

Whatcom County Council Water Work Session

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



Minutes - Final

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.

The County Council approved these minutes on December 8, 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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