



1  
2 Louise Bjornson, Council on Aging volunteer, submitted a handout (*on file*)  
3 and spoke against proposed amendment seven regarding prohibiting nonprofit  
4 funding.

5  
6 Janet Marino, Whatcom Peace and Justice Center, spoke against proposed  
7 amendment seven regarding prohibiting nonprofit funding.

8  
9 Charles Law spoke against proposed amendment seven regarding prohibiting  
10 nonprofit funding.

11  
12 Stoney Bird submitted a handout (*on file*) and spoke about proportional  
13 representation on the County Council.

14  
15 (*Note: Commission Chair Ben Elenbaas left the meeting at 7:30 p.m.*  
16 *Commission Vice-Chair Joe Elenbaas assumed the duties of the Chair.*)

17  
18 Paul Englesberg submitted a handout (*on file*) and spoke about proposed  
19 amendment four regarding the Preamble.

20  
21 Harriet Spanel spoke on proposed amendment one regarding district-only  
22 voting, proposed amendment three about limiting Council-proposed Charter  
23 amendments, and proposed amendment six regarding term limits.

24  
25 Lucy Morse submitted a handout (*on file*) and spoke on the amendments  
26 regarding the Preamble, district-only voting, and limiting county funding of  
27 nonprofit organizations.

28  
29 John Munson, Ferndale Food Bank Board Member, spoke against proposed  
30 amendment seven regarding prohibiting nonprofit funding.

31  
32 Jim LeMaster, Ferndale Food Bank Board Member, spoke against proposed  
33 amendment seven regarding prohibiting nonprofit funding.

34  
35 Mike Cohen, Bellingham Food Bank Director, spoke against proposed  
36 amendment seven regarding prohibiting nonprofit funding.

37  
38 Karen Brown spoke about amendment one regarding district-only voting and  
39 amendment seven regarding prohibiting nonprofit funding.

40  
41 Greg Brown spoke about amendment one regarding district-only voting,  
42 amendment three regarding limiting Council-proposed Charter amendments, and  
43 against proposed amendment seven regarding prohibiting nonprofit funding.

44  
45 Jean Quinliven spoke about limiting environmental study requirements for  
46 projects around the county and limiting Council-proposed Charter amendments.

47  
48 Mika Dultz spoke about proposed amendment seven regarding nonprofit  
49 funding and district-only voting.

50

1 Karl Uppiano spoke about proposed amendment seven regarding prohibiting  
2 nonprofit funding.

3  
4 Joy Gilfillan spoke against proposed amendment seven regarding prohibiting  
5 nonprofit funding and the budget process between the Executive and Legislative  
6 branches of County government.

7  
8 Kelly Bushaw, Bellingham School District and Whatcom Community College,  
9 spoke against proposed amendment seven regarding prohibiting nonprofit funding.

10  
11 *(Clerk's Note: The Commission took a break from 8:25 p.m. to 8:40 p.m.)*

12  
13 **5. Approval of Minutes for February 9, 2015**

14  
15 Dow moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded.

16  
17 Mackiewicz stated the minutes should correctly reflect his vote against the  
18 motion to adjourn.

19  
20 The motion carried unanimously with no debate.

21  
22 **6. Old Business: Discussion and Possible Vote on Proposed Charter**  
23 **Amendments to Voters at the next General Election**

24  
25 Proposed Amendment 1: Shall the Charter be amended to provide for election of  
26 council members within the council district from which the candidate was  
27 nominated?

28  
29 Joe Elenbaas moved to approve the proposed amendment.

30  
31 The motion passed with debate 8-6-1, Commissioners Donovan, Mackiewicz,  
32 May, Ryan, Stuen, and Walker opposed and Ben Elenbaas absent.

33  
34 Proposed Amendment 2: Shall the Charter, in Article 5.40 and Article 5.60, be  
35 amended to increase the "concise statement" limit from 20 words to 40 words?

36  
37 Stuen moved to postpone to the next meeting. The motion was seconded.

38  
39 The motion to postpone carried without debate 14-0-1 with Ben Elenbaas  
40 absent.

41  
42 Proposed Amendment 3: Shall Charter Section 8.20 be amended to prohibit the  
43 County Council from proposing Charter amendments on matters that have been  
44 approved by a 2/3 majority of voters?

45  
46 Joe Elenbaas stated this item would be held for two weeks to allow the  
47 Commissioner who proposed the amendment to be present and to allow legal  
48 counsel to do research.

