

# **Whatcom County Council Water Work Session**

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



## **Minutes - Draft Minutes**

**Tuesday, June 23, 2020**

**10:30 AM**

**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 10:33 a.m. in a virtual meeting.

**Roll Call**

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

**Absent:** None

**Floodplain Integrated Planning (FLIP) update**

Paula Harris, Public Works Department, gave a presentation and updated the Councilmembers. She and Councilmembers discussed flood proofing buyouts, whether a stream or ditch can be buried, whether someone can look at the channels where the river splits to see if there is an opportunity to dredge part of it to pull out the gravel and deepen it enough so that it can be filled with flood water, and only taking gravel from dry reaches so that habitat is not affected.

**NPDES and Lake Whatcom TMDL Update**

Cathy Craver, Public Works Department, updated the councilmembers. She highlighted accomplishments from the last permit cycle and spoke about some of the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements that are part of their new permit.

**Water Resources Update**

Gary Stoyka, Public Works Department, briefed the Councilmembers on the March Watershed Management Board meeting which was cancelled and rescheduled for June 24, 2020 at 9 a.m. The main topics for the meeting are a summary of where the board is on the 5-year work plan and a presentation from the Department of Ecology (DOE) about adjudication and how they will select the next adjudication basin.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, updated the Council on resolution of water issues and recent meetings with several stakeholders regarding the water adjudication process, what a good settlement looks like to all the parties involved, and the role he sees the Council playing. He also spoke about the Council engaging with the Planning Unit with leadership coming from Council.

Sidhu and Stoyka answered questions about when they would know whether the County is placed in the queue for the adjudication process, a suggestion that the parties come together and agree on what they would mutually like to

achieve including shared goals toward a common objective, and whether there could be a moderator who is not invested in water issues to direct water meetings.

Stoyka continued his update on the following items:

- Continuing work on water use efficiency projects
- A report from RH2 Engineering on using water banks or a trust water rights program in Whatcom County
- The next Planning Unit Meeting on June 24, 2020 at which there will be an update on their efforts to update the Watershed Management Plan and an attempt to come up with a unified position on adjudication
- A Lake Whatcom Joint Councils and Commissions meeting to approve the next five-year work plan which got cancelled because of the COVID-19 crisis (Each jurisdiction is taking it to their individual councils for approval and that will then come to the Council for approval)
- The Lake Whatcom Stewardship guide which is almost ready
- The start of the Lake Whatcom 2020 aquatic invasive species inspection program
- The completion of the Natural Resources Division of Public Works annual report

### **WRIA 1 Planning Unit**

Kathy Sabel, Planning Unit member, gave an update on Planning Unit meetings from February, March and June of 2020. She spoke about a memo sent to the Council on March 26, 2020 and stated that the Planning Unit is requesting the Whatcom County Council specify what efforts they wish the Planning Unit to perform. The Planning Unit would like to address any possible miscommunications and would appreciate hearing any questions and comments on that memo.

She answered questions about resending information regarding Council requests of the Planning Unit, updating the Planning Unit caucus representation questionnaire online, whether the Planning Unit's as well as individual caucus' decisions about whether they are for or against adjudication will be in an informal or formal meeting, requiring the questionnaire and making sure caucuses still exist and are still meeting and active before acting as representatives in decisions and advice.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:11 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

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Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

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Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

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Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription