

Whatcom County Council Committee of the Whole

**COUNTY COURTHOUSE
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Bellingham, WA 98225-4038
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Committee Minutes - Draft Minutes

VIRTUAL MEETING - ENDS NO LATER THAN 4:30 P.M.

Tuesday, June 16, 2020

2:25 PM

Virtual Meeting

COUNCILMEMBERS

Rud Browne
Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan
Ben Elenbaas
Carol Frazey
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 2:29 p.m. in a virtual meeting.

Roll Call

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

Absent: None

Clerk's note: Browne joined the meeting shortly after roll call.

Announcements

Special Presentation

1. [AB2020-247](#) Presentation on impacts of COVID-19 from childcare business owners

The following people presented:

Aida Rodriguez, Busy Bee Learning Center
Kim Walbeck, Seedlings Early Learning

The presenters answered questions about whether they can speculate about the biggest barriers for other child care providers that have not been able to stay open, whether they applied for the Paycheck Protection Program, whether they are aware of any programs that have closed down and do not have any plans to reopen at this point, what the County can do to help them in their businesses, and whether there are any products or resources that they are having a hard time finding.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2020-219](#) Discussion and update on strategies and other items related to COVID-19

Erika Lautenbach, Health Department Director, updated the Council on the following:

- Case rates are going up since Whatcom County moved to Phase 2
- There has been an increase of people in home self-isolation or quarantine that have needed contact tracing
- There is an increase of exposures due to increased social events
- The employer support task force is working with and providing support to businesses and getting good feedback

She discussed with Councilmembers whether they could put location numbers on common business signage in order to enable feedback and rankings of businesses for compliance, whether there is a risk that the County will go back to Phase 1 if the numbers of cases continues to go up, support of multimedia communication with the community to encourage change in behavior, whether there are any solutions to address deliberately non-compliant social behavior, confusing and mixed public messages about what is an appropriate group activity, how to present messaging that is clear and promotes trust, compliance being based on personal experience as opposed to messaging, finding ways to be creative with public messaging, how contact tracing is being done, ways to do that in the future, and whether there is a consequence if someone does not keep to a quarantine.

Clerks' note: Councilmembers continued to discuss this agenda item later in the meeting after AB2020-234.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

2. [AB2020-234](#) Discussion regarding goals, guidelines, and approach to updating current and future budgets

Councilmembers discussed how they would like to address this agenda item, and whether they could send suggestions for budget goals to the Clerk of the Council to compile so they can be discussed at a later date.

Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council, spoke about the possibility of scheduling a discussion on the budget next week.

Councilmembers discussed the process of determining Council budget goals.

Byrd presented an example of a Whatcom County COVID-19 Economic Recovery Dashboard from the City of Bellingham.

Brown-Davis followed up on whether Councilmembers would like to have a special meeting on June 23, 2020. Councilmembers concurred to meet on that date.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

1. [AB2020-219](#) Discussion and update on strategies and other items related to COVID-19

Clerk's note: This is a continuation of discussion on this item from earlier in the meeting.

Councilmembers discussed the proposed drop-in center on Cornwall Avenue in Bellingham.

The following people spoke and answered questions:

Anne Deacon, Health Department
Tyler Schroeder, Executive's Office

Staff updated the Councilmembers and they discussed whether the County funds the homeless outreach team (HOT) and whether case managers and team members could be increased using the CARES Act funding, other funds that might be available to increase support at the facility, whether this facility will socially isolate the homeless population, concerns about a lack of public process and what would happen to businesses in the area, possibilities for the building in the future, adding outside buildings to the site, and working on requests to provide to the City of Bellingham.

Byrd moved to send a letter to the City of Bellingham before the emergency meeting tonight and ask that they not make a decision on this until June 24, 2020 in order to allow the community to provide feedback. The motion was seconded by Elenbaas.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Byrd repeated the motion to send an email to the City Council requesting that they postpone signing the lease until their next meeting next week to provide the community an extra week of time to provide engagement.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Byrd, Elenbaas, and Kershner

Nay: 4 - Donovan, Frazey, Browne, and Buchanan

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2020-252](#) Resolution inviting other local jurisdictions to collaborate to improve efficiency for the benefit of our taxpayers

Browne moved that the resolution be recommended for approval and briefed the Councilmembers on its purpose. The motion was seconded by Frazey.

Councilmembers discussed the motion, whether the resolution has been shown to the other jurisdictions and the logistics of how to coordinate a

joint meeting.

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

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

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

Other Business

Councilmembers discussed coming up with constructive ideas for the City of Bellingham.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:46 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription