

Whatcom County Council Committee of the Whole

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

**VIRTUAL MEETING - MAY BEGIN EARLIER/LATER THAN 2:10 P.M.,
ENDS NO LATER THAN 5 P.M.**

Tuesday, May 4, 2021

2:10 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 2:11 p.m. in a virtual meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 6 - Rud Browne, Barry Buchanan, Todd Donovan, Carol Frazey, Ben Elenbaas and Kathy Kershner

Absent: 1 - Tyler Byrd

Committee Discussion

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

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

- An increase in COVID-19 cases and hospitalization and a decreasing average age of those hospitalized
- A slow-down of vaccine demand
- The severity of breakthrough cases (people getting infected after being vaccinated)
- Vaccine progress in the various age groups

Greg Stern, Health Officer, briefed the Councilmembers about controlling the spread of COVID-19 by cooperating with contact tracing, and vaccine effectiveness against virus variants.

Councilmembers and the speakers discussed how long someone should wait to get a vaccine if they have had COVID-19 and have recovered, the difference in immunity from natural infection as compared to the vaccine, the reason there is less cooperation with contact tracing, the status for possible change in phases of the State's reopening plan, whether incentives should be offered for being vaccinated, and officials presenting direct and consistent information about the virus to avoid mixed messages and to gain public trust.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

2. [AB2021-265](#) Discussion with Public Works Department staff regarding franchise committee assignments prior to public hearings

Andrew Hester, Public Works Department, briefed the Councilmembers.

He and Councilmembers discussed the timing and in which committee they

would like these items to be scheduled for discussion, how many franchises come through each year, and what information could be presented to Councilmembers about a franchise.

Donovan moved that franchise agreements be discussed before introduction in Committee of the Whole. The motion was seconded by Frazey.

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

Nay: 0

Out of the meeting: 2 - Elenbaas and Kershner

Absent: 1 - Byrd

Councilmembers and Hester discussed a process for the franchise agreement scheduled for introduction tonight (AB2021-261) and whether it could be scheduled in Committee of the Whole for discussion in two weeks.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

Special Presentation

1. [AB2021-260](#) Presentation from Human Services Manager on efforts to expand responses to people experiencing a behavioral health crisis

Anne Deacon, Health Department, gave a presentation and answered whether this just focuses on calls that go to law enforcement, whether the City of Bellingham is committed to the funding, and what consideration has been given to cross-training 9-1-1 dispatchers to deal with either police or medical response.

This agenda item was PRESENTED AND DISCUSSED.

2. [AB2021-268](#) Presentation from Human Services Manager on the recommendations from the Homeless Strategies Workgroup

Anne Deacon, Health Department, gave a presentation and answered questions.

Browne moved to recommend to the full Council that they accept the recommendations put forward by the Homeless Strategies Workgroup as presented. The motion was seconded by Frazey.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, spoke about how local elected officials could work with neighboring counties encouraging them to increase shelter capacity in their own communities, the Way Station project, and affordable housing.

Councilmembers and the speakers discussed the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Donovan, Elenbaas, Frazey, Browne, and Buchanan

Nay: 0

Out of the Meeting: 1 - Kershner

Absent: 1 - Byrd

Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council, asked whether a draft resolution mentioned by Councilmember Browne should be added to tonight's Council meeting agenda.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:16 p.m.

The County Council approved these minutes on May 18, 2021.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

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