49  
50 The Commission concurred by general consent.

1 Proposed Amendment 4: Shall the Charter Preamble be amended affirm the  
2 diversity of our citizens?

3  
4 Mutchler moved to postpone to the next meeting.

5  
6 The Commission concurred by general consent.

7  
8 Proposed Amendment 5: Shall the Charter be amended to facilitate voting on  
9 initiative and referendum?

10  
11 Donovan moved to approve the proposed amendment.

12  
13 Dow moved to amend to change the percentage from eight percent to 10  
14 percent of the gubernatorial election. The motion was seconded.

15  
16 The motion failed with debate 6-8-1, with Commissioners Sobjack, Ryan,  
17 Langley, Kentch, Dow, and Bell in favor and Ben Elenbaas absent.

18  
19 The main motion carried with debate 12-2-1, with Commissioners Dow and  
20 Ryan opposed and Ben Elenbaas absent.

21  
22 Proposed Amendment 6: Shall the Charter be amended to apply term limits to the  
23 County Councilmembers, Executive, Auditor, Treasurer, Assessor, and Sheriff?

24  
25 This item was not discussed and was held to March 9, 2015.

26  
27 Proposed Amendment 7: Shall the County Charter prohibit grants and expenditures  
28 to non-profit organizations unless the County is reimbursed by another organization  
29 or jurisdiction?

30  
31 This item was not discussed and was held to March 9, 2015.

32  
33 **7. New Business**

34  
35 Shall Charter Section 4.10 be amended to provide voter education concerning  
36 county officials' election titles?

37  
38 Mutchler moved to submit this item and schedule it as old business on the  
39 next agenda. The motion was seconded.

40  
41 The Commission concurred by general consent.

42  
43 Shall the Charter be amended to provide for the election of County Council  
44 Members who represent a district from which the candidate was nominated?

45  
46 Donovan moved to submit this item and schedule it as old business on the  
47 next agenda. The motion was seconded.

48  
49 The Commission concurred by general consent.

1 May moved that all future agendas have two categories for Old Business.  
2 The first category would contain proposed amendments the Commission has not yet  
3 considered. The second category would be a continuing list of amendments already  
4 discussed and voted on. The motion was seconded.

5  
6 The motion carried 14-0-1 with Ben Elenbaas absent.

7  
8 Shall Charter Section 8.23 be amended to prohibit the County Council from  
9 proposing any Charter amendment to Charter Sections 2.12 and 2.13?

10  
11 Dow moved to submit this item and schedule it as old business on the next  
12 agenda. The motion was seconded.

13  
14 The Commission concurred by general consent.

15  
16 Shall the Charter be amended to require that the Councilmember At-Large reside in  
17 unincorporated Whatcom County?

18  
19 Langley moved to submit this item and schedule it as old business on the  
20 next agenda. The motion was seconded.

21  
22 The Commission concurred by general consent.

23  
24 May moved to thank Lummi Nation Chairman Tim Ballew, II and his staff for  
25 hosting tonight's meeting and providing refreshments. The motion was seconded.

26  
27 The motion carried 14-0-1 with Ben Elenbaas absent.

28  
29 **14. ADJOURN**

30  
31 Goldsmith moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded.

32  
33 The motion carried unanimously.

34  
35 The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

36  
37 The Commission approved these minutes on , 2005

38  
39  
40  
41 \_\_\_\_\_  
42 Jill Nixon, Recording Secretary

43  
44  
45  
46  
47 \_\_\_\_\_  
48 Chet Dow, Commission Secretary

49 \_\_\_\_\_  
Ben Elenbaas, Commission Chair

# Proposed Amendment No. 1

Date submitted  
to Commission: **1/26/2015**

~~Date scheduled~~  
~~on agenda:~~

**Approved.**

Submitted by <b>Joe Elenbaas</b>	2/9/2015: Not discussed.
Charter Amendment Number: <b>1</b>	2/23/15: Approved 8-6-1. Donovan, Mackiewicz, May, Ryan, Stuan, and Walker opposed. Ben Elenbaas absent.
Section: <b>Article 2: The Legislative Branch.</b> <b>Section 2.13</b>	
Amendment:  <b>“Shall the Charter be amended to provide for election of council members within the council district from which the candidate was nominated?”</b>  As proposed, this Amendment would modify language in Section 2.13 as follows:  Section 2.13 Election <del>Countywide</del> by Council District  The registered voters of <del>Whateam County</del> <b>each Council District</b> shall vote upon each council member position <b>to be filled from their district</b> at the November general election. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes for each position shall be elected.	

