Whatcom County
Council Water Work Session

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

Minutes - Final

Tuesday, September 21, 2021
10:30 AM
Virtual Meeting

VIRTUAL MEETING - (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 10:32 a.m. in a virtual meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 5 - Rud Browne, Barry Buchanan, Todd Donovan, Ben Elenbaas, and Carol Frazey

Absent: 2 - Tyler Byrd, and Kathy Kershner

Announcements

Water Resources Update

Gary Stoyka, Public Works Department, updated on the following:

- Cascadia Policy Solutions will present their readiness assessment for the adjudication/settlement/collaborative process at the October 21, 2021 Watershed Management Board meeting
- A new contract with Cascadia Policy Solutions will be coming to Council for work and implementation of the solutions table
- The Drainage Based Management process and recommendations for next steps from a facilitator. A new contract with Kramer Consulting will be coming to Council.
- The Public Utility District (PUD) is moving forward with phase 2 of the regional water supply planning process.
- Staff has finished the peer review of the ground water model of the north part of the county and is proposing to move to the next step of the modeling process.
- A beta version of a Data hub for integrated monitoring and centralized data management is complete and they will move forward with the next steps.
- A first draft plan for an Agricultural Water Use Efficiency project has been run through agricultural people first.
- There are upcoming budget items to facilitate the county's collaborative process to solve water issues
- Upcoming meetings of the Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 1 and Watershed Management Board

He answered questions about which collaborative process he was referring to in relation to the upcoming budget requests, whether some of the work of the collaborative process will complement the adjudication process, when the data hub will be complete and whether the public will have access to it, and whether they have engaged the Farm Bureau as agricultural

stakeholders.

Clerk's note: Buchanan read the next item on the agenda into the record but discussion continued on this item and engaging agricultural stakeholders.

2022-2027 Water Resources Improvement Plan

The following people spoke:

- Gary Stoyka, Public Works Department
- Kraig Olason, Public Works Department
- Paula Harris, Public Works Department

Olason presented on the Water Resources Improvement Plan stormwater projects. He answered questions about funding sources for the projects, whether Birch Bay Watershed & Aquatic Resources Management (BBWARM) has a bigger balance to fund projects than the Lake Whatcom Stormwater Utility, and an email from a constituent on Ten Mile Creek about whether culverts could be made large enough to also be wildlife crossings.

Harris presented on the 2022-2027 Water Resources Improvement Plan river and flood projects.

Stoyka answered whether there is a resolution coming to the Council for approval of the plan.

Domestic Water Use Efficiency Project Update – Whatcom Water Alliance

The following people presented (additional information on file, attached to the Meeting Details):

- Chris Elder, Public Works Department
- Aneka Sweeney, Whatcom Conservation District
- Gary Stoyka, Public Works Department

Sweeney answered questions about the membership of the Whatcom Water Alliance and participation of the smaller water districts, whether the idea in the three-year plan is that the smaller districts will start funding things going forward, and whether there has been outreach to smaller districts to tell them how they can get the most out of their existing water rights.

Browne suggested they find some incentive for the private water districts to work with the County on water conservation and to provide a map of their infrastructure, a list of their membership, and their budget for capital

improvements going forward.

Stoyka answered whether the amounts of $50,000, $30,000 and $40,000 as noted on the presentation slide titled, “Enhanced Whatcom Water Alliance Program Budget” as coming from Whatcom County are included in the Whatcom County budget.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:44 a.m.

The County Council approved these minutes on September 28, 2021.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

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Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

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Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

SIGNED COPY ON FILE