

**Birch Bay Incorporation Association**  
**Steering Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday July 18, 2024 at North Bay Community Church**

**1. Call to Order:**

The Steering Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

Berry read the Statement of Purpose from the BBIA Bylaws.

**2. Attendance:**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>In Person</b>	<b>Via Zoom</b>	<b>Regrets</b>
Chair	Matt Berry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
ViceChair/Chair Communications	Lisa Guthrie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Treasurer / Chair Finance	Sharman Burnam	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Secretary	Michael Stringam	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Co-Chair Research	Chuck Kinzer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Co-Chair Research	Jonathan Mallahan		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Steering Committee Member	Caprice Pine			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Steering Committee Member	Brian Bell		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Steering Committee Member	Barney Yorkston			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Steering Committee Member	Cecil Robinson		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Steering Committee Member	Jason Polverari			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Steering Committee Member	Patrick Alesse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Steering Committee Member	Wayne Kortlever			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Steering Committee Member	James (Bob) Aiken		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Special Guest</b>	<b>Bob Jean</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>General Association Attendance</b>		<b>6</b>		

**3. Approval of Minutes.**

Minutes of the BBIA May 16 Quarterly Association Meeting as recorded were approved.

<b><u>Moved by:</u></b>	<b><u>Seconded by:</u></b>	<b><u>Vote:</u></b>
Lisa Guthrie	Chuck Kinzer	Yea: 10    Nay: 0    Abstain: 0

Minutes of the BBIA June 20 Steering Committee, as recorded were approved.

<b><u>Moved by:</u></b>	<b><u>Seconded by:</u></b>	<b><u>Vote:</u></b>
Lisa Guthrie	Chuck Kinzer	Yea: 10    Nay: 0    Abstain: 0

Brian Bell noted that the minutes do not include answers to questions.

**4. Committee Reports**

**a) Executive Committee Report (Matt Berry)**

Berry presented a one-page report that included comments received by e-mail, the County Budget Request for funding an updated Feasibility Study, and meetings with the Whatcom County Small Cities Partnership. Berry also noted that the County Budget Request would be presented to County Council for a vote on Tuesday July 23 and encouraged anyone interested to present support for the funding to study the feasibility which would not be an endorsement for or against incorporation, but merely a request for additional information.

### **b) Communications Committee Report (Lisa Guthrie)**

Guthrie presented a short two paragraph report. The Communications Committee will prepare a tented booth for community events, starting with the Sandcastle and Roll Back Auto Weekend August 3rd & 4<sup>th</sup>. A printed handout page was presented that will be made available for the public at such events. Guthrie asked for Steering Committee members or any other supporters to sign-up for one of six 3-hour shifts on Saturday and Sunday, August 3rd & 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **c) Research and Feasibility Committee Report (Chuck Kinzer)**

Kinzer noted that there was Committee report because the group had not yet met. He noted that they were working on a significant report on the recent survey, which had 639 responses, including 568 registered voters, which represented a statistically significant response rate. Kinzer reported that the Committee would meet on Wednesday August 24 to review the report, then it would be presented to the Executive Committee and then presented to the August Steering Committee/Quarterly Association meeting. Mallahan noted that about 80% of the respondents had requested results of the survey and that there should be a special communication to let them know that they would receive the results shortly.

### **d) Finance Committee Report (Sharman Burnam)**

Burnam noted that a Draft Budget had been presented to the Steering Committee in June, and that the only current change would include reduction of the revenue and expenditure line items with respect to the Updated Feasibility Study from \$200,000 to \$150,000. Discussion on the utility of including the County funding in the budget was discussed.

The BBIA Budget as amended was approved.

<b><u>Moved by:</u></b> Lisa Guthrie	<b><u>Seconded by:</u></b> Michael Stringam	<b><u>Vote:</u></b> Yea: 10    Nay: 0    Abstain: 0
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Authority for Expenditures by the Executive up to \$250.00 for any item within the approved BBIA Budget without a further vote by the Steering Committee was approved.

<b><u>Moved by:</u></b> Sharman Burnam	<b><u>Seconded by:</u></b> Lisa Guthrie	<b><u>Vote:</u></b> Yea: 10    Nay: 0    Abstain: 0
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Burnam also presented a one-page Treasurer's Report showing revenues and expenditures for the past month. She also noted that applications for four additional grants had been made.

## **5. Open session**

Questions and comments received from attendees included:

- Is a new city feasible; does it just create another level of bureaucracy.

## **6. New Business**

### **a) August Quarterly Association Meeting**

Berry noted that the regularly scheduled meeting date on the third Thursday of the month was August 15<sup>th</sup> which is also Opening Day for the Crab Fishery. After some discussion it was agreed that the August 15<sup>th</sup> date should stand. The Executive Committee will review alternate locations and speakers.

## **b) Guest Speaker – Bob Jean**

Berry introduced Bob Jean as a consultant with significant experience in new City incorporations in Washington State, including management of the most recent new Cities including University Place.

Jean recounted his direct experiences with several of the New Cities and also reviewed others of the thirteen Cities incorporated in the past 15 years. He noted that there were basically three reasons for incorporation:

1. Local control of the services and regulations of the local community.
2. Improved local presence and response times of emergency services, particularly law enforcement.
3. Local management of State mandated urban growth.

He noted that Whatcom County must provide basic services to all the County at a similar level while Cities can provide services more tailored to the needs of the immediate community. He felt that Whatcom County did a good job in providing their mandated services.

Jean noted that many changes in taxation, demographics and other issues have changed since the previous Incorporation Feasibility Study was completed. The maximum allowable mill rates allowed by State Laws for Counties are \$2.25 per \$1,000 assessed value. Whatcom County currently charges \$1.85 per \$1,000, although it has been higher in the past. The maximum allowable mill rates allowed by State Laws for Cities are \$1.65 per \$1,000 assessed value, so basic taxation under Incorporation would actually be lower by law. Other taxes and fees can be raised by voters. However, many costs have also changed; Jean estimated the annual cost of a law enforcement officer at \$250,000 per annum, once the costs of a vehicle, dispatch and other support services were included.

Jean noted that most if not all of the recently Incorporated cities in Washington have lower taxes and fees than their respective Counties. Taxes generally do not increase with Incorporation, but in fact are generally less than comparable County taxes. In his experience, after Cities incorporate, residents also usually see improvements in levels of service, particularly with Law Enforcement and with Land Use Zoning Control. Some services can be contracted, such as Law Enforcement which could be provided through a Special Local Detachment contracted through the Sheriff's Department but responsive to a local Mayor or City Council.

Jean provided many more examples of the costs and benefits that newly incorporated cities have experienced.

## **7. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm on a motion by Lisa Guthrie, seconded by Michael Stringam, with no objections.

Bob Jean remained in the room to answer further questions from attendees.