## Proposed Amendment 2

Date submitted  
to Commission: **1/26/2015**

Date scheduled  
on agenda: **3/9/2015**

Submitted by Joe Elenbaas	2/9/2015: Not discussed.
Charter Amendment Number: <b>2</b>	2/23/2015: Postponed to 3/9/2015
Section: <b>Article 5: The Public Interest. Sections 5.40 and 5.60</b>	
Amendment:  <b>Shall the Charter in Article 5.40 and Article 5.60 be amended to increase the "concise statement" limit from 20 words to 40 words?</b>  As proposed, this Amendment would modify language in Sections 5.40 and 5.60 as follows:  Section 5.40 Initiative – Procedures.  Any legal voter or organization of legal voters of Whatcom County may file an initiative proposal with the County Auditor, who within five (5) days, excluding Saturday, Sunday and holidays, shall confer with the petitioner to review the proposal as to form and style. The Auditor shall give the proposed initiative a number, which shall thereafter be the identifying number for the measure. The Auditor shall then transmit a copy of the proposal to the Prosecuting Attorney, who within ten (10) days after receipt thereof, in consultation with the petitioner shall formulate a concise statement, posed as a positive question, not to exceed <del>twenty (20)</del> <b>forty (40)</b> words, which shall express and give a true and impartial statement of the purpose of the measure. Such concise statement will be the ballot title. The petitioner then has one hundred and twenty (120) days .....(continued)  Section 5.60 Referendum – Procedures.  Any legal voter, or organization of legal voters of Whatcom County may file a referendum proposal, against any enacted ordinance or portion thereof, with the County Auditor. The proposal shall be presented to the Auditor within forty-five (45) days after the ordinance is passed by the County Council.  Within five (5) days, excluding Saturday, Sunday and holidays, the Auditor shall confer with the petitioner to review the proposal as to form and style. The Auditor shall give the referendum proposal a number, which shall thereafter be the identifying number for the measure. The Auditor shall then transmit a copy of the proposal to the County Prosecuting Attorney, who within ten (10) days after receipt thereof, shall formulate a concise statement, posed as a question, not to exceed <del>twenty (20)</del> <b>forty (40)</b> words, which shall express and give a true and impartial statement of the measure being referred. Such concise statement will be the ballot title.  The petitioner then has one hundred and twenty (120) days .....(continued)	

**Whatcom County  
Auditor's Office**

Whatcom County Courthouse  
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 103  
Bellingham, WA 98225-4038  
Phone: (360) 676-6740  
Fax: (360) 738-4556  
Email: [auditor@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:auditor@co.whatcom.wa.us)  
Web: [www.whatcomcounty.us/auditor](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/auditor)



**Debbie Adelstein**  
County Auditor

**Diana Bradrick**  
Chief Deputy Auditor

February 5, 2015

To: Charter Review Commission Members

Re: Charter Review Commission Proposal  
Initiative and Referendum Procedures

Below is the language I would propose for our charter provisions for initiative and referendum procedures to match the state requirement in RCW 29A.72.050. I think it is always a good practice to have the language be the same so there is no confusion about what the requirements are. I would ask that you consider this as an alternative to what has been proposed by Commissioner Elenbaas.

**Proposed Change:**

Whatcom County Charter  
Section 5.40 Initiative – Procedures. & Section 5.60 Referendum – Procedures.

... The Auditor shall then transmit a copy of the proposal to the Prosecuting Attorney, who within ten (10) days after receipt thereof, in consultation with the petitioner shall formulate the ballot title which shall consist of: (a) a statement of the subject of the measure; (b) a concise description of the measure; and (c) a question: "Shall this be enacted into law?" The statement of the subject of the measure must be proposed as a positive statement, be sufficiently broad to reflect the subject, and be sufficiently precise to give notice of the measure's subject matter, and not exceed ten words. The concise description must contain no more than thirty words, be a true and impartial description of the measure's essential contents, clearly identify the proposition to be voted on, and not, to the extent reasonably possible, create prejudice either for or against the measure. . . . statement, posed as a positive question, not to exceed twenty (20) words, which shall express and give a true and impartial statement of the purpose of the measure. Such concise statement will be the ballot title.

