

**RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS  
SKAGIT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 2018**

The Skagit County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, April 17, 2018, with Chair Kenneth A. Dahlstedt, Commissioner Lisa Janicki, and Commissioner Ron Wesen present.

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Dahlstedt called the proceedings to order at 8:34 a.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chair Dahlstedt led the gallery in the salute to the flag.

III. AGENDA:

a) \*7:00 a.m. - 8:15 a.m. Good Scout Breakfast (Salem Lutheran Church, 2529 North LaVenture Road, Mount Vernon)

b) 8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Proclamation Recognizing April 2018 as Skagit Volunteer Month

Chair Dahlstedt announced that Commissioner Janicki would be arriving a little bit late and was excused.

Liz Jennings, Community Engagement Manager at the Skagit Volunteer Center, a program through Community Action of Skagit County, was present to celebrate and recognize the positive impacts volunteers made in the community. She reported that in 2017, 4,000 volunteers had been “mobilized” and success stories were shared by Ms. Jennings and by the Executive Director of Untied Way Debra Lancaster.

Discussion followed regarding the important impacts made by volunteers in their communities.

Commissioner Wesen read the proclamation recognizing April 2018 as Skagit Volunteer Month.

Chair Dahlstedt recessed the proceedings at 8:55 a.m.

c) 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Public Works - Dan Berentson, Director:

Chair Dahlstedt reconvened the proceedings at 9:03 a.m. and introduced Director Dan Berentson.

1. Public Hearing/Possible Action: To Consider Testimony Regarding a Vessel Replacement Surcharge, Rescind Resolution R20150261, and Establish a New Skagit County Guemes Island Ferry Fare Structure

Mr. Berentson introduced Ferry Operations Division Manager Rachel Rowe.

Ms. Rowe provided an overview of the proposed implementation of a vessel replacement surcharge and of the meetings that had been held to gather input from the community about implementing a surcharge. She reviewed the guidelines that Skagit County

would need to follow to implement a surcharge and reviewed the proposed surcharge fare increase amounts.

Information provided by Ms. Rowe regarding the ferry vessel replacement surcharge can be found here: <ftp://ftp.skagitcounty.net/countycommissioners/documents/agendapackets/04162018/>

Chair Dahlstedt opened the public hearing at 9:22 a.m. and directed the clerk to set the timer at 3 minutes per speaker in order to allow everyone present an opportunity to provide testimony.

John Hopkins of Guemes Island provided comments in support of implementing a surcharge. He also provided additional ideas: impose the surcharge only on vehicles only and keep it to a minimum amount, capture funding from people who did not use the ferry very much, but owned property on Guemes Island by implementing a real estate tax rate of \$0.20 per thousand, and create a ferry district.

Glen Veal of Guemes Island provided comments against the implementation of a surcharge. He believed the current ferry would not need to be replaced for another 20 years and he compared Skagit County's replacement schedule to the State of Washington's replacement schedule. He shared concerns about recent studies that had been performed and believed the ferry should continue to be treated like any other bridge or road and continue to receive funding from the general fund instead of narrowing down funding to only the users of the ferry.

Allen Bush of Guemes Island provided comments against the implementation of a surcharge. He pointed out that property owners on Guemes Island had long paid taxes into the road fund which provided for road and bridge repairs and replacement and that the ferry should be treated the same way and receive funding from the road fund. He said that a ticket surcharge would impose a large debt on a small group and requested the surcharge not be implemented.

Howard Pellet of Guemes Island provided comments against the implementation of a surcharge. He echoed Mr. Veal and Mr. Bush's comments and asked to be treated fairly. He believed the ferry should remain in service for another 15 to 20 years.

Phyllis Woolworth of Guemes Island said that she agreed with those who spoke against the implementation of a surcharge. She pointed out that many who lived on the island were on fixed incomes.

Chip Bogosian of Guemes Island provided comments against a careless implementation of a surcharge. He said that the ferry was part of the road system and should be funded by road taxes. He felt there were other economical ways to fund a ferry rather than implementing a surcharge. He said that he did not want to beta-test a new electric ferry and he asked for responsible, dependable transportation.

Robin Mari of Guemes Island shared that she agreed with those who had spoken before her and she believed that they represented the majority of the islanders. She shared that the current ferry fare rate was already cost prohibitive and should not be increased further by the implementation of a surcharge. She believed other funding options could be explored.

Steve Orsini of Guemes Island shared that he hoped everyone's intention was to arrive at the best solution for a fiscally responsible ferry/operation. He talked about funding and some concerns, including that the specifications for a new 32 car vessel was too large. He said the current ferry could last until 2036. The hull was still in good shape and he suggested repowering the current ferry and implementing a 3 – 5% surcharge (instead of a 23 – 30% surcharge) which was more in line with other ferry surcharge amounts.

