

# **Whatcom County Council Water Work Session**

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



## **Minutes - Draft Minutes**

**VIRTUAL MEETING - VIEW ONLINE**

**Tuesday, November 17, 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 10:37 a.m. in a virtual meeting.

**Roll Call**

**Present:** 6 - Rud Browne, Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, Ben Elenbaas and Carol Frazey

**Absent:** 1 - Kathy Kershner

**Water Resources Update**

Gary Stoyka, Public Works Department, briefed the Councilmembers about the following:

- The water adjudication settlement process
- The December 17 Watershed Management Board meeting in which they will vote on whether to accept the Executive's settlement proposal
- The following projects:
  - Ongoing regional water supply plan work that the Public Utility District (PUD) is heading up
  - The Drainage Based Management project led by the County
- A consultant has been chosen for the ground water model peer review
- Work and next steps on the water use efficiency projects
- Work on the agricultural water use efficiency project
- Updates on meetings of the Watershed Management Board, Planning Unit, and Lake Whatcom Policy Group
- Two new interlocal agreements with the City of Bellingham and the Conservation District to move the homeowner incentive program forward for Lake Whatcom

He answered whether talking to the Department of Ecology about getting the local settlement process going is a biennial budget request to the Governor and whether it would be competing for funds allocated for adjudication.

**Washington Conservation Corps Presentation**

Gary Stoyka, Public Works Department, introduced the presentation.

John Thompson, Public Works Department introduced the Whatcom Conservation Corps. speakers and the following people presented:

- James van der Voort
- Simone Vachon
- Hanna Michaud
- Will Ashford
- Abby Dekoekkoek
- Michelle Meyer

They answered what kind of projects the crews could work on when they were not able to be out working in the field.

Thompson gave closing remarks.

### **WRIA 1 Planning Unit Discussion**

Kathy Sabel, WRIA Planning Unit representative, read from an email which included the following questions for Council:

1. What is the role of the Whatcom County Council in relation to the WRIA 1 Watershed Management Board and the negotiated settlement concept?
2. Is there a new iteration of the settlement concept paper?
3. What is the County Council's view on the negotiated settlement concept paper?
4. What role does the County Council see for the WRIA 1 Planning Unit in a negotiated settlement?

Gary Stoyka, Public Works Department, and Councilmembers discussed what the Watershed Management Board would be looking at approving, what funding the Executive has allocated in the 2021 Flood Control Zone District budget to support the settlement process and funding that may be requested over the next several years, the motion approved by the Council that the framework that may come back to them would not be exclusive to the adjudication process, how the Council would interact with any proposals made since the Executive is the County representative on the Watershed Management Board, and a suggestion that the Council discuss the Planning Unit's questions in a Council or Committee meeting in order to provide them with more specific answers from the Council as a whole within an open public meeting process.

Councilmembers, Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council, and the other speakers discussed putting an agenda item in the Natural Resources Committee that would address the Planning Unit's questions, whether they should wait until they hear back from the Executive about what the framework might look like, when the Executive would have something to

bring back to the Council, whether this could be added to one of the last two meetings of the year as an agenda item, whether all the involved parties are behind the proposed white paper for settlement, waiting for the discussion at the December 17, 2020 Watershed Management Board meeting, whether the Planning Unit is suggesting there is a conflict between the Comprehensive Plan and the water settlement process, and hearing the recommendations of the Planning Unit as a group.

**Other Business**

There was no other business.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:34 a.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