**RCW 29A.72.050**

(1) The ballot title for an initiative to the people, an initiative to the legislature, a referendum bill, or a referendum measure consists of: (a) A statement of the subject of the measure; (b) a concise description of the measure; and (c) a question in the form prescribed in this section for the ballot measure in question. The statement of the subject of a measure must be sufficiently broad to reflect the subject of the measure, sufficiently precise to give notice of the measure's subject matter, and not exceed ten words. The concise description must contain no more than thirty words, be a true and impartial description of the measure's essential contents, clearly identify the proposition to be voted on, and not, to the extent reasonably possible, create prejudice either for or against the measure.

I respectfully ask that this be given consideration at your next meeting. I have reviewed this proposed change with Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Royce Buckingham and he concurs with the proposed language.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Debbie Adelstein".

Debbie Adelstein  
County Auditor



## PROPOSED AMENDMENT 3

Date submitted  
to Commission: **2/9/2015**

Date scheduled  
on agenda: **3/9/2015**

Charter Amendment Number: <b>3</b>	2/23/2015: Postponed to 3/9/2015
Submitted by: <b>Ben Elenbaas</b>	
Title: <b>Shall Charter Section 8.20 be amended to prohibit the County Council from proposing Charter amendments on matters that have been approved by a 2/3 majority of voters?</b>	
Section: <b>Charter Section 8.20</b>	
Amendment:  <b>Section 8.20 Charter Amendment – General Provisions.</b> Charter amendments may be proposed by the Commission, the County Council (except in matters approved by a 2/3 majority of the voters), or by the public. Any proposed Charter amendment shall be filed and registered with the Auditor and submitted to the voters at the next November general election occurring at least ninety (90) days after registration of the proposed amendment with the Auditor. If more than one amendment is submitted on the same ballot, they shall be submitted in such a manner that the people may vote for or against the amendments separately; provided, an amendment which embraces a single or inter-related subject may be submitted as a single proposition even though it is composed of changes to one or more articles. If a proposed amendment is approved by a majority of the voters voting on the issues, it shall be effective ten (10) days after the results of the election are certified, unless a later date is specified in the petition or ordinance proposing the amendment. Any implementing ordinance required by any Charter amendment shall be enacted by the Council within one hundred and eighty (180) days after the amendment is effective, unless the amendment provides otherwise.	

## PROPOSED AMENDMENT 4

Date submitted  
to Commission/or Clerk: **2/3/2015**  
Amendment submitted: **2/9/2015**

Date scheduled  
on agenda: **3/9/2015**

Submitted by <b>Jon Mutchler</b>	2/9/2015: Not Discussed, substitute submitted, moved and seconded to 2/23 meeting. 2/23/2015: Postponed to 3/9/2015
Charter Amendment Number: <b>4</b>	
Title: <b>Shall the Charter Preamble be amended to affirm the diversity of our citizens?</b>	
Section: <b>Preamble</b>	
Amendment: <p style="text-align: center;">Preamble</p> <p>Treasuring the many wonders of our unique environment, <b>respecting the different cultures and traditions among our citizens,</b> and realizing that the power and duty to govern and protect this region is inherent in its people, we, the citizens of Whatcom County, in order to have a government which advances justice, inspires confidence, and fosters responsibility, do adopt as the foundation of our government, this Charter.</p>	

## PROPOSED AMENDMENT 5

Date submitted  
to Commission/or Clerk: **2/4/2015**

Date scheduled  
on agenda: **3/9/2015**

Charter Amendment Number: <b>5</b>	2/9/2015: Not discussed. Amended, moved and seconded to 2/23 meeting.
Submitted by: <b>Todd Donovan</b>	2/23/2015: Postponed to 3/9/2015
Title: <b>Shall the Charter be amended to facilitate voting on initiative and referendum?</b>	
Section(s): <b>Section 5.40 and Section 5.60</b>	
Amendment:  Amend sec. 5.40, "...not less than 15% of the vote cast in the county in the last general election or not less than 8% of the vote cast in the county in the last regular gubernatorial election, whichever is lower."  Amend sec. 5.60, "...not less than 15% of the vote cast in the county in the last general election or not less than 8% of the vote cast in the county in the last regular gubernatorial election, whichever is lower."	

