East McLeod Road to Verizon Wireless  
  
Cathy Halka, Clerk of the Council, stated the related resolution (**AB2025-378**) has a substitute and both items have a revised title to correct the address.

Andrew Hester, Public Works Department, stated that this is a General Fund facilities item and not a Road Fund item. He briefed the councilmembers on the property and stated the County has owned the property since the 1970s. Since the early 2000s, there has been a cell tower lease on the property and they were requested by Verizon to work with Puget Sound Energy on getting an easement there because they are going to be doing a cell tower upgrade. He spoke about the terms of the sale and confirmed that the substitute is changing one digit in the address from 3545 to 3645. He stated the resolution will be introduced tonight and have a public hearing on a future date.

**This agenda item was DISCUSSED.**

2. [AB2025-384](#) Discussion of a resolution amending the 2025 Flood Control Zone District and Subzones Budget, request no. 2, in the amount of \$445,550 (Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors)  
  
Gary Stoyka, Public Works Department, stated there are two items included in this request. One is for their culvert program to do design of five culverts in the Black Slough area, and it is partially offset by some grant funding. It was a contract that was on the continuing appropriations list but was left off, so this is correcting that. The other is dealing with the County's water rights. The County holds a number of water rights for its facilities but needs to identify which fund is associated with each one. So, they have decided to have the Flood Fund front about \$300,000 so they can research that, and then they will go back and do supplemental budget requests to the affected funds to make sure that all the money is charged to the correct fund. He spoke about how the work will be done, and stated a contract that explicitly references the law firm they will use should be on the next agenda. This is just the budget supplemental request (**AB2025-384**) and it is scheduled for introduction tonight and approval in two weeks. He answered a question about sharing what the County learns from its own water rights process with the public, courts, and Department of Ecology to make it easier for everybody else, and he stated they can use what they learn in this process to

augment the assistance they are providing. He spoke about upcoming outreach events and webinars geared toward helping people with the water right claim process. He answered whether they are fully staffed in that outreach work, and stated that they are.

**This agenda item was DISCUSSED.**

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

1. [AB2025-355](#) Ordinance authorizing interfund loans to finance cash flow for county road fund up to \$4 million for a term not to exceed two years

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

Elizabeth Kosa, Public Works Department Director, answered whether there are service reductions involved with the savings to shore up the Road Fund beyond leaving 14 FTE positions vacant, and stated they also deferred maintenance and capital projects, made cuts with the chip seal program, and removed the 2025 small area paver. She answered whether they are considering a substitute and spoke about the update that was made (prior to introduction) to add a clause to make sure Council was notified when they do any of these requests.

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

**Aye:** 3 - Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan

**Nay:** 0

2. [AB2025-337](#) Ordinance amending the 2025 Whatcom County Budget, request no. 5, in the amount of \$1,053,510

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

***Byrd moved*** to strike the last item, the \$155,000 (to fund minor remodel of Assessor's Office). He spoke about the request and asked that they bring it back in the 2026 biennium planning.

The following people spoke:

- Randy Rydel, Administrative Services Department Finance Director
- Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office
- Kimberly Thulin, Prosecuting Attorney's Office
- Rebecca Xczar, County Assessor



They discussed that this would be using REET dollars, that it would likely come from the General Fund if they do not pull it from the REET Fund, and that this ordinance is on for action tonight and removing the request would not be a substantive amendment.

Rebecca Xczar, County Assessor, stated she was promised this remodel almost three years ago and it has been pushed down the road due to other priorities. She spoke about the space issues in her office, that this plan is less money than what was budgeted for last year for the project, and that the remodel is really needed for her office.

Schott-Bresler answered what these REET dollars would be used for if they remove the request, and stated the funds could be reprioritized for something else on the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), but \$155,000 is a relatively small amount for capital projects.

Byrd stated this is an unbudgeted request, but the speakers discussed that it was budgeted for last year and just not completed, and it was not budgeted for 2025 because it was expected to get done in 2024.

Xczar answered whether they have assurances that the project will get done if Council proceeds with it, and stated she believes they are ready to go out to bid and that they have drawings and plans and a list of materials needed.

The motion to amend *failed* by the following vote:

**Aye:** 1 - Byrd

**Nay:** 2 - Buchanan and Donovan

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

**Aye:** 2 - Donovan, and Buchanan

**Nay:** 1 - Byrd

### **Items Added by Revision**

There were no agenda items added by revision.

### **Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

**Todd Donovan-via email 6/3/2025**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Todd Donovan, Committee Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Kristi Felbinger

SIGNED COPY ON FILE