

Birch Bay Incorporation Association (BBIA)

BBIA Quarterly Association Meeting Minutes **Thursday Feb. 20, 2025 at North Bay Community Church**

1. Call to Order

The Steering Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:06 pm.

2. Roll Call

Position	Name	In Person	Via Zoom	Regrets
Chair	Matt Berry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Vice 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	Jonathan Mallahan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Steering Committee Member	Caprice Pine	<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	Holly Hamilton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Steering Committee Member	Yorkson Jeen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Steering Committee Member	Jan Barnes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Steering Committee Member	Michael Rutkowski	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Steering Committee Member	Pauline Nefcy		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Steering Committee Member	Lisa Black		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Steering Committee Member	Raymond Chladny			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Invited Guests	Sheriff Tanksley	2		
General Association Attendance		44	23	
Total Attendance		58	25	

3. Approval of Minutes.

Minutes of the January 16th, 2025 Steering Committee Meeting were approved with corrections.

Moved: Lisa Guthrie	Second: Caprice Pine	Vote: Yea: 12 Nay: 0 Abstain: 0
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4. Executive Committee Report

Matt Berry presented a one-page report including:

- Whatcom County selected Community Attributes Inc. (CAI) as the consultant to update the Birch Bay Feasibility Study, but the contract has not been concluded.
- City and County Council members met earlier on Thursday, February 20, 2025 to discuss UGA planning policies and population growth distribution, including Birch Bay UGA and possible incorporation.

5. Communications Committee

Lisa Guthrie presented a one-page report including:

- BBIA website has been relaunched under ***WeAreBirchBay.org***. Searches for previous sites will lead to the new site.
- A list of HOA's within the Birch Bay UGA has been identified and speakers will try attend appropriate meetings or coffee gatherings.
- ***"Sound Bite #1"*** on comparative police forces for nearby cities was distributed at the meeting.
- A list of community events to attend with the BBIA booth and information.
- ***"Newsletter #1"*** is scheduled for March and will be distributed in the Northern Light to about 10,000 mailboxes.

6. Finance Committee

Sharman Burnam presented a three-page report including:

- Treasurer's report for Jan. 17 to Feb. 20, 2025 showing a balance of \$3,752.28
- ***"Draft 2025 BBIA Budget"*** projecting \$31,600 in revenues and \$19,210 in expenditures
- Commitment of Finance Committee to apply for and secure grants.
- A ***"BBIA Pledge Card"*** for Steering Committee members and other interested BBIA members and friends to donate to support the work of the Association.

Adoption of the BBIA Draft 2025 Budget:

Moved: Lisa Guthrie	Second: Caprice Pine	Vote: Yea: 12 Nay: 0 Abstain: 0
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7. Research Committee

Jonathan Mallahan presented a two-page report including:

- Comparative analysis of City Levy Rates and the number of law enforcement officers per 1,000 residents.
- A simple comparative analysis would indicate that Birch Bay could afford 11 police officers including associated expense if the new City committed the same proportion of revenues to law enforcement.

8. Special Guest – Sheriff Donnell "Tank" Tanksley

Matt Berry introduced Sheriff Tanksley, Whatcom County Sheriff and presented him with framed photo of a Deputy on a motorcycle on Birch Bay Drive from the 1950's with a "10 mph" Speed Limit sign in the background. Sheriff Tanksley presented a slide show on the operations of the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office, noting:

- \$48 million budget including patrol officers, dispatch, detectives, and corrections staff.
- Introduced Deputy Joel Douglas who is assigned to spend 40 hours per week in Birch Bay

Sheriff Tanksley answered questions previously submitted and questions from the audience/zoom.

- How many police officers could be assigned to Birch Bay based on services in other cities? About 11 similar to Jonathan Mallahan's presentation.
- Could Birch Bay contract with the Whatcom County Sheriff for law enforcement at least in the early set-up years and would deputies be assigned specifically to Birch Bay? Yes.

- Would a County contract allow a local station in Birch Bay? Yes, there is one now in the City of Stanwood which contracts with Snohomish County Sheriff's office.
- Can the Sheriff's Slide Presentation be posted on the BBIA website? Yes.
- Would it be easier for a new City to contract with the County or start its own Police Department? Contracting would probably be easier since it is complicated to set up a new department and immediately recruit staff.
- Will Point Whitehorn be more difficult to police if it is cut-off by the State Park gates closing in the evening? Police service will be provided by the County.
- Are all the costs for vehicles, offices, back-up, etc. included in the cost calculations? Yes, but some services provided by the County, State and Federal services (such as detectives) would continue in coordination with City Police as they do now for existing Cities.
- How would you compare the Sheriff's Office with City Police? Both work well together under a "Mutual Aid" agreement.
- What major crimes have occurred in Birch Bay in past year? Not aware of any, but several serious investigations into burglary, arson, etc.
- Response time for a recent felony was 45 minutes; why so long? Average response time is 13 minutes in Birch Bay, but could be longer in early morning hours.
- Would a new City of Birch Bay assign one officer to Birch Bay Village? That would be up to the City Council and Police Chief.
- How can the community support the Sheriff's Office? Do not use Social Media to discuss potential crimes. Phone 911 and make a formal report. Also, set up a Neighborhood Watch program.
- Any challenges with hiring and retention? Had some serious shortfalls in 2020 due to Covid, but are back on track now. Hiring and retention would likely be more difficult for a start-up City, so another good reason to consider contracting at least for the first few years.
- If a new City of Birch Bay contracts with the County, would that reduce services in other parts of the County? No, not likely, since overall services would need to ramp up to recruit new officers to provide new services to Birch Bay; it is not likely that 11 new officers would be hired in the first year whether it was a separate Police Department or a contract with the County Sheriff.
- How can Neighborhood Watch work successfully with so many BnB's in the area? Would need to work with the owner/landlords more.

Matt Berry and the audience thanked Sheriff Tanksley and Deputy Douglas for their presentation.

9. Open Session (Questions & Comments).

1. Larger scale zoning maps are available at reception table.
2. 2008 Feasibility Study is outdated and should not be used; forecasts were inaccurate by 2010.
3. Graph presented on comparative Law Enforcement levels is misleading since the County Sheriff has several deputies assigned to Section 1, which includes Birch Bay.
4. Recent felony arson required back-up from Blaine Police since only one on-duty Sergeant responded in early morning hours.

10. Adjournment

Matt Berry declared the meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.