## PROPOSED AMENDMENT 6

Date submitted  
to Commission: **2/9/2015**

Date scheduled  
on agenda: **3/9/2015**

Charter Amendment Number: <b>6</b>	2/23/2015: Not discussed. Held to next meeting.
Submitted by: <b>Ken Bell</b>	
Title: <b>Shall the Charter be amended to apply term limits to the County Councilmembers, Executive, Auditor, Treasurer, Assessor, and Sheriff?</b>	
Section:	
Amendment:	
<b>CURRENT AMENDMENT</b>	
<b>Section 2.14 Terms of Council Members.</b>	
The term of office of each elected councilmember shall be four (4) years commencing with the second Monday in January following election, and until a successor has been elected and has qualified.	
In order to broaden the opportunities for public services and ensure that elected officials of governments are responsive to the citizens of Whatcom County, no non-judicial elected officials for any county office shall serve more than two consecutive terms in office, except that with respect to terms of office are two years or shorter in duration, no such elected official shall serve more than three consecutive terms in office. For purposes of this section, terms are considered consecutive unless they are at least four (4) years apart.	

### **PROPOSED CHANGES:**

#### **ARTICLE 2 THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

##### **Section 2.14 Terms of Council Members.**

The term of office of each elected councilmember shall be four (4) years commencing with the second Monday in January following election, and until a successor has been elected and has qualified. Elected councilmembers shall serve no more than two consecutive terms in office. Terms are considered consecutive unless they are at least four years apart.

#### **ARTICLE 3 THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

##### **Section 3.21 Election and Term of Office.**

The County Executive shall be nominated and elected by the voters of the county, and the term of office shall be four years and until the successor is elected and qualified. The County Executive shall serve no more than two consecutive terms in office. Terms are considered consecutive unless they are at least four years apart.

##### **Section 3.51 Election and Term of Office.**

There is hereby created by the adoption of this Charter the office of County Assessor, County Auditor, County Treasurer and County Sheriff. These elected officers shall be nominated and elected by the voters of the county, and their terms of office shall be four years and until their successors are elected and qualified. The County Assessor, County Auditor, County Treasurer, and County Sheriff shall serve no more than two consecutive terms in office. Terms are considered consecutive unless they are at least four years apart.

## PROPOSED AMENDMENT 7

Date submitted  
to Commission/or Clerk: **2/9/2015**

Date scheduled  
on agenda: **3/9/2015**

Charter Amendment Number: <b>7</b>	2/23/2015: Not discussed. Held to 3/9/2015
Submitted by: <b>Yvonne Goldsmith</b>	
Title: <b>Shall the County Charter prohibit grants and expenditures to non-profit organizations unless the County is reimbursed by another organization or jurisdiction?</b>	
Section: (new) <b>Section 6.74 Charitable Appropriations</b>	
Amendment:  <b>Section 6.74 Charitable Appropriations</b>  The Whatcom County Executive and the Whatcom County councilmembers shall not distribute county funds via grants or expenditures, whether budgeted or non-budgeted, to charitable, educational, civic, homeowners, neighborhood, arts, trade, business, religious or scientific non-profit organizations or any other similar types of community organizations/groups not mentioned herein, unless the grant or expenditure is directly reimbursed by community, private, state, or federal grant agencies for the identical purposes for which the agency/government grant is provided.	

## PROPOSED AMENDMENT 8

Date submitted  
to Commission: **2/23/2015**

Date scheduled  
on agenda: **3/9/2015**

Charter Amendment Number: <b>8</b>	
Submitted by: <b>Jon Mutchler</b>	
Title: <b>Shall the Charter be amended to provide voter education concerning county officials' election titles by requiring ballots to refer to the Assessor as the "Property Assessor" and the Auditor as the "Auditor and Elections Officer."</b>	
Section: <b>Charter section 4.10 Election Procedures</b>	
Amendment:  <b>Section 4.10 Election Procedures.</b> Except as provided in this Article, the nominating primaries and elections of the Assessor, Auditor, Treasurer and Sheriff shall be conducted in accordance with general law governing the election of non-partisan County officers.  <b>On election ballots and official ballot descriptions, the offices of "assessor" and "auditor" shall be called, respectively, "property assessor" and "auditor and elections officer."</b>  Nominating primaries and elections of the County Council and Executive shall be conducted in accordance with general law governing the election of non-partisan County offices.	

## PROPOSED AMENDMENT 9

Date submitted  
to Commission/or Clerk: Feb 23 2015

Date scheduled  
on agenda: **3/9/2015**

Charter Amendment Number: **9**

Submitted by: Todd Donovan

Title: **Shall the Charter be amended to provide for the election of Council Members countywide and by districts from which the candidate was nominated?**

Section: 2

Amendment:

Sec. 2.11 ~~Three~~ **Five** Districts

The county shall divide into ~~three~~ **five** districts so that each district shall comprise as nearly as possible one ~~third~~ **fifth** of the population of the county.

