

Whatcom County Business and Commerce Committee  
Meeting Notes  
February 21, 2023

**Voting Members Present:** Debbie Ahl, Ryan Allsop (Committee Vice Chair), Paul Burrill, Clark Campbell, Pete Dawson, Troy Muljat, Brad Rader, Sarah Rothenbuhler (Committee Chair), RB Tewksbury, Chris Trout

**Voting Members Not Present:** Pamela Brady, Casey Diggs, Bob Pritchett, Dana Wilson

**Nonvoting Members Present:** Small Cities Representative Jori Burnett, Mayor Seth Fleetwood, Andrew Gamble, Eva Schulte, CJ Seitz

**Nonvoting Members Not Present:** County Councilmember Tyler Byrd, Don Goldberg, County Executive Satpal Sidhu

**Public Present:** Ken Bell – POB Commissioner, Lance Calloway, Jane Carten, Dan Dunne, Jessie Everson, Rob Fix – Executive Director, Port of Bellingham, Bob Fraser, Pamela Jons, Kathy Kershner – Whatcom County Council, Rob Lee, Brent Lundstrom – Director, Center of Excellence for Cybersecurity, Brittney Maruska, Kaitlin Mastin, John Michener, Anya Milton – Director of Corporate and Continuing Education and Work Based Education, Trish Newbold – Director for Workforce and Special Projects, Guy Occhiogrosso, Hannah Ordos, Chris Orr, Katie Patterson, Anna Robbins, Dr. Barry Robinson – WCC Vice President for Instruction, Lyle Sorenson, Gina Stark

### **February Agenda**

#### **Introductions / Administrative business / Comments welcome from the Public (5 min)**

- Committee Chair calls meeting to order
- Committee Member Introductions
- Approve December 2022 and January 2023 minutes
- Invite public to participate along with Committee members during Q&A sessions

#### **Update on Nooksack River Resources and Solutions**

- Yakima Water Integrated Plan Partnership (Jan 2023 presentation) group invited to present at Whatcom County Council

#### **Update on Community Safety**

- Opportunity for a tour with ModCorr approximately April 2023 (Nov 2022 presentation), organized by Lyle Sorenson

#### **Discussion regarding bylaws amendments (15 mins)**

- Review of 2023 Business Commerce Roster & Meeting Schedule
- Review of Business Commerce Bylaws
- Chair/Co-Chair Nomination/Vote
- Recommendation to County Council to add Construction sector position

**Presentation on Bellingham Technical College's Programs and Connections to Business and Commerce** given by Anya Milton, Director of Corporate and Continuing Education and Work Based Education (20 mins)

- Connecting BTC training programs to Whatcom County business and employee needs
- New and existing BTC corporate training programs
- Q&A (10 mins)

**Presentation on Whatcom Community College's Programs and Connections to Business and Commerce** hosted by WCBCC Committee Member Eva Schulte, Executive Director for the WCC Foundation (20 mins)

Facilitated by Dr. Barry Robinson, WCC Vice President for Instruction with presentation Trish Newbold, Director for Workforce and Special Projects and Brent Lundstrom, Director, Center of Excellence for Cybersecurity

- Closing health disparities in our community through workforce development
- Addressing the cybersecurity workforce gap and training employees to be cyber-empowered
- Q&A (10 mins)

DRAFT

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** I'm going to call the meeting to order. Thank you, everyone, for being here. We'll start with the committee member introductions.

**Ryan Allsop:** Ryan Allsop, Allsop Incorporated.

**Chris Trout:** Chris Trout with Woodstone Manufacturing.

**Clark Campbell:** Clarke Campbell, Gear Aid

**Gina Stark:** Gina Stark, Port of Bellingham.

**Troy Muljat:** Troy Muljat, Muljat Group.

**Paul Burrill:** Paul Burrill, Fathom Seafoods.

**John Michener:** John Michener, Port of Bellingham.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Sarah Rothenbuhler, Birch Equipment. And then we'll go into Zoom— I see RB at the top there.

**RB Tewksbury:** Hello, everybody. Good morning.

**Debbie Ahl:** Hi. Good morning. This is Debbie Ahl, health care.

**Pete Dawson:** Good morning, everyone. Pete Dawson. Dawson Construction and real estate.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Seth, you driving?

**Seth Fleetwood:** Seth Fleetwood, Mayor of Bellingham. Just driving in on the guide from Lynden.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Right on. And one of our former members, Andrew Gamble, thank you so much for being here.

**Ryan Allsop:** We miss any other members — that's everybody?

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Think we're good to go. All right. We have a quorum, and we have two sets of meeting notes to approve. We've got the December 20th, 22 and January 2023 meeting minutes. Does anyone mind making a motion to approve?

**Paul Burill:** Motion to approve.

**Ryan Allsop:** Second.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** All right, so approved. A reminder that everyone here, you don't need to be a committee member to participate in the conversation. We really appreciate you being here and would love to hear what you're thinking. We're going to move right into update on the Nooksack River resources and solutions. The Yakima Water Integrated Plan Partnership, that was a pretty impressive meeting, and they did throw out an invitation for people to travel and be in a tour there. And so I do really want Dana and Brad Rader and Paul Burrill to be a part of that, and I think they've also expressed interest in that. If any other members, committee members or otherwise have interest in that, I've reached out to them. I want to reach out again with maybe a month that just to start narrowing down to make that actually happen.

**Paul Burrill:** Let's wait till it warms up a little bit. [Laughter]

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Are you thinking May - June?

**Paul Burrill:** May, June. Can we just charter a flight and bounce over there?

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** That probably be the most efficient if everyone could pitch in. So maybe in May, June. [Unintelligible query.] We're going to have to buy lottery tickets or do something. [Laughter.]

**Paul Burrill:** Maybe talk to them about water levels because sometimes we may not be able to see everything. So find out if the water level is high in the spring, that might change what we can do.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** I was also wondering about that because it's going to be primarily our fishermen and our farmers. So what months are the best for you?

**Ryan Allsop:** Not May or June? [Unintelligible comments and laughter.]

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Okay. So we'll start with them and find out when they recommend. Perfect! Update on community safety— Lyle, do you mind giving us an update on that and thank you so much for bringing the great speakers out for the November meeting.

**Lyle Sorenson:** So we've been in contact with them. Buddy Johns from Mod Core has a mobile demonstration unit that I had tentatively booked to be here sometime the week of March 10th. And that's actually a cell model of the modular rapid deployment system that they're rolling out. That's something that they claim that they could meet our needs with whatever in probably 12 months following the well, those can be set up on a gravel parking lot or whatever. So they require minimal infrastructure. And that's an option that we can either lease or purchase depending on what we wanted to do. So, you know, that definitely gives us an interim while we spend another five years figuring out something else.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** 5 or 10.

**Lyle Sorenson:** 5 or 10— better you to say than me. Also, I'm expecting by the end of the month an update on the plan, private partnership, public private partnership stuff from Core Civic. So we should have some kind of some written proposal or example from them of some possibilities on how they can do that. And when we say public private everybody always gets their hackles up. A private jail, that's not the case. What the model is here is that they would build it for us. They would maintain it for 30 years and we would lease it. So we would be fully in control of operations. But it streamlines the process somewhat on funding and construction.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Are there also options where there's a design where we could pull in local contracts?

**Lyle Sorenson:** I can't imagine that they'd necessarily have contract restrictions. It would be open to whoever. I mean, anytime you build a facility like this, it's not typically restricted to only local or only national, you know, builders to do that. A lot of the larger projects and what we're proposing, I would think that it would stay primarily local.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** To have that knowledge.

**Lyle Sorenson:** Right. Yeah. I mean, that's what they do. That's their business model. So you know that that's beneficial. I think it makes sense to take a look at those things. So anyway, I'll get an update on when and where or Buddy Johns' meeting. And that's the week of March 10th.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** March 10th. Okay. And then we could send an update out.

**Lyle Sorenson:** Yes.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Let us know.

**Lyle Sorenson:** We were looking at March 7th because they thought maybe that would be a good committee activity. I've had significant pushback from Barry Buchanan in the last five minutes on that. So he says they're not ready for anything like that. They need more time. My response was, that's why we've been messing around for over a quarter of a century. You know, it's never a bad time to get that.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Okay. Thank you.

**Lyle Sorenson:** Thank you for the opportunity. So that would that's probably April. April, May. Okay. Depending on the— their first 20 units were sold before they were completed, even, and they're going to be deployed in Oklahoma.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Okay.

