

Whatcom County Council (Special)

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



Minutes - Draft Minutes

Tuesday, September 5, 2023

10 AM

Hybrid Meeting

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

COUNCILMEMBERS

Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan
Ben Elenbaas
Carol Frazey
Kaylee Galloway
Kathy Kershner

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Council Chair Barry Buchanan called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, Ben Elenbaas, Carol Frazey, Kaylee Galloway, and Kathy Kershner

Announcements

Committee Discussion and Possible Action

1. [AB2023-563](#) Discussion of Whatcom County Executive's veto of Ordinance 2023-045, an ordinance amending Whatcom County Code 13.24, Ferry Rates (action may be taken on this item)

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, spoke about his veto of Ordinance 2023-045.

Approximate Timestamp: 3:19

Galloway read from the proposed engagement plan (on file). She stated her hope is that, should the veto be sustained today, they commit to following an engagement plan.

Sidhu stated an engagement plan is feasible and the Administration will work with the Council.

Approximate Timestamp: 5:31

Buchanan moved that, should a motion be made and seconded to override the Executive's veto on this Ordinance, the Council allow public comment on this agenda item. The motion was seconded by Galloway.

Approximate Timestamp: 7:10

Councilmembers discussed the motion and Elenbaas spoke about public engagement on this item.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Frazey, Galloway, and Kershner

Nay: 0

Approximate Timestamp: 11:09

Byrd moved to override the veto. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Buchanan stated the *veto is sustained*.

Approximate Timestamp: 12:24

Elenbaas spoke about the veto, and listening to input from both those on Lummi Island and those on the mainland.

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

Motion approved 7-0 that, should a motion be made and seconded to override the Executive's veto on this Ordinance, the Council allow public comment on this agenda item.

A motion was made to override the veto (of Ordinance 2023-045) but the motion failed for lack of a second. The veto was sustained.

2. [AB2023-569](#) Discussion and possible approval of mid-biennium modifications to the Council Office 2023-2024 Budget

Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council, stated this item is to discuss ideas from Councilmember Galloway.

Approximate Timestamp: 15:51

Galloway described her intent for the discussion.

Brown-Davis stated they could get a discussion started today and then put it on the agenda for next week for actual decisions or Additional Service Requests (ASRs) that the Council might want to move forward with. Those have to be turned in to the Administration by the 22nd of this month.

Approximate Timestamp: 17:49

Byrd spoke about hiring dedicated legislative aids for each Councilmember.

Approximate Timestamp: 20:58

Galloway spoke about adding \$100,000 funding for the Lake Whatcom Policy Group to build capacity and facilitation services (in light of Mark Gardner's upcoming retirement from the City of Bellingham), as well as expanding data and monitoring services and climate and vulnerability assessments. She could take the request to the policy group tomorrow and urge the City of Bellingham to run a joint request. The \$100,000 would just be the County's portion.

Approximate Timestamp: 24:20

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive spoke about where that money might come from in the budget and stated they should talk to the City about what their plans are for replacing Mark and whether they need money from the County.

Galloway spoke about how the interest in third party facilitation came to be.

Councilmembers discussed getting input at tomorrow's Lake Whatcom Policy Group meeting and bringing back a more fleshed-out proposal on what amounts the different entities would step up for, and what the \$100,000 might cover.

Galloway stated she has been thinking about proposing legislation and figuring out how they can give more Council direction to the policy group.

Sidhu suggested they let the policy group discuss what their future is going to look like after the facilitator retires and whether they will need a person. Then that should come as a proposal to all three entities (City of Bellingham Council, Whatcom County Council, and Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District Board of Commissioners).

Galloway stated she will be able to report back after the policy group meeting tomorrow.

Approximate Timestamp: 29:30

Galloway spoke about and Councilmembers discussed other funding ideas including:

- Developing a task force that would bring together all the partners to discuss forestry in Whatcom County and which would develop a forest resiliency plan and a framework for engagement of the various levels of government
- Figuring out how they can support the Mt. Baker School district as a beneficiary in the interim while some timber sales have been paused
- Addressing Food security and basic needs for young children by increasing dedicated funding to the food banks
- Exploring what capital funding support they could provide to the Birch Bay Library
- Building additional staff capacity (as Byrd mentioned)
- Moving up the investment of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) levy plan and implementation plan as soon as possible to expand community paramedic services throughout Whatcom County

Approximate Timestamp: 36:04

Brown-Davis, answered whether we have an estimate of what additional staff would cost and stated it depends on the job description.

Clerk's note: There was a network issue and the sound cut out for a brief

period.

Sidhu spoke about the ability to take a revenue loss and convert American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds into the General Fund and stated the Administration will engage the Council more on the status of ARPA funds.

Approximate Timestamp: 38:48

Councilmembers discussed that the agenda item refers only to the Council Office budget, having Galloway send her ideas to the other Councilmembers so they can think about them, and having further discussion about the Council Office travel budget and making sure there is enough funding to support Councilmember travel for 2024.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:42 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription