

**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, March 7, 2023
11 AM
Hybrid Meeting**

HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY NOON (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON AT 311 GRAND AVENUE SUITE 101, SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR CALL 360.778.5010)

COUNCILMEMBERS

Todd Donovan
Carol Frazey
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 11:04 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Todd Donovan, Carol Frazey, and Kathy Kershner

Also Present: Tyler Byrd, Barry Buchanan, Ben Elenbaas, and Kaylee Galloway

Announcements

Special Presentation

1. [AB2023-169](#) Report from Information Technology Division

Perry Rice, Administrative Services Department Information Technology Manager, presented and answered whether they are working toward compatibility of criminal justice software between the Prosecutor's Office, Sheriff's Office, and Public Defender's Office; why the 2022 countywide aerial imagery was rejected; and whether we will have to pay more to have the vendor redo it this year.

Tyler Schroeder, Director of Administrative Services, and Rice answered whether we have received the grant for the water adjudication "courtroom of the future" that is being constructed in the Courthouse in the former conference rooms, whether that will increase Superior Court in general or whether it is just for the adjudication, and whether we are seeing more cyber threats.

This agenda item was REPORTED.

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2023-021](#) Discussion of ordinance amending the Whatcom County Unified Fee Schedule - Ferry Rates

The following people presented and answered questions:

- Elizabeth Kosa, Public Works Department Acting Director
- Randy Rydel, Public Works Department

Rydel stated there have been mistakes along the way in the calculations and that two revenue sources had been swapped. Since 2006 the general ledger account that was in the system was called "Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax" but that is where the ferry deficit money was going into. The presentation stated:

The code states that Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax attributable to the Ferry (MVFT) will be used in the calculation. The code is silent on the handling of Ferry Deficit Reimbursement funds. In calculations all the way back to 2007, MVFT was left out of the Adjusted Operating Expenses equation and Ferry Deficit Reimbursement funds were substituted in.

There are income sources outlined in Whatcom County Code 10.34 used to reduce expenses for ferry operations to create an "Adjusted Operating Expense (AOE)." The Ferry Deficit Reimbursement was never included as part of the reduction of operating expenses. He answered where those funds come from, and stated it is Public Works' recommendation to move those so that they are included in this calculation.

He answered what a desirable ferry fund balance is and showed how the fare box reserve would be affected if we used \$1.3 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, moved the Ferry Deficit Reimbursement from other funding to the AOE calculation, and increased fares by 38 percent. He stated their proposal would be to raise the fares by 25 percent the first year (this year) and then add another 10 percent increase in 2024. He answered whether not applying \$1.3 million in ARPA funds would change the rate increases that Public Works might recommend or whether it would just be a longer period of time before we would be recovered.

Tyler Schroeder, Director of Administrative Services, answered whether we have \$1.3 million from ARPA and stated they probably have about \$1 million without impacting other Council-discussed priorities. He answered whether the expense recovery of \$408,200 for "2022 and prior Fare box deficit" are for years that would be covered under ARPA.

Kosa answered what they are asking of Council today and stated Public Works is recommending that we proceed with the code change to move both the Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax and the Ferry Deficit into the front end of that equation which would help us move forward with that 25/10 percent fare box increase.

Councilmembers and staff discussed what the options would be if they do not use ARPA funds, how much the Road Fund is contributing and subsidizing what the fare box is supposed to be recovering, how the Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee (LIFAC) feels about the proposed increases, whether it has been discussed why the fare box and other funding

is a 55/45 percent split as opposed to a 50/50 percent split, when they can decide whether or not to use ARPA funds, the Administration's plan to recommend a \$1 million ARPA allocation for the Lummi Island Ferry fair recovery along with the 25/10 percent fair increases, whether the increase can be evaluated in a year, and keeping the needs-based fare increase as low as possible.

Byrd and other Councilmembers thanked Rydel for his work.

Donovan moved to move forward with the code changes for fares and revenues as recommended by the Public Works Department.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Frazey, Donovan, and Kershner

Nay: 0

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

Motion approved to move forward with the code changes for fares and revenues as recommended by the Public Works Department.

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2023-183](#) Letter of support for the Small and Rural Courthouse Matching Grant Program for enhanced courthouse security

Kershner briefed the Councilmembers.

Donovan moved that the Request for Motion be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL.

Councilmembers discussed how the letter was sent to Council, whether this is already a bill or whether it is asking to create a new grant program, and making sure our courthouse qualifies as small and rural.

Kershner requested that the Council's Legislative Analyst research the questions further before the Council meeting tonight.

Donovan's motion that the Request for Motion be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

Council "Consent Agenda" Items

Frazey moved to approve Consent Agenda items one through ten. She stated she had a question about Consent Agenda item number eight (**AB2023-175**).

Chris D'Onofrio, Health and Community Services, answered whether this is only going toward eviction prevention, and whether it is just going to landlords and hotels or to other entities like non-profits or homeless services.

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

1. [AB2023-147](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Washington State Military Department to provide disaster case management and housing assistance to households impacted by the December 2022 storms, in the amount of \$396,000

Frazey moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

2. [AB2023-151](#) Request approval for the County Executive to authorize the purchase of two (2) passenger vans, using the Washington State Contract #05916, from Bud Clary Ford/Hyundai, located in Longview, Washington, in an amount not to exceed \$73,707.66

Frazey moved that the Bid Award be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

3. [AB2023-153](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham to support staffing and implementation of the Alternative Response Team Pilot Program in the amount of \$62,969 for a total amended contract amount of \$322,179

Frazey moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

4. [AB2023-154](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to support the Housing and Essential Needs Program in the amount of \$157,120 for a total amended contract amount of \$2,811,264

Frazezy moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

5. [AB2023-161](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Whatcom Long Term Recovery Group to provide disaster case management and housing assistance to households impacted by the December 2022 storms, in the amount of \$360,000

Frazezy moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

6. [AB2023-163](#) Request authorization for County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Bellingham Technical College for oversight of the instructional process of the Paramedic Training program in the amount of \$42,990

Frazezy moved that the Agreement be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

7. [AB2023-170](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Lydia Place to provide funding for motel rooms for families with children who would otherwise experience unsheltered homelessness in the amount of \$172,111.49 for a total amended contract amount of \$573,129.49

Frazezy moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

8. [AB2023-175](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to operate the Whatcom Homeless Service Center in the amount of \$1,344,000 for a total amended contract amount of \$9,033,021

Frazey moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

9. [AB2023-176](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Lifeline Connections to provide behavioral health services in the Whatcom County Jail and Work Center in the amount of \$310,000 for a total amended contract amount of \$1,580,586

Frazey moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

10. [AB2023-184](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Crossroads Consulting to expand the scope and compensation of the agreement, in an amount of \$66,750 for a total amended contract amount of \$217,700

Frazey moved that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Kathy Kershner-via email 3/21/2023

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Kathy Kershner, Committee Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

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