**Lyle Sorenson:** So there could be a possibility of Galveston or Oklahoma. The Oklahoma tour would not be as fun as Galveston, but actually seeing the units in action being deployed and in use would probably be of a lot of value to you. Yeah.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Yeah. Thank you. Thank you for all you're doing.

**Lyle Sorenson:** No problem.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** All right. Peter Frazier, are you— I thought I saw Peter log in. We can't see everyone that's on Zoom on our screen, but Peter has offered to—

**Gina Stark:** Yeah, it's Bob Fraser— you were right on the Fraser! But it's a Bob, not a Peter. [Laughter.]

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Thanks for being here, Bob. I'm going to pass out sign-up sheets. Peter's been running local tours and he's inviting any and all people that are interested in coming and seeing our facility that, really, was outdated in the 80s. I remember in high school in the 80s— I know that's hard to believe, I know you think that I'm 20, but I am in my 50s— I remember that we needed a jail then and that was a big part of the community conversation. So, for the love of God, I hope we can move forward versus keeping talking about it.

**Kathy Kershner:** I hope so, too. I hope the voters will approve the funding package that comes on the ballot in November.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Yeah. Thank you for being here, Kathy. And I'm sorry I'm totally staring you down when I asked that.

**Kathy Kershner:** That's all right. We have been supported the three times but we've not voted for it.

**Ryan Allsop:** What are the odds that it doesn't make it on the ballot?

**Kathy Kershner:** Zero. Do you mean that the voters will vote for it or that we put it on the ballot?

**Ryan Allsop:** They put on the ballot.

**Kathy Kershner:** It will be put on the ballot.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Good.

**Ryan Allsop:** That's good.

**Kathy Kershner:** I can't imagine that we would not do that.

**Troy Muljat:** Do they have a number yet for that funding?

**Kathy Kershner:** No. Not really.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** But there's so much knowledge. I really am interested in this group because there's so much about surrounding it with the rehabilitation piece and we need to do better as communities with that.

**Kathy Kershner:** Yes.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** But in the meantime, if anyone has any interest in these tours, you do not have to be a committee member. And perhaps we'll send this out with our follow up meeting notes. But he has tour openings Friday, February 24th at 2 p.m., Friday, March 3rd at 2 p.m., Friday, March 17th at 2 p.m. — wear green! Friday, March 24th at 10 a.m. and needs he just needs first, last name and cell number so he can coordinate with anyone that hasn't seen the jail in current state.

**Ryan Allsop:** And yeah, it's horrible. The library is being used as bunkrooms. Most people here, I'm preaching to the choir on. Like I think we need to get the non-believers in needing a new jail on the tour more important than the believers. But that's harder to do at.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Well and that's a good point. If anyone knows anybody who's second guessing it, they should take a tour.

**Ryan Allsop:** Maybe they can invite them. From a safety standpoint, everything, it's borderline inhumane.

**Ken Bell:** When you go through the tour, they tell you things that you don't normally think of. And that's how the demographics changed over the last ten years and what the demographic is today. So we should be looking at is very different. And you also see the working conditions of the people who are working in that jail. That's inhumane. If the working conditions are inhumane, imagine what the inmates are doing.

**Kathy Kershner:** And it puts us at a very high risk as a community. If anything happens, when something happens, a huge risk, we need to replace it.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Yes. And how frustrating for the police force.

**Kathy Kershner:** Well, yeah, we're having a hard time with the police and corrections deputies staying on board. Why would you.

**Ken Bell:** And the things that stood out to me was not only the mental health — over 90% are mentally ill — but also the fact that this is a multi-level jail and the complications of moving an inmate from one floor to the other. You don't think about it until you've got an elevator that's down or you're walking somebody down a stairwell and they decide to turn on you. So to have a jail that we go vertical with should factor

into where we site it and how we build it. So those are the kinds of things that everybody needs to go listen to.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Or we're not doing our due diligence.

**Ken Bell:** Even believers.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Yeah. Great. Thank you, thank you. And thank you, Peter Frazier, for keeping that going. Any other comments? We'll move on to the upcoming week. There's a couple things. One, I think all our members are posted on the port's business advisory committee but I didn't see RB on there. So maybe we can just double check that we've got all the members listed. And actually that was the County Council's list of all the members. But I don't think the port does list out all the members and it'd be nice to have that on the port's as well.

**Gina Stark:** Yeah, it's because it's a county council committee then all the members are listed on the County Council website.

**Ryan Allsop:** It was previously on.

**Gina Stark:** I think we've had a link is where we've always done it, with the link.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Okay.

**Gina Stark:** And it takes you to the County Council page and then that's where all the rosters and the minutes and all this stuff is done.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** And maybe it was me, but I didn't see on there.

**Gina Stark:** I'll double check. We'll double check. Yeah.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Okay.

**Gina Stark:** For sure. We definitely want RB listed!

**Kathy Kershner:** Absolutely.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** So the next step. This is the time where I step down and Ryan takes over and we nominate a Vice Chair. And just full disclosure, Ryan has been an amazing vice chair and has said, go to hell if you think I'll be chair. [Laughter.]

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** And he said it right from the get go. We didn't check with RB, but we did check with all other members to see if anyone wanted to step in as chair. And one of the proposals that came up



was to make this a two-year option, and it keeps the momentum of the board going. Ryan and I are both willing to do the two year. One of our other plans is to propose a construction member, ask County Council if we could have a construction member, and we already have a nomination of Dan Dunne. He's just been so involved.

**Kathy Kershner:** So you need a construction member on the committee?

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** We would.

**Kathy Kershner:** You don't have one?

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** We do have contractor on the committee but he's as a different leg. But construction is a big part of our county and should be represented.

**Kathy Kershner:** Certainly, happy to take that and see what we can do. How many members are on the committee? So we want to keep it an odd number. So we'd add two. I'm happy to bring something forward.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** If we can't think of another industry, we can have another at large.

**Kathy Kershner:** Yeah. Okay.

**Clark Campbell:** Yeah. Make a motion for education. Even though it's not a government entity, it's still a big employment sector.

**Kathy Kershner:** It sure is here.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** And Clark and I have discussed that too because, we need education on here, but education is not a private business.

**Clark Campbell:** Yeah.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** It's always going to be subsidized differently. Private business is not subsidized, and that gets forgotten in a lot of conversations.

**Clark Campbell:** Okay. I can respect that. Yeah.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Ryan also said he would step in, if people didn't want to do the two year option, you did say you would step in.

**Ryan Allsop:** And would as long as you keep running it. (Laughter)

**John Michener:** There is a question up here.

**Trish Newbold:** [Via Zoom Comment]: Is agriculture represented?

**Ryan Allsop:** Brad Rader.

**Lance Calloway:** [Via Zoom Comment]: Is tourism represented

**Gina Stark:** And is tourism represented. So maybe hoteliers? You're thinking hoteliers because they're a big part of our community.

**Lance Calloway:** Absolutely. Tourism is about a, you know, \$600 million industry in Whatcom County.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Excellent ideas. Thank you.

**Ryan Allsop:** That's a great suggestion. [Unintelligible, multiple members speaking.]

**Clark Campbell:** Tourism hotels I think are similar. Hospitality with Casey Diggs representing restaurants and I don't know to the extent that [unintelligible, multiple members speaking]. That's retail? Okay. That's interesting.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** So construction and tourism.

**Ryan Allsop:** Yeah, that would be great. That'd be great. Yeah.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Yeah. Thank you.

**Ryan Allsop:** Quite a few businesses around we can definitely tap into on that.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** That'd be wonderful. And backtracking, I see Jane Carter added a video on the jail facility that maybe we could add into our meeting notes. Thank you for that.

**Gina Stark:** Yeah, we'll make sure that gets saved.

**Jane Carter:** [Via Zoom Comment] I haven't watched this yet, but I found this:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HOVtzutn2zU> for those of us who haven't toured the facility.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Thank you, Jane. Back to this, does anyone have any thoughts?

**Ryan Allsop:** Is anyone opposed to starting a second year and going forward with changing the bylaws to a two-year optional?

**Paul Burrill:** Year optional is good because once you get a little bit of momentum going, once you do, I think we should try to hold that. To have it switch too rapidly. I think we could hurt the progress.

**Chris Trout:** I'm not opposed to it. But I'm new.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** I feel like we all are. (Laughter)

**Ryan Allsop:** I don't think there was any real reason for the structure we had and we just kind of like put it out there. It was like beg and plead for people to take it on.

**Clark Campbell:** And no one, no one is rushing to.

**Ryan Allsop:** And Clark ended up in that role and then Sarah stepped up. So I think it's really been unstructured. So I'm totally fine with it.

**Paul Burrill:** How about banking and finance?

**Ryan Allsop:** That's an interesting one as another business.

**Ken Bell:** Because commercial lending.

**Ryan Allsop:** Let's stay focused. Let's try to answer this one question and we'll come back. Can we just vote on it? The two-year optional term.

**Eva Schulte:** I would suggest that there's a successive vice chair. I mean, we could figure out how it works with existing leaders, but so that there's an overlap, right? So it wouldn't be two year service for chair and vice, but there'd be a rotation so you could really ramp up and then share. Maybe you could do a staggered turn now, but for future, if we are adjusting the charter.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** How would we word that then? Because that's a great idea.

**Eva Schulte:** I think you would just do terms right. There'd be a two-year rotational term, but on the off year you bring on the vice chair, right? For the intent of onboarding. Yes.

**Troy Muljat:** Year of overlap.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** That's wonderful.

**Ryan Allsop:** So if you were to structure that now, I would be stepping out.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** And if anyone's interested in stepping in, that would be great. Or some of the new members. I know Dan would step into that vice chair. I hope...

**Ryan Allsop:** That's how it begins. Just so we're clear, like that's how I ended up. Same with Clark.  
(Laughter)

**Clark Campbell:** And just one observation. It's been a pretty heavy lift for Sarah in terms of, you know, I look at our transcripts, our minutes are pretty extensive, so those could be shortened to be just action points and who spoke and if it was a motion taken. So, you know, you've offered the services of your employees to help do that work and that's not necessarily a requirement.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Yes.

**Clark Campbell:** You know, like certainly wasn't the thing that I did, right. I leaned pretty heavily on, on Gina and Don's team to assist with that.

**Ryan Allsop:** So that's the heavy lift. I mean, this this group originally was supposed to be meeting quarterly and so we mean those the original members remember that it was quarterly. We found it to be ineffective, traditionally, to drive change, to see if we could drive change. And it's just too infrequent. And so we stepped up to monthly.

**Clark Campbell:** Monthly, I think there's a lot of sense.

**Ryan Allsop:** But in doing so, there's a lot of content. I mean, I will say that's one of the reasons I don't want to take on that. She works 27 hours a day and you know, I've got three other jobs currently. And so just like she does, she's doing a yeoman's job. I mean, it's a tall order. It's not a minor amount of phone calls, amount of coordinating of speakers. And I mean, I'm not trying to talk a lot, I'm just saying you know, there's a lot of energy put in. Sarah is doing an amazing job of trying to coordinate that. Clark was doing that before. But all for the hope of improving our community in multiple facets. I think we're all committed that way. This is our service.

**Clark Campbell:** Motion?

**Ryan Allsop:** I think the motion is to vote on the two year term, two year term with alternating.

**Clark Campbell:** Alternate and then that will commence with this year. I'll put it forward as a motion, I guess.

**Ryan Allsop:** Second.

**Debbie Ahl:** I'll second.

**Ryan Allsop:** All in favor.

**Troy Muljat:** Aye.

**Paul Burrill:** Aye.

**John Michener:** Aye.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Aye.

**Chris Trout:** Aye.

**Clark Campbell:** Aye.

**RB Tewksbury:** Aye.

**Debbie Ahl:** Aye.

**Clark Campbell:** Looks like that passed.

**Kathy Kershner:** Could I ask for a motion from the committee to increase the membership, including two new positions for construction and tourism.

**Ryan Allsop:** Finance or banking? I think that finance or financial would not be a bad, you know, an option.

**Clark Campbell:** I thought that was a good suggestion. You need clarity. Do you have to have a specific ordinance?

**Gina Stark:** I was going to say, first of all, you're going to have to [unintelligible].

**Kathy Kershner:** I will take that on. But I want to know the city is in support of that before we do it.

**Chris Trout:** What are the criteria? So we're throwing out some segments. What's that criteria?

**Kathy Kershner:** So what do you currently have if you've got a 20 member committee? The ones that we're talking about here include Internet technology, manufacturing, food processing, recreation, retail, marine trades, commercial real estate, agriculture, energy industry and health care. And I think what we would what I'm hearing you'd like to do is add a construction position, a tourism position, and possibly a banking and finance.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Okay. So then we'd need to add one more at large to keep it an odd number.

**Kathy Kershner:** Well, you're actually at an even number, which is interesting because usually we don't set committees up as an even number. But I think some of those are the non-voting members. [Multiple members speaking at once.]

**Kathy Kershner:** 13. It's 13. Correct. Right. So you are odd. So you'd want to add—

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** We are odd. [Laughter.]

**Ryan Allsop:** We are.

**Kathy Kershner:** Yes you are. [Laughter.] You want to add either 2 or 4, right.

**Clark Campbell:** Before we go right to a vote? Should we open that up for discussion? Ken you were the one that were looking at a segment that I thought was lacking. Yes

**Ken Bell:** They have an important perspective. None of us move without it.

**Debbie Ahl:** I have one more question. How does the new construction position differ from who we already have on the board?

**Clark Campbell:** Commercial Development. Commercial Real estate.

**Debbie Ahl:** So commercial real estate versus construction. And then we have real estate.

**Troy Muljat:** There's just one real estate. I'm general business. Yeah.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Did that answer your question?

**Debbie Ahl:** So Pete, are you general business?

**Pete Dawson:** No. Troy's general business. I'm commercial real estate. Not quite sure how that worked out.

**Debbie Ahl:** Oh, Troy's general business.

**Pete Dawson:** Yes

**Debbie Ahl:** Yeah, I mean, I don't doubt that construction is just a huge part of, you know, the community, everything going on. I'm just trying to understand that.

**Troy Muljat:** I think we're trying to set up structures appropriately once it's beyond all of us. Just building. We don't fit all, we're square pegs in round holes at this point.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Yes. We want to keep building the foundation, it seems like we might survive as a committee. (Laughter)

**Kathy Kershner:** I think this committee is evolving and growing. I have to tell you, I continue to enjoy watching it evolve. It's great. And I appreciate the multiple terms and how people are digging in, the subcommittees and the work on the different concepts. I think it's good. It's really solid.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Thank you for being a part of it.

**Paul Burrill:** Two parts— first, I'd like to thank everyone that has served. That's a lot of work and everybody else helps out, too. Second, if the committee gets too big, does it become hard to get a quorum and is there any way to offset that? Because I do think these extra spaces would be good. They're really important industries within our county. The quorum might be tough.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** And the zoom piece needs to stay in place.

**Paul Burrill:** It has been important for multiple business owners. Sometimes you just can't be here.

**Clark Campbell:** Is there a question that with regard to like right now what we need? How much for quorum.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** It needs to be seven.

**Clark Campbell:** So with that, it would raise it to nine. Because that would make it harder.

**Kathy Kershner:** You can set your own business rules. So you can decide what your quorum is going to be.

**Clark Campbell:** So we can keep it to seven. Getting to nine, I think we'd have fewer meetings that would be a quorum.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** We didn't hit quorum once in 2022.

**Debbie Ahl:** Do we have somebody from retail? Like downtown businesses.

**Ryan Allsop:** Casey Diggs.

**Debbie Ahl:** Oh, that's right. That's right. I mean, it is definitely retail, but it's also retail, kind of the food and beverage industry, which is growing. But I'm thinking about other retail as well. Just you know, I think about some of the impacts that we've seen on downtown businesses and everything from hair salons to little shops trying to start up.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** We ran, I think, a few years without all of the positions being filled. But they were filled in 2022. So maybe just while we're having the discussion we had before, as before, we can continue if they're not all filled immediately, but it gives that momentum. And excellent point on keeping quorum at seven.

**Ryan Allsop:** It's either 2 or 4 to stay at odd numbers. Is that correct?

**Kathy Kershner:** Generally, if the best way to go. Yeah.

**Josh Burdick:** [Via Zoom Comment]: I didn't hear anyone listed from the Creative/Arts community; is that sector represented?

**Gina Stark:** And as Josh commented, I didn't hear anyone listed from the creative arts community. Is that sector represented?

**Clark Campbell:** No, it's not.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Correct. But that could come in as one of the 3 or 4— what's the official phrase? 'Other for profit?' Josh, there's no equipment rental either, damn it.

**Eva Schulte:** I do think for Debbie's point, it's really smart for us to think about the smaller businesses that maybe don't have voice and how we're creating space. So I don't know if that would be included explicitly in the charter.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** I think keeping that open and being aware of it because Dan comes in and represents a whole different construction segment than Dawson.

**Pete Dawson:** Yeah, for sure.

**Dan Dunne:** We're like the grubby guys in sweatshirts and Dawson is like the [gestures broadly].

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** I think that's important but I don't want to add more rules. Let's keep flowing and push those businesses to apply.

**Clark Campbell:** If we're going to do it and do it incrementally four seems like a pretty big move. And then particularly for keeping the quorum level at seven, you know, now you've got less than half of the group. So I don't know. I like the idea of keeping the quorum at seven but adding four to the committee, which means this group needs to at least dial in. Is it construction plus small business or construction plus retail or construction? Well, not retail. We already have construction plus finance and banking or construction plus tourism.



**Troy Muljat:** So we have an advisory level to us, I mean, I think all of us as those small business owners, we're pretty sympathetic to a business and that's why we're here. We're trying to be selfless to help out.

**Clark Campbell:** But I think Debbie did raise a good point. We don't really have straight up retail as part of as part of this group.

**Kathy Kershner:** We do have a retail spot.

**Clark Campbell:** We have a beverage restaurant representing retail and that's downtown based and that's great. But other small retail.

**Ryan Allsop:** Okay. Again, I mean, I think I kind of agree with Mark. Maybe jump with two. We can talk about two more next year if we want to add two. I do think, you know, to Ken's point, we can also invite them. I think we need we need those voices here. They're not represented here as just public. And so getting a few more if we want, the banking industry, that type of thing. And then I think those are good ideas. I don't think there's any harm in having them here and we should be encouraging them to come. We just want to list and see if we can start getting some network to them and see if we can get them here as part of the community because they have a lot of the same issues and they'll think we're going to represent them just fine for now. And then eventually they can take some of our spots as we step out. We do need to backfill.

**CJ Seitz:** Do we have a hospitality sector? Because generally restaurants and hospitality and retail separately. So do we have a hospitality?

**CJ Seitz:** Generally speaking, that hospitality and tourism I think would be like would be like restaurants and hotel.

**Ryan Allsop:** It depends on how narrow you want the funnel, right? I mean, that's the question. I mean, it starts to narrow pretty fast if you're. Oh, sorry, who has a question?

**Gina Stark:** Guy.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Hey, Guy.

**Ryan Allsop:** Hey, Guy.

**Guy Occhiogrosso:** Hello, everyone. Just a point of clarification. When you look at the historic makeup of the group, I do believe it was designed around the, the sectors that we wanted to grow as a community. I'm not discounting or saying I disagree. I'm just looking back from the historical perspective because, if we're going to start silo-ing industries that we want to invite, like this meeting could get real big real quick. And so I think there may be some alignment with the CEDS report or, I don't know, just kind of looking at again, that historical look back and know that there have been positions added since the

creation of the of the committee. But just kind of thinking long term what success looks like if you wanted to segment industries. There's a lot of nuance there and that could grow the committee quite substantially. And then you have a whole different set of problems. So just kind of throwing that out there. I don't disagree with any of the suggestions that have been raised up to this point, but going forward, it's probably a good idea to choose why an industry would be included over others. Because if nothing else, that is the historic component. So just adding my two cents to that.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Thank you.

**Ryan Allsop:** Thanks.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** With that note, do we propose two or four? And what are they? With the housing being such an issue, and one of our four main focuses, I still hope we can add construction. I'd love adding another open for-profit because that allows more diversity. So there's two. I'm all for just going for four but sounds like people are leaning towards two.

**Paul Burrill:** Motion for two.

**Troy Muljat:** And two? At this point, we have...?

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Construction and open for profit. Does that feel okay?

**Troy Muljat:** Yeah.

**Ryan Allsop:** So you're saying we're going to apply that to anything, basically? That gives us the most flexibility. It's not always easy to find somebody that wants to come in either. So that does make flexibility.

**Clark Campbell:** And it sounded like there was a motion for that to be more oriented towards small business?

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** If we could just keep it for profit and keep it open. Whoever's going to step up, get it. Go for it. No more rules or complications.

**Clark Campbell:** It has to get put through by county. The county [unintelligible], whatever that language is, it may get adjusted by the county council.

**Kathy Kershner:** It could all get adapted. I'm going to take your recommendation to the county.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Thank you.

**Kathy Kershner:** But you have to vote on it so that I know you've got it.

**Clark Campbell:** So proposal for two additional seats, one being earmarked for construction and one open for profit business. That was a motion.

**Ryan Allsop:** Seconded.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** So now we vote.

**Ryan Allsop:** Okay. All in favor.

**Troy Muljat:** Aye.

**Paul Burrill:** Aye.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Aye.

**Ryan Allsop:** Aye.

**Chris Trout:** Aye.

**RB Tewksbury:** Aye.

**Clark Campbell:** Aye.

**Ryan Allsop:** Okay. All right. There we go. Two motions, one meeting.

**Gina Stark:** And the only increased quorum by one. So now you need eight.

**Clark Campbell:** Does that need to be reflected in a change to the bylaws?

**Gina Stark:** It's already Robert's rules of order.

**Kathy Kershner:** So yes I will have an ordinance drafted and we will discuss it at the county level and pass it there. And then once it's passed, then your committee will be bigger. Then we'll take applications for the seats that are open.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Thank you. Jennifer had written a proposal for bylaws on extending the chair and vice chair that the alternating vice chair. We just need to get that language adapted.

**Kathy Kershner:** And that's all on you guys because you get to set your own committee rules. It's not part of the ordinance.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Okay. Yeah. Perfect. Teaming up with Jennifer.

**Gina Stark:** Jenn is on that. Yeah. When she returns.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** And so now thank you so much, our presenters, thank you for your patience through our housekeeping. We're going to start out with the presentation on Bellingham Technical College's programs and connections to business and commerce.

**Anya Milton:** Yes. Hello, everyone. Can you hear me? Yes. Okay, good. Excellent. I'm Anya Milton. I am the director of corporate and continuing education and work-based education here at BTC. Some of you may remember me from the Ferndale Chamber of Commerce, where I was the executive director for the past four years. Coming over to BTC, one of my personal focuses is workforce development, which actually aligns really well with the CEDS and goal number three. And so I'm going to share my screen and I'm going to turn off my video. Can you see the presentation? Okay. So as we go over this quick presentation, I want to frame this presentation for you under the guise of looking at goal number three of the CEDS, and that is to develop a skilled workforce, expand educational attainment and align employer needs with educational programs and curriculum. And some of those objectives include skill alignment and information sharing, STEM program improvements, educational attainment improvements, retention of local talent. Post-secondary— excuse me, post-secondary education expansion and work based education and training. So again, in creating this framework, I want to put forward our mission and vision, which is to provide student centered, high quality professional technical education for today's needs and tomorrow's opportunities. And I want you to pay particular attention to the term "student", because for BTC, the average age of our student is 29. So it isn't just the kids coming right out of high school. It is folks who are making a change in their career or coming back to college or also improving their personal development or their professional development as well.

Then our vision, I think this again is important because it aligns well with the CEDS and also with why you are all here today. So to be recognized, to be a recognized leader in providing innovative and effective technical education, maximizing student potential and supporting— here's the good one— regional economy through development of a competitive workforce. So quick history again providing the framework here is that the first industrial school here in Whatcom County. It was started in 1911 and it evolved into a manual training section. But the important part here is it was built and planned by the Bellingham School District. I don't know if many of you know that. I certainly didn't and I've lived here for 18 years. Another important factor here, especially with continuing ed, when you frame it in that way, is in 1940, with the war looming, we trained over 4000 people who received industry training during the war. Then in '57, the Bellingham Vocational Technical Institute was established and operated by a still the Bellingham School District. And it wasn't until 1991 that the Bellingham Vocational Technical Institute was renamed BTC as it became a member of the Washington State Community and Technical College System. And then here we are today on our 32 acre campus that includes the Marine Drive Annex. One other important aspect I want to point out about that connection to the school districts is that I think in '91, there may have been the beginning of a little bit of a kind of disconnect as we were part of a different system.

And with the with the pandemic, I think that accelerated a greater disconnect with the school districts. And this is something we are really focusing on, reconnecting that pipeline of those younger students into our system. So as an academic overview, BTC offers 40 different degrees and certificates in nine areas of study listed below. You may know many of them. And the real reason why I'm here today is to help you understand what some of our program offerings are and how they align well with the CEDS. So what's the difference between corporate and continuing education and work based education? So the this is the cheat sheet here. And I'm going to go into some of the details in a minute. But for corporate training, what we're looking at is groups of individuals. So companies, either one company or maybe a consortium of companies looking to upskill their teams. Continuing education is individually focused on professional development, and that is offered through open enrollment classes, both synchronous and asynchronous, here on campus and off campus. And then we also have on demand learning, which is through a third party platform. Work based education is educational opportunities for students to connect to businesses and industries through apprenticeships, internships, job shadows and eventually jobs.

