

Whatcom County Council Water Work Session

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



Minutes - Final

**Tuesday, February 18, 2020
10:30 AM
Civic Center Building Garden Room**

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 10:30 a.m. in the Civic Center Garden Level Conference Room, 322 Commercial Avenue, Bellingham, Washington.

Roll Call

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

Absent: None

Watershed Planning Update

The following people spoke and answered questions:

Gary Stoyka, Public Works Department
Steve Jilk, Public Utility District (PUD) General Manager
Chris Elder, Public Works Department
Paula Harris, Public Works Department

Stoyka gave an update about Watershed Planning, including an upcoming update by Robin McPherson from the Department of Ecology (DOE) about the water right adjudication process and what it means for the Nooksack Basin. He and Jilk answered questions about the adjudication process and how existing plans or systems may be affected.

Stoyka and Jilk updated about the Regional Water Supply Planning process for the Water Resource Inventory Area 1 (WRIA1) led by the PUD using grant funds from the National Estuary Program. They gave an update on the Technical Workgroup meetings with pilot area participants and their work of looking at not only water supply but also habitat and water quality, what funding sources are available, and next steps.

Stoyka and Elder updated and answered questions about two water use efficiency projects, one to look at domestic supply issues and the other to look at agricultural efficiency issues. He spoke about the agricultural community's concern about the issue of relinquishment and a study and report done by RH2 Engineering on whether a water bank and/or the water trust program in the State could be used in Whatcom County to address that concern.

He gave an update on the work of the Planning Unit and about improving communications between them and the Council.

Stoyka and Harris updated and answered questions about planning for streamflow restoration grant funding and what kind of projects are being pursued.

Lake Whatcom Management Program 2020-2024 Work Plan

The following Public Works Department staff presented and answered questions:

Gary Stoyka
Chris Elder
Ingrid Enschede
Cathy Craver
Paula Harris

Stoyka presented on the Lake Whatcom Management Program 2020-2024 Workplan. He and staff answered questions about whether the County is in a land purchasing program like the City of Bellingham, how to view the metrics for each of the Program Areas covered in the presentation, how phosphorus in the lake is measured and reduced and how the State requirements for the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) can be met, how much of the projected five-year costs for the Stormwater Program Area are for capital projects and how much is for maintenance, managing hazardous materials in areas other than the lake, looking into the use of Roundup, whether there is a statewide aquatic invasive species act, and whether there is a solution to the problem of inspecting water planes that may come directly to the lake from another body of water.

Other Business

The following Public Works Department staff spoke and answered questions:

Gary Stoyka
Paula Harris

Councilmembers and staff discussed looking at long term solutions to flooding in the County, a recently completed study by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) which was compared with past studies and showed a net accumulation of sediment in the lower river upstream of Everson, the movement of sediment over time showing how the river "digests" the mountain, what the latest flood and sediment movement will mean for the whole downstream system, and the status of County flood-related pilot projects. Councilmembers will get questions to Harris for further discussion at a future meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

The County Council approved these minutes on March 10, 2020.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

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