

The Skagit County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, June 16, 2026, with Chair Ron Wesen, Commissioner Peter Browning, and Commissioner Joe Burns present.

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Wesen called the proceedings to order at 9:30 a.m.

II. AGENDA:

a) *9:30 a.m. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Wesen led the attendees in the salute to the flag.

b) *9:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Parks and Facilities - Ken Hansen, Director:

Projects and Administration Manager Marie Henry and West County Parks Lead Mike McCutchin outlined recent repairs made to the Swinomish Boat Launch. Ms. Henry reviewed the renovations completed in 2026, reporting that the project cost totaled \$400,000 and addressed both operational needs and significant safety improvements.

To help offset the renovation costs, Parks and Facilities recommended raising the boat launch fee by \$4, bringing the proposed fee to \$14. Ms. Henry noted that the last increase occurred in 2024, when the fee was raised from \$8 to \$10. Prior to 2024, the fees remained unchanged since 2016. Annual passes would continue to be available at the current price of \$100.

Discussion followed regarding the cost of annual passes, day passes, the honor-pay system, and the dock renovations.

1. Public Hearing to Consider Testimony Regarding the Proposed Revision of the Current Fee Schedule for the Swinomish Boat Launch

Chair Wesen opened the public hearing at 9:35 a.m. Seeing no public testimony forthcoming, Commissioner Browning made a motion to close the public hearing at 9:35 a.m., Commissioner Burns seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

Chair Wesen recessed the proceedings at 9:38 a.m.

c) *10:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. Board of Health Meeting. Record of the Proceedings for this meeting can be found at: www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/BoardOfHealth

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

Chair Wesen reconvened the proceedings at 11:32 a.m. and excused Commissioner Browning's absence.

1. Public Comment Period

Elke Macartney of Skagit County cited several articles raising concerns about unsafe lithium mining practices involving child labor.

Lora Stansbury Weiss of Skagit County commented on the six-month moratorium on data centers and on emerging alternatives to lithium-ion battery facilities.

Rebecca Peck of Skagit County commented on the recently adopted Rules of Decorum for public meetings of the Board of County Commissioners and other county governing bodies, Resolution No. R20260112. She also addressed the topic of commissioners keeping regular office hours in their respective districts and the meaning of tyranny.

Anthony Romano of Skagit County commented on the Transfer of Development Rights Program and the Farmland Legacy Program.

Link to public comments submitted:

<https://www.skagitcounty.net/CountyCommissioners/Documents/AgendaPackets/06152026.zip>

2. [County and Individual Success Stories](#)

None provided.

3. [Miscellaneous \(announcements, letters, etc.\)](#)

The Commissioners commented on various past, upcoming meetings, and letters signed for the week June 8, 2026.

Chair Wesen recessed the proceedings at 11:50 a.m.

e) [*11:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Public Health - East County Manger, Community Action of Skagit County Stephanie Semro:](#)

Chair Wesen reconvened the proceedings at 11:52 a.m. and welcomed Commissioner Browning to the proceedings.

Senior Public Health Analyst George Kosovich provided a PowerPoint presentation, noting that the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program was a public services grant made available through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The CDBG Program supported partnerships with Community Action of Skagit County programs to fund new services, expand existing services, implement innovative service delivery, and reach new clients. The program also addressed the root causes of poverty and helped low-income families and individuals regain or retain self-sufficiency. Grants were made available to 17 non-entitlement counties in Washington State. The program partnered with Community Action of Skagit County to provide these services.

Mr. Kosovich reported that the anticipated grant award was expected to total \$65,000. The annual award amount was allocated using a formula based on service area population, poverty rates, and the amount available from the state's annual HUD award. He noted that Skagit County would develop the application in partnership with Community Action of Skagit County, invite public comment, and then submit the application to the Washington State Department of Commerce. He further reported that the 2026–27 application and the 2025–26 closeout report would be routed to the Commissioners at a later date and subsequently submitted to the Department of Commerce.

Community Action of Skagit County, East County Manager Stephanie Semro provided information about the resource assistance offered at the East County Resource Center and shared information about successful outcomes.

Link to PowerPoint presentation:

<https://www.skagitcounty.net/CountyCommissioners/Documents/AgendaPackets/06152026.zip>

1. [Public Hearing to Consider Testimony Regarding the CDBG-Public Services 2025-26 Close Out Report and 2026-27 Application](#)

Chair Wesen opened the public hearing at 12:06 p.m. Seeing no public testimony forthcoming, Commissioner Burns closed the public hearing at 12:07 p.m. Chair Wesen seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

Chair Wesen recessed the proceedings at 12:08 p.m.

f) 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Special Joint Meeting with the Cities of Anacortes, Burlington, and Mount Vernon Regarding North Star (Skagit County Public Health, Chinook Conference Room, 301 Valley Mall Way, Suite 110, Mount Vernon)

1. Dinner and Networking

2. Call to Order and Roll Call:

Chair Wesen convened the special joint meeting with the Cities of Anacortes Mayor Ryan Walters, Burlington Mayor Bill Aslett, and Mount Vernon Mayor Peter Donovan at 6:15 p.m.

