

**Whatcom County
Council Finance and Administrative Services Committee**

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



Committee Minutes - Draft Minutes

Tuesday, February 11, 2020

10:30 AM

Council Chambers

COUNCILMEMBERS

Rud Browne

Tyler Byrd

Kathy Kershner

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Committee Chair Tyler Byrd called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m. in the Council Chambers, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, Washington.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Rud Browne, Tyler Byrd and Kathy Kershner

Absent: None

Also present: Barry Buchanan, Carol Frazey, Ben Elenbaas, and Todd Donovan

County Executive's Report

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, reported on the following items:

~ A recent visit to Olympia to speak with the Governor's Office and others about childcare and Sheriff's radio system funding, the Governor's homelessness initiative, and the uncertainties about the Green Apple renewable fuels project which had been proposed to be co-located with the Phillips 66 Refinery.

~Creating a draft application process for Economic Development Investment (EDI) funds

~Gathering budget priorities from Councilmembers before the budget process begins

~The recent "Super Bowl Flood" in the county.

He introduced John Gargett, Emergency Management, who submitted a report (on file) and briefed the Council on the recent flood event. He spoke about drivers not minding road closure signs, using drones to get a better view of conditions, improving radio communication systems, and response coordination. He and Bill Elfo, County Sheriff, answered questions about whether there is a penalty if a driver goes around posted road closure signs and possible consequences, how many properties were affected, how often this type of flood occurs, and the number of affected homes in each city.

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2020-046](#) Ordinance amending the 2020 Whatcom County Budget, request no. 4, in the amount of \$193,202

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, and Tyler Schroeder, Executive's Office,

answered questions about the proposed Executive's Office Outreach Facilitator, what benefit the position will provide for the County, the anticipated costs that will be associated with it, whether it is coming out of the Executive's budget, what the impact will be to the general fund budget and reserves, and whether it will be included in the biennium budget and start in January as opposed to being approved now.

Schroeder gave a brief history and he and Sidhu answered questions about the appropriation of \$100,000 to fund subsidized childcare, what the money will be used for, whether it will solve the problem or just put a temporary bandaid on it, whether it is a County or State function, what the crisis has to do with the minimum wage, whether an analysis could be provided that would show what the Boys and Girls Club model will look like and how the proposed money would be used, whether the County has a revenue and expense analysis of Kid's World's business operations, whether Boys and Girls Club has a plan for assuming the operations of the business, why this centers around only Kid's World and not other childcare centers, how many of those other centers accept kids below the market rate, what the State shortage is, and whether the County will help out other centers.

**Browne moved that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION.
The motion carried by the following vote:**

Aye: 3 - Browne, Byrd and Kershner

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

2. [AB2020-052](#) Ordinance amending the project budget for the New Jail Project Fund 2013-2014, request no. 5

Browne moved that the ordinance be recommended for adoption.

Tyler Schroeder, Executive's Office, and Councilmembers discussed the new name of the fund and whether it should be called the New Public Health, Safety, and Justice Facility Project Fund.

Kershner moved to amend the ordinance to change the name of the fund in the last paragraph:

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that the name of the fund be changed to New Public Health, Safety and Justice Facility Project Fund."

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Browne, Byrd, and Kershner
Nay: 0

Schroeder briefed the Council on the details of the project budget request and answered questions about the amount in the fund.

Browne's motion that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION WITH PROPOSED AMENDMENT carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Browne, Byrd and Kershner

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

3. [AB2020-077](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement amendment between Whatcom County and City of Blaine for the purposes of adjusting the EDI loan terms on the Gateway Regional Stormwater project

Kershner moved that the Interlocal be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Browne, Byrd and Kershner

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

4. [AB2020-047](#) Resolution to approve annual petition for refunds paid list consistent with RCW 84.69.020

Kershner moved that the Resolution be recommended for approval.

Steve Oliver, County Treasurer, and John Romaker, Assessor's Office, answered a question about what triggers a person being taken off the Senior/Disabled exemption program rolls and the requirement for an applicant to inform the Assessor's Office if their income level changes.

Kershner's motion that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Browne, Byrd and Kershner

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

Council "Consent Agenda" Items

1. [AB2020-002](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract with Whatcom

Dispute Resolution Center in the amount of \$96,000

Browne moved that the Contract be recommended for authorization by consent.

