

**Whatcom County  
Council Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee**

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



**Committee Minutes - Draft Minutes**

**Wednesday, November 9, 2022**

**2:05 PM**

**Hybrid Meeting**

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 2:45 P.M.; MAY BEGIN EARLY  
(PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT  
[www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil), OR CALL 360.778.5010)**

**COUNCILMEMBERS**

Barry Buchanan  
Tyler Byrd  
Carol Frazey

**CLERK OF THE COUNCIL**

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

## Call To Order

Committee Chair Barry Buchanan called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. in a hybrid meeting.

## Roll Call

**Present:** 3 - Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, and Carol Frazey

**Absent:** None

Also Present: Ben Elenbaas, Kaylee Galloway, and Kathy Kershner

## Announcements

## Committee Discussion

1. [AB2022-566](#) Discussion on progress and next steps of the Justice Project (Public Health, Safety, and Justice Facility Needs Assessment)

*Clerk's note:* Committee Chair Buchanan changed the order of the agenda items.

Buchanan updated the Councilmembers on the following:

- The current public engagement phase of the project
- Highlights of the public engagement efforts of The Vida Agency including a community survey and a jail tour video
- An upcoming town hall meeting on November 15, 2022 and a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting on November 17th and additional meeting on December 15th.
- Community feedback via email and a request for feedback on the draft vision, values, and goals
- Posting preliminary findings from the report as they become available
- The Communications consultant leading listening sessions in Latinx and tribal communities as well as with people who were formally incarcerated and their family members
- The final meeting of the SAC on January 19, 2023. That is where they will vote on the final needs assessment report, and that report will then be packaged up for a presentation to the Council on February 7, 2023

**This agenda item was REPORTED.**

### **Special Presentation**

1. [AB2022-625](#) Report from the Prosecuting Attorney's Office

Eric Richey, Whatcom County Prosecuting Attorney, stated he did not have any additional information from what he already shared last week at the budget meeting but he could answer questions. He answered whether there is a bottleneck in the courtrooms, whether we keep statistics on how many cases we plea bargain out as opposed to how many we send to trial or to how many people just plead guilty and get sentenced, whether it is allowed to file felony cases in District Court and whether that is a new process, and whether they still have two victim advocates or whether they added more since the last budget cycle.

Kershner stated as they find out from other counties about their caseloads, it would be interesting to know the bigger picture of how many arrests they are making, how much crime they are experiencing, and whether we are experiencing way more crime. She spoke about adding more Sheriff's deputies in the next two years and how that will work if the courts are already over capacity.

**This agenda item was REPORTED.**

### **Items Added by Revision**

There were no agenda items added by revision.

### **Other Business**

Councilmembers discussed the timing of the next meeting.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:24 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

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Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

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Barry Buchanan, Committee Chair

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Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