Councilmembers present from the City of Anacortes included Christine Cleland McGarth, Marcia Hunt, and Carolyn Moulton.

Councilmembers present from the City of Burlington included Brian Steen, and James Stavig.

Councilmembers present from the City of Mount Vernon included Navor Tercero, Mary Hudson, Randy West, Hannah Oliver, and Demi Daman.

Councilmembers present from the City of Sedro-Woolley included Paul Cocke, and Nora Pederson.

Other staff in attendance included Skagit County Public Health Director Monica Negrila, Skagit County Assistant Public Health Director Sarah Hinman, Skagit County Senior Public Health Analyst George Kosovich, Skagit County Community Health Coordinator Kasandra Church, Skagit County Communications Coordinator Andrea Harrison, Skagit County Julota Data Specialist Astha Patel, City of Mount Vernon Special Projects Manager Adam Pearson, City of Burlington Community Development Director Brad Johnson and Clerk of the Board of Skagit County Commissioners Linda Hammons.

3. Meeting Goals and Agenda Overview:

Ms. Negrila reviewed the meeting goals which included: continuing to build rapport and collaboration across jurisdictions; learn about current programs and services at Martha's Place, discuss opportunities to engage in shared funding for housing and behavioral health services; learn about next steps for the North Star Strategic Plan; and share updates across jurisdictions.

4. Public Comments:

No public comment was provided.

5. Martha's Place - Presentation:

Martha's Place Director of Housing Ariell Wright and Martha's Place Regional Director Rita Jo were present to provide updates. Ms. Wright shared details about the project's funding, including contributions from the cities of Mount Vernon and Burlington, as well as state and federal funding. She also provided an update on their permanent supportive housing program, detailing their services for chronically homeless individuals with disabilities, including supportive services, on-site Substance Use Disorder (SUD) professionals, and community engagement activities. The presentation highlighted positive outcomes including 35 successfully housed households with a 50% retention rate, 8 had graduated to fair market housing, and the recent launch of a Lived Experience Advisory Board with 13 engaged members. Discussion followed which touched on the challenges of serving the most vulnerable populations and the need for additional housing services in the area.

6. Coordination on Housing and Behavioral Health Funding:

Senior Public Health Analyst George Kosovich provided information about funding collaboration and welcomed each city to provide information about their primary sources of funding.

City of Anacortes:

Affordable housing was supported through affordable housing sales tax money (approximately \$750,000-800,000 annually) and receives a smaller amount from the 1406 state rebate program (\$46,000 annually). The city contracted with the Anacortes Housing Authority and The Anacortes Family Center to fund specific housing projects, including two completed developments and a planned third project, with funds distributed quarterly on a 50-50 basis. Additional funding sources include Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money (\$107,000 annually), general fund allocations for social services, and opioid settlement funds.

City of Burlington:

Affordable housing was supported through 1590 and 1406 sales (approximately \$1.3 million annually). The city also used fee waivers, distributed grants to recipients, Connecting Housing to Infrastructure Program (CHIP) funding (approximately \$1.4 million) and were potentially considering using funds from surplus public lands.

City of Mount Vernon:

Affordable housing was supported through CDBG 1406 and 1590 (approximately \$3.5 million had been distributed to date).

Ms. Negrila proposed the following funding options for discussion:

- Option 1: Separate processes (no change)
- Option 2: Joint applications, timelines, and reports.
- Option 3: Joint priorities set-up front.
- Option 4: Pooled funding.

Discussion followed about the advantages of each option. Participants expressed strong support for implementing joint applications with standardized timelines and reporting requirements to reduce the burden on nonprofit organizations. The group acknowledged the need for consistent criteria across jurisdictions and discussed the potential benefits of pooling resources for large projects like the First Step Center and Martha's Place. The group addressed concerns about coordinating grant applications across the county, suggesting that some services should be coordinated county-wide while others might work better at the local level based on community needs.

7. Next Three-Year Strategic Plan:

Consultant with Nexis Health Strategies Mike Bonetto presented a proposed timeline for updating the three-year Strategic Plan, outlining key steps from June through December 2026.

Discussion followed about how city councils could be involved in the planning process, Ms. Negrila proposed that councils could review the Plan at steering committee meetings throughout the year rather than requiring formal approval from each city council.

8. Updates, Summary and Next Steps:

Ms. Church provided updates on the North Star Symposium and the launch of the North Star Collective Program, which had already attracted 28 new organizations and individuals.

Each jurisdiction provided updates including the upcoming 5-year anniversary of the First Step Center.

III. ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Wesen adjourned the proceedings at 8:00 p.m.

*Note, to obtain an audio or video recording of this meeting; please contact the Skagit County Commissioners' office.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

Ron Wesen, Chair

Peter Browning, Commissioner

Joe Burns, Commissioner

ATTEST:

Clerk of the Board