Bud Ullman of Guemes Island shared concerns that another increase to the ferry fare would price people off the island. He said that the Ferry Committee would be providing information to the Commissioners about implementing a needs-based fare discount similar to a program in Whatcom County. Mr. Ullman asked the Commissioners to clarify their new vessel funding intentions and requested the project be halted if significant outside funding was not received.

The Commissioners commented on the various surcharge ideas and the proposed electric ferry project.

Commissioner Wesen made a motion to close the public hearing, continue to accept written comments through April 27, 2018, and accept in-person comments during the April 28, 2018 public meeting. Commissioner Janicki seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

Chair Dahlstedt recessed the proceedings at 9:58 a.m.

d) 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Public Health - Jennifer Johnson, Director:

Chair Dahlstedt reconvened the proceedings at 10:30 a.m. and introduced Housing Resource Coordinator Kathy Ferris.

1. Public Hearing/Possible Action: To Consider Testimony Regarding the HOME Investments Partnership Program on Housing and Community Development Needs

Kathy Ferris provided an overview of the Consortium that had been formed in 2015 to obtain HOME funding, the work performed on the Analysis of Impediments (AI) to Fair Housing Choice, and the draft AI report's key findings and primary impediments. Ms. Ferris also provided an overview of the five-year Consolidated Plan which was a detailed document that assessed affordable housing needs and market conditions to help make data-driven investment decisions and identify community-wide housing priorities. She said that the Consolidated Plan also included the 2018 Annual Action Plan.

Ms. Ferris provided an overview of some of the accomplishments funded by the HOME grant, some expected allocations, and what types of investments were eligible (rental assistance and development, homeownership development/acquisition/rehabilitation or down payment assistance, etc.) A comprehensive citizen participation process had also been completed with stakeholder and consumer focus groups, a community survey, and a preliminary public hearing had been held on February 27, 2018.

Comments were being accepted on the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan through April 20, 2018 and on the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice through May 4, 2018. Input and data collected from the citizen participation process was reviewed by Ms. Ferris and she shared the proposed allocations that had been recommended.

The PowerPoint provided by Ms. Ferris can be found here:

<ftp://ftp.skagitcounty.net/countycommissioners/documents/agendapackets/04162018/>

The Commissioners clarified whether the community survey was still open and commented on some of the barriers to affordable housing.

Chair Dahlstedt opened the public hearing at 10:54 a.m.

Jodi Monroe of the Home Trust of Skagit said that she had attended to hear more about the AI, Consolidated Plan, and Annual Action Plan. She discussed the challenge to meet the community's affordable housing needs and talked about the projects that had been partially funded through the HOME Consortium program. Ms. Monroe shared how the Home Trust of Skagit was making an impact and to learn more or contribute to their organization one could visit: [hometrustedofskagit.org](http://hometrustedofskagit.org)

Paul Schissler shared that he had been working on the affordability housing issue for over 30 years and he said that the housing shortage had never been as critical as it was now. He said that approximately half of our neighbors were not able to afford current rental rates. In light of the current events, he invited the Commissioners to learn more about Vienna's solution to affordable housing at an informational function in Bellingham that was running through April 28, 2018.

Catherine Reid from Island County Human Services was present to thank Skagit County employees Kathy Ferris and Kayla Schott-Bresler for their leadership administering the HOME Consortium and work on the grants and planning involved with the programs.

Discussion followed regarding vacancy rates and the value of partnerships. Public Health Analyst Kayla Schott-Bresler thanked the Commissioners, local, and regional partners for making the HOME Consortium a success for residents in their communities and information was provided on some other projects and programs that were being implemented to address homelessness and affordable housing needs.

Discussion was held with an audience member about working with Habitat for Humanity.

Seeing no further public testimony forthcoming, Commissioner Wesen made a motion to close the public hearing at 11:23 a.m. which was seconded by Commissioner Janicki. The vote passed unanimously.

Chair Dahlstedt recessed the proceedings at 11:24 a.m.

e) 11:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. Board of County Commissioners:

Chair Dahlstedt reconvened the proceedings at 11:30 a.m.

1. County and Individual Success Stories

Volunteer Services Manager Erin Long for Hospice of the Northwest provided information about their organization and the work performed by volunteers. She presented a proclamation for the Commissioners to consider regarding National Healthcare Volunteer Week.

More information about Hospice of the Northwest can be found at [hospicenw.org](http://hospicenw.org), phone number: 360-814-5550.

The Commissioners commented about the valuable services provided by volunteers from Hospice to families: either caring for a loved one, or caring for someone experiencing grief.

Erin Long read the Proclamation regarding National Healthcare Volunteer Week: April 15-23, 2018.

2. Public Comment Period

No one provided public comment.

3. Miscellaneous Announcements

No miscellaneous announcements were made.

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Dahlstedt adjourned the proceedings at 11:45 a.m.

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Kenneth A. Dahlstedt, Chair

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Lisa Janicki, Commissioner

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Ron Wesen, Commissioner

ATTEST:

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Clerk of the Board