



MEMORANDUM

TO: WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
FROM: BARRY BUCHANAN, TODD DONOVAN, BEN ELENBAAS
DATE: SEPTEMBER 24, 2024
RE: INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE

The Investigative Committee assigned to conduct a preliminary investigation of the employment law incident that came to light in April of this year has completed its final draft report.

The Whatcom County Council established this investigative committee on May 7, 2024, when the Council selected Councilmembers Ben Elenbaas, Todd Donovan, and Barry Buchanan (AB2024-310) to form an investigative committee to review employment law decisions discussed at Council's April 30, 2024, meeting (AB2024-294).

The investigative committee first met May 14, 2024, and began scheduling and conducting a series of approximately 14 interviews with current and former county employees, beginning May 24th and continuing into early August 2024. Interviews ran approximately one to two hours each, with interviewees including staff from various County departments, including Public Works and Human Resources, and including multiple department heads, the Executive, and Executive office staff. All interviews were done in person.

The committee has completed the final draft report for our Committee of the Whole meeting on 9/24/24. With the council's support, we would suggest that council staff prepare a scope of work for a third party to examine our policies, procedures, and processes regarding such Human Resources and management matters.

We also believe that this Investigatory Committee should be disbanded to make room for the third party work we have authorized budget for.

We regret this process has taken so long. Scheduling three councilmembers and an interviewee during the summer months proved to be very challenging. We wanted our process to be thorough and the focus be on our employees. We take this responsibility seriously and hope this report and the follow-on third-party work will help begin to restore trust and respect within our workforce.