Sec. 2.12 Nominations

(a) ~~There shall be two Council positions in each of the three districts, designated positions A) and position B), respectively.~~ At the primary...

(b) Nominee at large. There shall be ~~one~~ **two** Council positions designated councilmember at large, which shall be **nominated in different years** without regard to district. The two candidates...

Sec. 2.13 Election Countywide **and by Council District**

The registered voters of ~~Whatcom County~~ each Council District shall vote upon ~~each their district's~~ Council member position at the November general election **and upon the at-large position.**

## PROPOSED AMENDMENT 10

Date submitted  
to Commission: **2/23/2015**

Date scheduled  
on agenda: **3/9/2015**

Charter Amendment Number: <b>10</b>	
Submitted by: <b>Chet Dow</b>	
Title: <b>Shall Charter Section 8.23 be amended to prohibit the County Council from proposing any Charter amendment to Charter Sections 2.12 or 2.13?</b>	
Section: <b>Charter Sections 8.23</b>	
Amendment:  <b>Section 8.23 Amendments by the County Council.</b> The County Council may propose amendments to the Charter by enacting an ordinance to submit a proposed amendment to the voters at the next November general election occurring at least ninety (90) days after enactment. A minimum of five (5) affirmative votes shall be required to enact such an ordinance. <b>No ordinance to amend any provision of Sections 2.12 or 2.13 of this Charter shall be proposed or enacted by the Council.</b> An ordinance proposing an amendment to the Charter shall not be subject to the veto power of the County Executive. The County Council by unanimous vote of the entire Council may effect amendments to the language of the Charter where the passage of time has rendered language moot or obsolete. Such changes shall be made by ordinance, and have a public hearing. <i>(Amended by Referendum 1995).</i>	



## PROPOSED AMENDMENT 11

Date submitted  
to Commission: 2/23/2015

Date scheduled  
on agenda: 3/9/2015

Charter Amendment Number: 11	
Submitted by: Cliff Langley	
Title: <b>Shall the Charter be amended to require that the Councilmember At-Large reside in unincorporated Whatcom County and be elected by unincorporated county voters?</b>	
Section: <b>Charter Section 2.12 (b)</b>	
Amendment:  <b>Section 2.12 Nominations.</b> (a) Nominees by district. There shall be two Council positions in each of the three districts, designated position (A) and position (B), respectively. At the primary election, the qualified electors of each district shall select two (2) candidates for each position to be filled from their district.  (b) Nominee at large. There shall be one Council position designated councilmember at-large, which shall be nominated without regard to district. <b>However the nominee will live in unincorporated Whatcom County and be elected by residents of unincorporated Whatcom County.</b> The two candidates receiving the largest number of votes <del>county-wide</del> <b>of unincorporated Whatcom County</b> shall be certified as candidates for the position of councilmember at-large. ( <i>Amended by Ord. 2005-075 Exh. A</i> )	

*CRC Staff note: Received via  
email from Commissioner Cliff  
Langley on 3/2/2015*

Jill

Opening public meetings with prayer is part of our national heritage, culture and tradition. Would you please therefore place on the agenda the following motion.

Move that in a spirit of tolerance and respect for tradition and history; at the beginning of our regularly scheduled commission meetings, along with the pledge of allegiance a prayer is offered to the God under whom we stand as a nation, the God of our founders, our Creator and the Supreme Ruler of the Universe to whom we are grateful for our liberties. Included in the prayer would be a request for wisdom, insight and guidance as we attempt to perfect the Home Rule Charter of Whatcom County.

Below are excerpts from an address by Ben Franklin that began the tradition in Congress. 1<sup>st</sup> Constitutional Convention June 28, 1787

Mr. President—The slow progress we have made, after four or five weeks' close attendance and continual reasoning with each other—our different sentiments on almost every question, several of the last producing as many nays as yeas—is, methinks, a melancholy proof of the imperfection of human understanding. We indeed seem to feel our own want of political wisdom,....

In this situation of this assembly, groping as it were in the dark to find political truth, and scarce able to distinguish it when presented to us, how has it happened, sir, that we have not hitherto once thought of humbly applying to the Father of lights to illuminate our understanding? In the beginning of the contest with Great Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for the Divine protection.....

Our prayers sir were heard.....To that Providence we owe this happy opportunity

Of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful Friend ? Or do we imagine that we no longer need His assistance?

I therefore beg leave to move that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning.....

.