Dave Reynolds, Superior Court Director, answered questions about the higher than anticipated costs and clarified a scrivener's error in the amount written on Exhibit B on packet page 57 stating the administrative fees "shall not exceed \$95,000" instead of \$96,000 as indicated in the table of the exhibit, what the cost was before, whether the amount of cases is increasing, and how many clients the Dispute Resolution Center serves.

Browne's motion that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Browne, Byrd and Kershner

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

2. [AB2020-024](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a residential lease agreement between Whatcom County and Sierra Beatson and Robert Hutton III to reside at the house located at 677 North Lake Samish Road, Bellingham, in the amount of \$1,550.00 per month

Kershner moved that the Contract be recommended for authorization by consent.

Mike McFarlane, Parks and Recreation Department Director, answered questions about why the County owns the house, whether the property and house are paid off so that the rent revenues go to the Parks Department, why the rent does not seem in line with market rate, how many homes Whatcom County rents out, whether there will be a rent increase for this year, how long the house was vacant, how many applicants there were, and whether any of the houses the County rents out could be sold instead of rented.

Kershner's motion that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT carried by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Browne and Kershner

Nay: 1 - Byrd

Absent: 0

3. [AB2020-069](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and RE Sources to increase the number of educational outreach opportunities in the amount of \$15,000 for a total amended contract amount

of \$65,000

Browne moved that the Contract be recommended for authorization by consent.

Jeff Hegedus, Health Department, submitted handouts (on file) answered questions about whether the County gets reports back about outcomes of this money and what it is being used for; whether he has the curriculum (handed out); the use of the extra \$15,000 to increase the current scope of work, put more emphasis on efforts on the new food recovery initiative, and provide more direct support to the schools for waste reduction and recycling; and concerns about political activities that ReSources is involved in outside of the program.

Councilmembers discussed funding organizations that have political influence.

Browne's motion that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT failed by the following vote:

Aye: 1 - Browne

Nay: 2 - Byrd and Kershner

Absent: 0

4. [AB2020-073](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Brown & Caldwell to conduct Phase I of the Lake Whatcom Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Reassessment in the amount of \$193,013

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

Aye: 3 - Browne, Byrd and Kershner

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

5. [AB2020-075](#) Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal amendment agreement between Whatcom County, City of Bellingham and Fire Protection District 7 for analytical and billing costs for the Ground Emergency Medical Transport program funding

Kershner moved that the Contract be recommended for authorization by consent.

Tyler Schroeder, Executive's Office, answered a question about whether the

ground emergency medical transport reimbursement a new source of funding to the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system and stated it was not previously included as part of the EMS funding plan. He also answered a question about how the money would be collected.

Kershner's motion that the Contract be RECOMMENDED FOR AUTHORIZATION BY CONSENT carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Browne, Byrd and Kershner

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

6. [AB2020-067](#) Resolution to set public hearing to sell tax-title property by public auction

Browne moved that the Resolution be recommended for approval.

Steve Oliver, County Treasurer, answered a question about potential conflict between neighbors and making all adjacent property owners aware that the Treasurer's Office has authorized a sale, whether laws about improving a property would apply in this situation, and whether the property to be sold could be divided up differently, and whether it has already sold.

Councilmembers and Oliver discussed delaying the public hearing date to give a chance for adjacent property owners to be notified of the sale, and not setting a precedent for allowing people to build something that is not permitted on land that is owned by someone else or the County that in turn inhibits another entity from being able to sell or get fair market value for the property.

Browne's motion that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Browne, Byrd and Kershner

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

7. [AB2020-049](#) Resolution cancelling uncollectible personal property taxes

Steve Oliver, County Treasurer, answered questions about the meaning of "No Assets" on Exhibit A, whether this is a personal property tax on these businesses, and whether businesses pay a personal property tax to the County and how it is collected.

Kershner moved that the Resolution be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Browne, Byrd and Kershner

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

Other Business

Elenbaas submitted a handout (on file) and spoke about citizens reporting flood damage, the need for a permit to fix damages caused by the flood, and the fees required for each permit. He asked if County funds could be used to alleviate the burden on people affected by this flood.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, stated this is only for people in the county and not in city limits, that inspections have to be done, and the County will deal with people on a case by case basis.

Tyler Schroeder, Executive's Office, stated there have been no applicants to date that have come in to go through the permitting process.

Steve Oliver, County Treasurer, stated there is a separate process through the County Assessor's Office to apply for property tax relief.

Staff and Councilmembers continued to discuss the item. Legal counsel would need to be consulted if they were to go forward and the Executive's Office will update the Council if applications for permits come in.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:51 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Tyler Byrd, Committee Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription