

Whatcom County Council Committee of the Whole

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



Committee Minutes - Final

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

2:35 PM

Virtual Meeting

**VIRTUAL MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 5 P.M. (TO PARTICIPATE, SEE
INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil OR CALL
360.778.5010)**

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 2:45 p.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

Announcements

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2021-395](#) Discussion and periodic update of the Shoreline Management Program
Cliff Strong, Planning and Development Services Department, briefed the Councilmembers on topic number 14 and 17b from the October 12 memo (on file). He answered questions about topic number five on no net loss, whether topics eight and 18 are the place to discuss riparian buffer guidelines, and where in the documents to find new policies and information on sea level rise.
This agenda item was DISCUSSED.
2. [AB2021-482](#) Presentation and discussion regarding Whatcom County's proposed American Rescue Plan Act funding priorities
They skipped this item and came back to it later when staff was available. See action on this item below after AB2021-561.

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2021-561](#) Ordinance amending Ordinance No. 2021-045 (Review of Response to COVID-19 Pandemic)
Cathy Halka, Council Legislative Analyst, briefed the Councilmembers on the changes made to the ordinance for this meeting.
Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council, and Councilmembers discussed pausing the meeting to make sure staff were present.
Halka stated a motion is needed for this item and Councilmembers discussed whether this item had been introduced.
Browne moved and Byrd seconded that the Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION. The motion carried by the following vote:
Aye: 6 - Browne, Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

Abstain: 1 - Elenbaas

Committee Discussion

2. [AB2021-482](#) Presentation and discussion regarding Whatcom County's proposed American Rescue Plan Act funding priorities

Browne stated he sent Councilmembers an email with comments on suggested changes for this item.

Clerk's note: At 3:04 p.m. Councilmembers paused the meeting to wait for staff to be available for the discussion. The meeting reconvened at 3:15 p.m.

Tyler Schroeder, Executive's Office, briefed the Councilmembers.

Fraze stated she would like to wait to hear from the Child and Family Well-being Task Force before making a decision and Browne referred to his suggested changes that would hinge on the task force report.

Councilmembers discussed how to proceed.

Schroeder answered questions about the "Economic recovery - childcare" priorities as presented by the Administration, whether they are definitive or just placeholders, and what the Millworks facility is.

Councilmembers discussed whether they should continue discussing the item at a special meeting on October 19 or on the next regular Council meeting date on October 26.

Browne stated he would like to defer AB2021-209 (scheduled on tonight's agenda) until they work out what the spending plan is going to be.

Buchanan moved to take this item up on October 19. The motion was seconded by Byrd.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Buchanan amended his motion ***and moved*** to take this item up on October 26.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Donovan, Elenbaas, Frazey, Kershner, Browne, Buchanan, and Byrd

Nay: 0

Councilmembers and Schroeder discussed Browne's ideas for the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds as sent to Council by email on October 12, 2021, using ARPA funds for infrastructure when additional infrastructure dollars may come available, whether there are plans or programs to help Whatcom County citizens for whom unemployment benefits are not available, making sure the funds are used to help people in a focused way, what the three projects (Black Slough, Fish Camp, and Lynden's MARS project) for "regional water infrastructure" listed under "Invest in capital projects" are and whether Conservation Futures Fund money should be used.

Byrd moved to strike the line item "Regional Water Infrastructure" under "Invest in capital projects" and have it brought back forward in a separate document coming from the Conservation Futures Fund. The motion was seconded by Browne.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, spoke about the motion and requested that they keep flexibility in the funding that can be used.

Schroeder answered questions about the balance of the Conservation Futures Fund, other things those funds are used for, and how much of the money in the proposed spreadsheet has already been spent or allocated.

Browne moved to amend Byrd's motion to remove ARPA funding as a source of funding for this and leave the discussion about the allocation of Conservation Future's Fund/grants for a later date. The motion was seconded by Byrd.

Byrd suggested they remove it from ARPA funding and dedicate those projects to the Conservation Future's Fund contingent on grant revenue.

Browne amended his motion and moved to not fund the conservation projects with ARPA funds and do support finding an alternative funding mechanism for those projects. Byrd seconded the motion.

Browne withdrew his motion to amend Byrd's original motion. Byrd seconded the withdrawal.

Byrd amended his original motion and moved to not fund the conservation

projects with ARPA funds and support finding an alternative funding mechanism for those projects. The motion was seconded by Browne.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Browne and *Byrd restated* the motion to delete the allocation of ARPA money for the regional water infrastructure projects and to allow the Executive to come back with alternative funding sources later.

Schroeder answered questions.

Byrd's amended motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Frazey, Kershner, Browne, Buchanan, Byrd, and Donovan

Nay: 1 - Elenbaas

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

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

2. [AB2021-209](#) Resolution regarding permanent affordability of childcare in Whatcom County

The following Child and Family Well-Being Task Force members presented:

- Jennifer Wright
- Vesla Tonnessen
- Anne Granberg
- Jamie Desmul
- Ray Deck III
- Astrid Newell
- Brian Nelson

The speakers answered questions about the cost allocation per item in the report, creating a system that is not self-sustaining if American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds are used, whether the priorities in the report are ranked, whether there is a sense of what things could be done the quickest to make a noticeable difference, whether the child care funding coordinator position and the child care facility specialist within the city/county planning departments are two separate positions, whether they know how much providing centralized administrative support for childcare providers (under Priority A) will save the average childcare facility, the State's response to the childcare emergency, and engaging with Western Washington University's (WWU) economics department.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, also spoke about getting more information about a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI).

Byrd moved to engage WWU’s economic development department and ask them to look at the options for investing in this industry. The motion *failed* for lack of a second.

Councilmembers and the speakers continued to discuss how long it takes to train new staff, what price level per child they are trying to attain so that the average family can afford it, deciding next steps, having a conversation about things that cannot be done (expanding family leave, providing subsidies, or giving property tax rebates), and discussing where funding will come from when ARPA funds run out.

This agenda item was FORWARDED TO COUNCIL WITHOUT A RECOMMENDATION.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

The County Council approved these minutes on October 26, 2021.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

SIGNED COPY ON FILE