So here for corporate training, it is specifically customized to the businesses' needs so it can increase job safety, bridge employee skill gaps, develop new leaders who are equipped for the future and or train on new technology. We also develop training solutions that serve new and recurring business clients of any size and across every industry. And we also have access to multiple funding opportunities to help offset the cost of training. Continuing ED is short term education for lifelong learning, career advancement and professional development. We offer opportunities from industry certifications to personal professional development and BTC's portfolio meets the evolving needs of a highly skilled workforce and provides enrichment for community members through continuous learning. The on demand— man, I'm really bungling all my words today— the on demand learning— we offer comprehensive catalog through Mind Edge, which is that third party platform. It offers affordable and engaging certificates and all sorts of courses. There's a list of some of the certifications that are available through Mind Edge. And it offers the flexibility for folks, busy folks, who have jobs that need to work on maybe a certification in their off time. So you can do that in a set like six months and your own leisure. And it's really affordable and it's a really wonderful thing that's taking off. So work-based education is the connection between students and business and industry through learning opportunities, as I mentioned before, of internships, job shadows and job site tours.

If you have connections to businesses or have a business yourself that are interested in aligning internships, I am acting as that first port of entry, if you will, to getting you connected to the faculty members and then to the students for those opportunities. We have career and internship fairs coming up in April for nursing and allied health. We're offering and career and internship fair. This is specifically for our students and that's on Friday, April 7th. And then basically everything else that we offer: advanced manufacturing, industrial trades, transportation industries, business and engineering, that will be on Monday, April 10th. And if you're on, I don't know if you can see that in the room at the Port. If you can't access that QR code, I can make sure that you have access to that information. And my contact information is at the end of the presentation. Apprenticeships. There's no better way to learn than on the job and being paid for it. And BTC currently supports three different apprenticeship programs the AJAC, which is advanced manufacturing apprenticeships, AGC, Inland Northwest Apprenticeship Program and

Whatcom Working Waterfront Apprenticeship. We are the new fiscal agent, so that is a very exciting partnership that we are developing and keeping an eye on as we are looking at expanding some of our continuing ed based programs in the maritime trades. So a quick note for you that we do have a strategic plan that is on our website that includes four broad themes, 13 different goals and 12 key performance indicators.

We have a really neat tool online that shows you all those metrics. And one of the things, one of the key goals that I want to point out to you is the innovation and responsiveness and how we keep pace with industry and workforce needs and emerging trends. Some of the things that we are tracking is our key performance indicators for student employment and workplace performance, growing and nurturing, our external partnerships, professional development for our employees and faculty so that they stay top notch and key, learning all the new things, new technologies, so that we're training up our students to meet those needs and then of course continue to do our strategic planning and resource allocation. So what does that all mean? You know, it's an essential, the essential element to our student success, our advisory committees and our advisory committees are made up of over 300 members from all sorts of businesses, different sectors of the community, including universities, municipal health, fire, park and parks departments. These advisory committees play a very important role by providing expert advice, support, skill acquisition, industry representation, review and develop curriculum. They look at our facilities and our different shop areas. They help us with equipment in terms of either suggesting how we need to grow and upskill our equipment or perhaps even surplus some of the equipment. So as an example, WTA is surplus a few busses this year and we will be the recipients of some diesel engines that will be used in our diesel technology program.

They also provide helpful career guidance and employment opportunities. If any of you are interested in providing your expertise on an advisory committee, feel free to reach out to me afterwards. Or if you know of someone that might be interested. Another aspect that we're making available is the career coach job posting tool, which we launched right before the pandemic. It was kind of quiet for a few years and now it's coming back. And Career Coach is a tool for employers to post their open positions for students to search so students and grads can search for job opportunities and businesses can create a user profile and begin posting their jobs. And I happen to be the person who mitigates the entire processing of jobs and creating profiles. So if you have questions, feel free to reach out to me. And then finally, my contact information is right here. Feel free to email me. I'd love to give you a tour on campus. We're trying to get more folks here for a visit and our Cafe Culinaire is up and running again. And feel free to look for information for reservations as they fill up quickly, but my email information is amilton@btc.edu. And that concludes my super fast presentation for you on what we do here at BTC. I'm happy to take any questions.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Anya, thank you. That was great. It's so nice to see things getting back to normal. And I learned some things, too.

**Anya Milton:** Absolutely. Thank you.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Maybe do Q&A until noon so that we can give Whatcom Community college some time too.

**Anya Milton:** Absolutely.

**Ryan Allsop:** From a support structure. Have you looked at are you doing behavioral health mental health classes yet? And I know you're really strong in dental and nursing, but it seems like a massive need. Would that be the community college level? Okay.

**Anya Milton:** Yeah. Mental health. Yeah, that's at the community college level. Although we do have a pretty strengthened community, excuse me, mental health counseling services for our students as well.

**Ryan Allsop:** And then talking to Officer Elmendorf, who's now one of the chief recruiting officers for the Bellingham Police Department, one of their biggest limitations there is starting to find police officers. Which it's great, he's starting to fill some openings, which is exciting. But as the core structure, it takes them, basically, from the time they hire one, it takes 18 months. They've got to go to the academy. The academy is really slow. There's enrollment periods that form. And so they're actually talking, I know, to Skagit County about doing a mini because they have all they can do a lot of the stuff up here. They've got driving and stuff. But if there's any way to help police departments up here expedite that process through force structure, tech school or community college. I think it'd be worth talking to them, see if there's some accredited processing, you know, to help with or something, because they're desperate for it. Same thing for jail employees. We're just talking about that. That's going to be one of the big limitations.

**Anya Milton:** That the community college may be able to answer that specifically more. But I know that Whatcom County Dispatch and WhatComm has reached out to Bellingham Technical College, and I'm working on developing a certification program for dispatchers in Whatcom County and beyond so that it's kind of like a pre-certification and so that they can get all the training and then they just get hired and then can do the on the job training at that point so they know what they're getting into so that we're looking at launching that in the fall. And so that's an exciting, you know, need that was established and we're meeting that need.

**Ryan Allsop:** Great.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** That is great. Thank you.

**Paul Burrill:** So your Marine trades program. Does it cover basically all industries on the waterfront being, say, cold storage to ship unloading to commercial fishing? Or is there any focus set up as of yet that you that you know of, any structure?

**Anya Milton:** So to be very clear, we are developing a sort of a basics for marine trades. And I know that the Working Waterfront has an apprenticeship program that does cover some of those areas. And we're working closely with the Working Waterfront program, the apprenticeship program, to get kind of glean

information and how we can help establish that. And we're also talking with the port on how we can do that together. We know that it's an identified need. We're looking at possibly building in sort of other certifications within that, like forklift certification. So it's really early stages. And if you have suggestions, I would be absolutely willing to hear them and listen and sort of glean any information possible as we move forward with this.

**Paul Burrill:** Right. Thank you.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Thank you. Thank you so much. That was excellent.

**Anya Milton:** You're very welcome. Thank you for the opportunity.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Great.

**Eva Schulte:** Well, Anya, a great presentation. And I think I really am appreciative of Sarah and the invite to engage deeper today, because just over a year ago, we did talk about our cybersecurity work at Whatcom Community College. For those of you that don't know me, I serve as executive director for Whatcom Community College Foundation, and I'm joined by several colleagues who I'll introduce in just a few moments. But this is our strategic advantage. In Whatcom County, we have four amazing educational institutions. And so here you have Bellingham Technical College, Whatcom Community College. On our agenda today, we also have Northwest Indian College. And of course CJ, representing Western Washington University. That is really unheard of in the country. And I think we need to talk about it. We want to be in relationship with business and corporate leaders that can share with their peers that this place can educate, can upskill, can equip workforce unlike any other county. We're doing that every day through all four educational institutions. So that's the broad, and going to local: What does that mean for you? We're really interested in how we're building more comprehensive partnerships with business and commerce and doing that through whichever entry is most strategic for you. If that's an internship, if that's creating a scholarship through an endowed fund that helps fund criminal justice students to be able to come into Whatcom when they didn't think they could otherwise, if they want a career in law enforcement or social work, we're having those conversations every day.

And so there's creative ways that you can serve. And as you heard from Anya, we also have community advisory committee roles. We have foundation board leaders that are giving their insight on where we can help fill that gap. Of the \$2,500 that we found is the existential difference for a student retaining or not. That's not a lot. And yet for all of our institutions, that can make a big difference in whether or not students persist. So today it's my pleasure to introduce our vice president for instruction. If you haven't met him yet, please take a moment. Have coffee. Dr. Barry Robinson is an exceptional leader that has come into our region to help guide the future of instruction at the college. And we're also joined by our director for workforce, Trish Newell, who will present on what you were asking about, the social work, behavioral health need and how we're equipping students to step into that critical area for Whatcom County also on substance use disorder prevention.



So Trish will touch on that and then you'll hear a little bit from our newest recruit to Whatcom, which is Brent Lundstrom. So Brent is building on the national work of our Cybersecurity Centers for Excellence in the state, working with business and industry across the state of Washington to build centers of excellence in cybersecurity. So you'll get a piece of all of those things in this presentation. Feel free to chime in if you have clarifying questions. There'll be more time for Q&A at the end. I also invited Brittany Maruska and Katie Patterson Hewlett. If you want to just pop on the screen to wave Brittany and Katie. So Brittany is serving as our workforce coordinator. So similar to Anya, that entry into internships and workforce opportunities, Brittany is your lead, comes with great experience there. And Katie Patterson Hewlett is my colleague at the Whatcom Community College Foundation that's really guiding our corporate and business connections. So that's the team you can engage all of us or anyone you know of the 500 employees that work at Whatcom Community College serving 10,000 students, is that a good sales pitch? Okay. All right. So now on to Dr. Barry Robinson.

**Dr. Barry Robinson:** Thank you, Ms. Eva, for that gracious introduction. Give you all just a brief introduction about myself. Since this is my first meeting and first time meeting most of you all. I'm a clinical neuro virologist and switched over to higher ed some time ago and then took off from that point to help others make their educational goals. In my family, they consider me an overachiever. I have several graduate degrees and pushed forward and tried to push some of my relatives to go forward a little bit further. But they think I'm crazy for going this far and building up a little bit of debt. Now on to the purpose of this meeting. As you've heard before, we're always open and willing to have you all come and join some of our advisory boards because that's how we connect with the community and learn the needs of the community and the businesses within our community and how we can prepare our graduates to fit that need. Now, I'm gonna throw a little twist out there and say if there's any committees that you want me to join because you would like for me to add the voice of higher ed and Whatcom, let me know. I'm not afraid to join committees, and I love getting out and meeting people and having those types of conversations. Without taking away the thunder of my two great colleagues on mental health and also cybersecurity, slash, we'll say, IT, I'm just going to say that we're deeply involved in trying to meet the needs of the community, and we need your help to do that at all levels. And as Ms. Eva mentioned, if you have anyone you know here on campus, reach out to them. Let them know the needs that you see in your area of specialty. And then we will try somehow to get back to me and we'll try to meet those needs at the level that it's satisfactory to the community and to you. At that point, I think I'm going to turn it over to Ms Trish Newbold. She's a great person and she's a great community leader herself. So take over Ms Trish.

**Trish Newbold:** Thank you, Dr. Robinson. Yes, my name is Trish Newbold. I am the director for Workforce and Special projects at Whatcom Community College. And it is my pleasure to speak with you today about how WCC is helping to close behavioral health disparities in our community through workforce development. So one really only needs to open their eyes and listen to the news to know that we do have a problem not just in our community here, but nationwide as well, with substance use and abuse. And the problem really only seems to be growing. So back in 2015, the Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement received a grant from the Chuckanut Health Foundation to develop a plan to help address those needs and to form a more robust continuum of treatment options in Whatcom County for people with chemical dependency issues, and to help connect those people with various resources.

So this was certainly not a problem that first arose in 2015. In fact, much of the research that the Whatcom Alliance did as part of this project was to review various county plans from the previous eight years. They also conducted multiple interviews of individuals representing the local health care industry, government and community organizations to gain an understanding of the status of substance abuse treatment in our community. And they found that while the goals and the issues and the needs had remained much the same over those eight years, there had also been some significant changes that they found, and that was that drug use overall was more prevalent, particularly with regard to the use of heroin and that treatment options were less adequate to meet those needs. So one of the gaps that was identified from this research project was specifically regarding workforces, which is where I'm going to focus my attention on today. They found that there were too few substance use disorder professionals or SUDPs in our community and that they were underpaid, which was resulting in a workforce that had large case holds and was overwhelmed, overworked, undertrained and under skilled. And as difficult as it was for them to recruit qualified SUDPs, it was even more difficult for them to retain them. They also found that there was a lack of professionals cross-trained in mental health and substance use skill sets.

In fact, there was a complete disconnect between the two. And given that roughly half of the people with substance use disorders have co-occurring mental health issues, many of those that were interviewed in this project also thought that we needed to make more of an effort to cross train. So alongside this work, WCC was also in the early stages of reviving what was then known as its chemical dependency program and was also reaching out to regional employers to help gain a better understanding of the behavioral health workforce needs and how we might help address them through education. And our own research found much of the same. There was a lack of SUDPs and there was a need for duly licensed professionals, specifically between mental health and substance use as well as social work and substance use. And we were also asking questions in our research about how we might address those gaps through education. So some of the things we were asking is what's the best delivery mode? And the majority said a hybrid delivery would work. Well, should practicums be part of the program? All said yes. And how could we become more effective and robust? And one of the themes that came out of that was that we needed to have an expedited pathway for Master's level mental health clinicians to be cross trained. We also learned that a SUDP associate degree would meet the needs for entry level positions, as well as provide a really good foundation for career progression with higher levels of education generally leading to positions with greater responsibility and pay.

So in 2016, WCC then partnered with Spokane Falls Community College and other stakeholders on a hospital employee education and training or HEET grant. And that grant had two primary goals. We could go— oh, there you are. So the first of those goals was to create and offer a 15 credit program offered fully online for those master's prepared licensed professionals. So some of those licenses included, for example, marriage and family therapist or mental health counselor, advanced social worker, physician's or physician's assistants and others. The other goal of this grant was to revive and update existing curriculum that we had for chemical dependency and package it for unlicensed professionals. So that specifically would be for those who would be new to the field altogether. So in 2017, we launched an alternative training program first at Spokane Falls in winter of 2017, and then in spring for Whatcom

Community College. For those master's prepared professionals, it was offered fully online and part time. So it really was tailored specifically for those who are working full time and were also looking to expand their education. So creating that dual credential pathway. We also launched a new certificate and associate of Applied Science Degree. The certificate was designed for those students who already had a prior degree of an associate degree or higher 65 credits of core curriculum related to substance use disorder professional.

And then for those who didn't have that prior degree, the associate degree was designed for them. Those options were designed to be delivered in a hybrid mode with the in-person requirements offered in the evening. Again, working ideal for the working professional and that program prepares graduates to counsel, assess and treat individuals, groups and families with substance use disorders in a variety of treatment settings. So since launching those programs, we have had 124 graduates from the program, of which I believe 76 earned the dual credit, The 15 credit certificate and the balance of 48 have earned the degree or certificate, including three already this academic year. So then meanwhile, we also had our eye on launching a Bachelor of Applied Science degree in social work that would build on the associate degree. This would provide our graduates a pathway for education and career progression, while also further addressing the need for duly credentialed professionals. So now that substance use disorder and social work credentials. So, as had been done when preparing to launch the program, we reached out to local industry and community organizations to help validate the demand and shape the curriculum. So it was in November of 2021 that we submitted our statement of need to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and then our final proposal in February of 22. The State Board approved that proposal in May of 2022, and in late December we received our final approval, which was from our accrediting body, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

And so we have just recently opened up our application program, our tool for students who to apply to the program that will start fall of this year. So we are looking forward to launching our first program this fall with our first cohort would then be graduating in spring of 2025 if all goes as planned. So we're very, very excited about that. This degree will prepare students with the competencies and knowledge for generalist practice and social work graduates. Graduates will be prepared to promote the well-being of individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities in a social work setting. Also want to point out that we are aligning the curriculum with the Council on Social Work, Education, Educational Policy and accreditation standards with the intent that we would seek program level accreditation. And then upon programmatic accreditation, this means that graduates of our program and social work would then be eligible to apply for entrance to a master of social work program. So it's not an terminal degree. It still provides them with that opportunity to build on their education and further their career progression. I think that's about all that I needed to say right now to get you up to speed with what we are offering. I'm happy to entertain questions now, unless there is a preference to wait until after Brent has had an opportunity for his presentation as well.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** We better go for the next presentation and then have Q&A, just because we're at about 18 minutes left for the meeting.

**Brent Lundstrom:** All right. Well, good afternoon, everyone. Brent Lundstrom. I'm the director of the Cybersecurity Center of Excellence. So Whatcom has received just tons of recognition, both regionally and nationally by the White House and has also received state funding to be designated as a Center of Excellence. My vision for the Center of Excellence is that we really help to become the epicenter here in the state of Washington for skilled cybersecurity workforce. Just a little bit about the Centers of Excellence. There are 12 centers of excellence that act as liaisons around the state between education, industry, legislation, to really accelerate the workforce gaps in key driver industries. So there's an aerospace and engineering center, there's an agriculture center, and we really work with each school that is focused in these key driver areas for economic development and growth here in the state. Just a few stats that I wanted to throw at you or a quick little lesson for the day. Malware is software that is designed to disrupt damage or gain access to a computer system. Phishing is when a hacker attempts to get you to click on a link through email, which is really responsible for all of malware infections. So those links, that spam that you're getting to your business emails, the most breaches are impacted when a nefarious actor perform some social engineering and attempts to install malware to gain access to your data and then ransom it back to you, which is also known as ransomware.

So there's a huge increase in cybercrime as we're speaking. Right now, as I'm talking through this this slide, somewhere, some someone has been attacked and hacked. So the cybercrime is really on the rise these days. By 2025 there are estimates that across the globe cybercrime will actually cost the world \$10.5 trillion annually. Another slide that, you know, I came across a bunch of stats and cybersecurity research firms produce some amazing stats to scare us into buying their services. This one sort of jumped out at me that 64% of companies have experienced at least one form of cyber attack. And you know, just like knowledge is power, access to your data is the ultimate power. We're seeing catastrophic attacks against pipelines, critical infrastructure, even our voting systems, all sectors of business are susceptible to cybercrime and cyber attacks, whether you're small, medium, large. Anyone that has that's connected to the World Wide Web and has artifacts in in your items within your organization, like IOT devices that have an IP address, are all susceptible to being hacked. So it's really a big challenge. And you know, next slide, one of the other stats that really jumped out at me is that here in the state of Washington, only 166 incidents were ever reported to the state auditor's office. And why is that? I think, you know, one thing that's really hard to track cyber crime is that most incidents go unreported.

Either folks are worried about the loss of reputation or they don't even have the staff on hand to recognize that their data may have been compromised. It can take over 11 months to for a cybersecurity expert to determine that maybe a breach has even happened. So that's granted you have someone with the appropriate skills on hand. And when we're talking about cyber crime, we all need to take a proactive approach to solving some of these issues and reversing these trends by a improving knowing some of the risk and improving your personal security. Training staff on what we consider to be proper cyber hygiene and really then looking at creating a surplus of cyber security workforce. So here in the state of Washington, we are in a in a talent gap. We're not unusual to the nation and globe; here in the state of Washington, we have a gap of about 25% where we need approximately 25% more staff to really protect our state. The Cybersecurity Infrastructure Agency, called CISA, has defined a framework of different job roles, and they've defined 52 different job roles that would be essential to protect our cyber welfare. And

so here in the state of Washington, we currently have over 15,000 cybersecurity jobs that are in need, which have a wide range of roles. Your IT director is going to be one of those typical folks that is going to need to be trained up in cyber security to protect the devices and infrastructure that that you have.

And we need to do more to just upskill people to know that the risks, the challenges and be able to mitigate some of those issues before they even become a problem. So here at Whatcom, we're doing quite a lot in in the terms of cybersecurity. We've launched some amazing two and four year cybersecurity programs. So if you're looking to get individuals trained up in in two years, up to four years, you can you can get some of your staff the qualified skills to protect your data and infrastructure there. That's all we have. We have plenty of opportunities to work with you and partner with you on improving your cyber hygiene and making sure that staff are skilled up. There's things that we can partner with you on in terms of maybe doing a boot camp or offering certificate programs that can meet the needs of your organization. One of the projects that Whatcom has partnered on is with Anvil, which is a local civil engineering firm and created a cyber range that's available to students, as well as training civil engineers on the impacts on in protecting the environment, on cyber security needs. So really kind of want you all to think outside the box here on ways in which we can partner together to really improve the level of security awareness within Washington state.

And you know, I'm here to act as a liaison between the industry as well as the school. I want to hear more about what sort of impacts you're seeing from a cybersecurity perspective and if you have ideas in ways that we can partner together here on a local level. Christy Saunders leads our cybersecurity programs on a state level. I'm working across all the community and technical colleges to elevate the awareness of cybersecurity issues and challenges. One opportunity is to identify advisory board members to each of our schools and as well as the Washington State Center of Excellence needs Advisory member Advisory Board members to partner with us. We have interns that may be looking for mentors or opportunities that that could come to your local businesses and help to make sure that you have the right cybersecurity measures in place if you're looking to get involved on a national level. We also have the Insight Center, which is directed by Corinne Sande, and she's done a significant amount of work on a national level in developing standards for cybersecurity education. So that's what I had for you today. And certainly welcome to take questions that you might have and really want to hear more from the small and medium sized businesses on how cybersecurity is really impacting you these days.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Thank you so much to you Brent and Trish, both really just excellent presentations. One question that I have is each all of you have mentioned your advisory boards. Would it be possible for us to get a list of each of your advisory boards or beyond that you would we could include really to all of our committee members.

**Clark Campbell:** Because we are going to want to reach out what the goals are.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Because we have a few hundred email recipient list from this, you might make a good connection that we're not even picturing.

**CJ Seitz:** I have to jump in and say I'm sitting on a board for community college and it is the best advisory, it's the best use of my time and I feel like it's a great fit for anybody here. It's well run, a good use of the professional's time.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Excellent.

**Eva Schulte:** It's so dynamic when you look at the varying places that people can enter into any one of our institutions. Whatcom being the example here, because it's a certificate. If it's like my sister-in-law, the reason I came to Whatcom Community College is my sister-in-law four years ago said this was an exceptional program and she did the substance use disorder prevention program. As someone who had a doctorate in psychology that wanted to upskill to know how she could better support substance use in Whatcom County outside in East County. Right. So, whether you're coming from 38% of our students being first generation, 37% of our students are students of color, there's really diverse entry points. Those community advisory committees allow us to know in real time what the need is for business and commerce really appreciate that, Sarah. And we don't have a lot of time now, but you've got emails here and Dr. Robinson and I will be in touch about the community advisory connects.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Five more minutes.

**Clark Campbell:** Yeah, I had a couple questions on the, the substance abuse professional degree program. Is that a new degree program generally? Like is that something you're seeing nationally? I have a daughter who's involved in medical outreach for the homeless in Salt Lake City. And it seems like the career path there is the people that she reports to are either coming from the nursing or physician assistants, you know, so you can get your EMT or you can go to get your PA and become a physician assistant. But the physician assistant, that's a big, fairly heavy lift. Is this kind of meant to bridge that the associate program for the substance abuse?

**Eva Schulte:** There's both certificate and associates and that's been what, five, six years that substance use disorder prevention programs really up ticked in presence.

**Trish Newbold:** Well so Whatcom launched the certificate and the degree program in fall of 2018. I don't know off the top of my head what how many other colleges within the state is are offering a similar program. But no, we're not alone. And again, don't know what the national stats are as well. But I suspect that there's plenty out there based on the on the need.

**Clark Campbell:** It's a pretty new field.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Did I read the right that there were 39 students or graduates or participants in 2018? But then for years, 22-23, there were only three students graduating today.

**Trish Newbold:** Yeah. So that 2017, that first number that you were looking at there, was all just the alternative program, that 15 credit program. So some of those numbers, about half of them actually

include Spokane Falls, but they show up in our numbers and I don't know why, other than it was a joint project. And so that alternative program, I think it's fallen, pulled back a little bit. I mean we met an immediate need of right out the right out of the gate there. And then that three that you saw, that's just so far this year, most of the people who've been going through the program, they will graduate in spring of 2023 of this year. And then I think also the last couple of years, just enrollments in general have, you know, taken a hit. And so that's going to have an impact for the number of graduates for the next year or two, I would expect.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Okay.

**Clark Campbell:** And just as a follow up on that, are you finding that that these are programs that that young people are wanting to go into and are choosing this as a field or is this more businesses saying, hey, we got an unmet need here or government services and they're sending their staff to get that associated certification. Where do you see the pipeline here?

**Trish Newbold:** I think there's a little bit of both there. There's certainly some that are just, you know, fresh out of high school that might be entering or fairly, you know, young adults entering the program. I don't know if it's industry sending people back into the program or just people maybe re-careering that are, you know, older adults that are entering the program as well. I could look up our stats, but off the top of my head, I don't know what the average age is.

**Clark Campbell:** Okay.

**Eva Schulte:** And then just to make the connect to cybersecurity to a lot of the students that I talked to, they're saying, I had no idea I'd be good at cybersecurity. I took one class because Whatcom is known for it, and then it turned on all sorts of opportunity for them. And then they took one class, led to an associate, and then led to a bachelors. And so that's kind of a nice incremental approach that allows for flexibility when you're exposing people and across the board in their curriculum.

**Troy Muljat:** On the cybersecurity part. And this might be a question for Brent, are you training, developing software engineers? Are you teaching them C, C+, Python, Ruby or are you teaching more on the management and they [audio cuts].

**Brent Lundstrom:** You know, I'm not I'm not necessarily the expert on the current program, but ultimately there are elements of Python and network engineering and networking that are components of the curriculum. So yes.

**Dr. Barry Robinson:** If I can add to that. Yes, we do have a separate program, the software development team that actually focuses more on that side of the house. And then we kind of integrate a little bit of the cybersecurity we say as a capstone or some extra input into those courses. So not directly in cybersecurity, because we have a different program that's dealing with that aspect, as far as all the

different programming coding that you mentioned. But they do get a little bit of exposure to cybersecurity across all our IT and computer science courses.

**Troy Muljat:** The question is, where do they go to work? Where do they go to work after they graduate that program? And then how do they attract those businesses to come here to Whatcom County? And would that be appropriate?

**Eva Schulte:** Yeah, I mean, I think those are conversations we're having all the time. And Christy and Corinne are engaged in those. So the associate of Applied Science and Computer Information Systems, that's on your slide deck, and the associate in Applied Science Transfer or AAST cybersecurity, I think we mentioned, but Anvil Corp, I think is a great example of a partner that we have a comprehensive relationship with that said, we want to actually attract students that are coming in, interning with us and then support our workforce and getting more certification and engagement. And so I don't know if we have a list that we can provide or we're public about that. But Dr. Robinson, we can follow up with Christy and Corinne and share some of those examples.

**Troy Muljat:** So in the Northwest, so you've got Amazons, Microsofts, that are going to suck that talent pool out. How do they stay here?

**Ryan Allsop:** More houses. [Laughter.]

**Brent Lundstrom:** I think there's an opportunity for these cybersecurity graduates to find more of those roles that can expand all of the IT needs that you may have. Cybersecurity being a big part of that. So if you're in the health care space or if you're in oil, in engineering, there's a significant need for cybersecurity workforce that that can really improve the overall performance of your IT space. So I think that that while, yes, there are other regions across the state that will be attracting these individuals, having cybersecurity a major component of these AAS and BS degrees is going to really help to elevate the cyber you know, empowerment here in the state and in the region. So I think those are. Go ahead.

**Ryan Allsop:** No, sorry, Go ahead.

**Brent Lundstrom:** I think those are the types of discussions I want to hear from you is how can we partner with the local businesses to make that make it attractive for these professionals to stay here and to thrive, right?

**Ryan Allsop:** Are your charters as the three high educations that are represented here, I mean, is your charter to graduate, you know, educate them, they graduate, and then employ them locally? Or is it really, you don't really care where they can [audio cuts]. We all want to keep them local. But I mean, I'd be curious statistically, from a Western community college and the technical, what percentage of your students leave and what percentage stay and which programs have the most staying versus the programs that are most departing the county? Because I think that'd be relevant to the businesses around here. And maybe we can help shift that.



**Troy Muljat:** The software community is very small. Yeah. I mean, so the issue so how are you keeping talent once you train and educate them?

**Trish Newbold:** We have that data.

**Eva Schulte:** Yeah, we do. And it's a fantastic question. I think, we'll correct this in the minutes if I'm wrong, but 84% now of our students wearing the WCC hat that stay in Whatcom County. So there is an advantage, right? We want to prepare students to be global citizens. And we also know that there are students that are more positioned to stay local. And so we have a higher percentage of those students that are coming through the community college because of, in many ways, who we're recruiting and positioning, that are able to then stay local. So correct me if I'm wrong on that percentage.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** The reason for this topic because it started with our parking lot conversation and cybersecurity, but mental health keeps coming up. It was like, hey, we have programs that are supporting that. It just it just evolved on us. Just another example of how important private public communications and meetings and advisory boards are, so thank you so much. I feel like the pendulum has swung too, because I feel like even our high schools used to teach, go to Seattle for the good jobs, and I feel like that's swinging. And the more we can learn where we need to show up and how to present to your students, the better. Thank you.

**Brent Lundstrom:** I mean think that people are going towards more of a hybrid work environment, especially in the cybersecurity workforce. So while they may not be employed by a local business owner, a lot of companies are willing to hire people that are able to work remotely too.

**Paul Burrill:** So sorry. One more question and I'll try to keep it fast. Talking about a lot of substance abuse. What about recreational use? There are talent gaps and I run into a lot of people that are looking to increase their pay and you talk to them about and they might be more in the trades industries, operating equipment and working in factory floors. You tell them about some of these good options and require background check and UA, and I've found that tends to you lose a lot of people that way. So while there's a lot of people looking, and this talent gap definitely exists, is there much conversation with the students when they come in about what happens if you use? That it reduces the amount of jobs you have available to you once you do graduate? I'm not sure if that's brought up much. It's extremely important.

**Eva Schulte:** We have a star student that won an award a couple of years ago who came from a place of being an opioid addict and on America's Most Wanted and speaks about that story and how this program, the substance use disorder prevention program, gave her the upskilling and an entry point to kind of reclaim her life and her story. So, I mean, that's one example. But I think you're raising, there is a systemic barrier, but there are programs that provide a different entry point. And she's probably the best equipped to then be able to engage with others.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** What does she do now?

**Eva Schulte:** Do you know? I can follow up with you. Yeah, she got her associate's. So her two year degree program and she presented to the Rotary recently. I was at that.

**Ryan Allsop:** And I think Paul's like, I know a lot of heavy industry heavy equipment will not hire— they can't hire— it's an insurance thing. It's a huge liability issue to run on heavy equipment. And so they have to be incredibly strict. But those are the highest paying of those jobs. They're the ones paying 55 bucks an hour for a forklift or 100 bucks an hour, you know, 80 bucks an hour for, you know, crane operator and stuff. I mean, there's real money there. Yeah, CDL drivers there is another example. And I think that's kind of what you're asking. It's a great question.

**Paul Burrill:** Yeah, that's like you bake it into the course curriculum, even if it's at a technical school saying, Hey, if you choose to do these actions, this will reduce the amount of employers.

**Eva Schulte:** Fair point.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** It would be nice to have someone from the that program involved with the jail in the rehabilitation.

**Eva Schulte:** Yes. We can follow up and maybe bring a delegation.

**Ryan Allsop:** And Brent, it'd be great if we could get your email to send our parents to you, to address all their cybersecurity questions and why they shouldn't click on ads. [Laughter.]

**Trish Newbold:** I will just jump in really quickly. We do also offer a criminal justice program and there is some talk about some collaboration between the criminal justice and the SUDP program to, you know, do some cross training there as well. It's not happening yet, but that's in the conversation, early conversations.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Wonderful.

**Eva Schulte:** Tell your kids what cybersecurity professionals get paid after two years, three years, five months. And base, it's \$65,000. [Multiple members speaking]

**Clark Campbell:** So we don't have to do three months at the next one.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Yeah. Excellent. Thank you. Could we just double check?

**Clark Campbell:** Yeah. I just was making note that we didn't approve the minutes from the January and December meeting. When we roll that to be the third one. They're quite extensive. I haven't read them, but I trust that they're a good transcript?

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Could we approve it for the first time or the second time right now?

**Clark Campbell:** So a motion to approve the December and January minutes.

**Ryan Allsop:** Second.

**Gina Stark:** So do we still have a quorum?

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Oh, come on, Gina. [Laughter.]

**Gina Stark:** Sorry! [Laughter.]

**Ryan Allsop:** We did at the very beginning. Because I thought I voted yes. I'm pretty sure I did.

**Clark Campbell:** Okay. We did it.

**Ryan Allsop:** Yeah.

**Clark Campbell:** Okay.

**Ryan Allsop:** At the very beginning.

**Sarah Rothenbuhler:** Thank you so much, everybody. And thank you to our speakers.

**Next meeting: Monday, March 20, 2023 11-1230pm**

Tentative Topic: Plan to invite Whatcom County to respond to WCBCC Housing Memo  
Hybrid Meeting- In-person encouraged and Zoom option available