



JOINT MEETING MINUTES

TOWN COUNCIL AND SAN JUAN COUNTY COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 2025

Brickworks, 150 Nichols Street, Friday Harbor, WA

Call To Order & Flag Salute

San Juan County Council Chair McVeigh called the meeting to order at 09:05 a.m.

Roll Call

Mayor Jackson; Town Councilmembers: Steve Hushebeck (Position No. 1), Richard Geffen (Position No. 2), Anna Maria de Freitas (Position No. 3), Mason Turnage (Position No. 4) and Barbara Starr (Position No. 5).

Town Administrator Denice Kulseth, Finance Director Bethany Berry, and Town Clerk Jennifer Krembs.

County Councilmembers: Kari McVeigh and Justin Paulsen. Jane Fuller was absent.

County Manager Jessica Hudson and Clerk to the County Council Sally Rogers.

Welcome and Introductions

At 9:05 a.m., San Juan County Council Chair McVeigh invited the Mayor, Councilmembers, County Manager, and Town Administrator to introduce themselves. Remarks were hopeful and shared excitement for collaboration on mutual goals.

Home Fund Update

At 9:13 a.m., County staff Affordable Housing Coordinator Ryan Page and Director of Health & Community Services gave a presentation to provide the history of the San Juan County Home Fund passed in 2018. Page explained that the Home Fund program is funded by the voter-approved Real Estate Excise Tax for affordable housing and now also by the 1/10th of 1% Sales Tax for affordable housing adopted in 2023. An update was provided for the REET revenue generated, sales tax revenue generated, and funding committed and allocated to 13 projects since 2018. Page provided an overview of affordable housing projects both completed and under development across the County including: Salish Way III (Lopez), Salal neighborhood re-roofing (San Juan), April's Grove (Orcas), Fishbay Cottages (Lopez), Harborview Apartments rehabilitation project (San Juan), Holliwalk (San Juan), Northern Heights (Orcas), Fisherman Bay Curve (Lopez), Kidder Way (Orcas), Lopez Village North (Lopez), Forrest House (Lopez), Argyle (San Juan), Pea Patch (Orcas). Lopez Village North and Forrest House are currently under construction, while the Argyle and Pea Patch projects are still in the pre-development phase. Countywide since 2019, the program has built or preserved 104 units of affordable housing with another 92 units currently in development. The Town and County are working to bring the Argyle Lots affordable housing project to fruition. The project is currently being developed by the San Juan Community Home Trust (SJCHT). The County has already committed an initial \$715,000 from the Home Fund to this project, in addition to leasing the land for the project to the SJCHT. The project is currently in the design and fundraising phase of development. Once completed, the Argyle project will provide up to 40 units of affordable rental housing serving residents in a variety of income ranges including both low- and moderate-income families and individuals. Page shared that the next application round will open during the summer of 2025. Page offered to be a resource for the Town moving forward. Page and Tompkins answered Councilmembers' questions.

Emergency Rapid Response dollars, RFPs and next steps

At 9:48 a.m., County staff Director of Health & Community Services Mark Tompkins and County Manager Jessica Hudson briefed the Councils on ongoing efforts to utilize the \$1.5 Million in Rapid Response Funding from the Washington State Department of Commerce to address disruptions to ferry service. San Juan County is seeking to establish interim, emergency transportation services throughout the County. The pilot project will utilize funding

51 from the Washington State Governor's Office to develop services including foot passenger transportation to
52 Anacortes, inter-island foot passenger transportation, and emergency barge transportation services. The County
53 sought proposals from interested parties to provide transportation services with all Request for Proposal (RFP)
54 submittals due back by Friday, March 14, 2025. The Councils discussed foot passenger capacity on boats and the
55 desire to support this pilot initiative with ground transportation options for both locals and tourists once they arrive
56 in the islands.

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58 **Review of 2025 Impactful State Legislation**

59 At 10:11 a.m., Town Administrator Denice Kulseth and County Manager Jessica Hudson shared an overview of
60 legislation that may impact the islands, including bills that relate to property taxes, vehicle registrations, the use of
61 Real Estate Excise Taxes, mobile dwellings, and more. A bill of particular interest to both Councils, HB 1923,
62 increases the availability of passenger-only ferries by establishing the mosquito fleet act. Already halfway through
63 the 2025 legislative session, both administrators plan to provide updates to their Councils as bills progress.

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65 **Review of Town and County Comprehensive Plan updates**

66 At 10:51 a.m., Community Development Director Ryan Ericson and County Planner III Sophia Cassam presented
67 updates on the Comprehensive Plan processes as required by the Growth Management Act (GMA) (36.70A RCW).
68 These plans are intended to take a 20-year look into the future and guide the jurisdictions in preparing to meet the
69 projected population's needs. Both governments intend to adopt their updated Comprehensive Plans in December
70 of 2025. Both Ericson and Cassam outlined the areas in which the Town and County governments coordinate,
71 including topics relating to population projections, housing needs, and job allocations. The County and Town will
72 also be coordinating on the Comprehensive Plan Official Map amendments for the Town of Friday Harbor Urban
73 Growth Area and on updating joint planning policies to address language consistency between the documents and
74 to ensure consistency with the GMA. The departments also reviewed recent community outreach efforts and
75 discussed ways to partner in community involvement into the future.

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77 **Other areas of Town and County mutual support/Council led discussion**

78 At 11:27 a.m., McVeigh invited the Councils to discuss future initiatives to partner on collaboratively. Support was
79 reiterated for local initiatives regarding transportation and several Councilmembers encouraged garnering support
80 for the foot passenger pilot programs from other entities such as the Economic Development Council, school, fire
81 district, and hospital districts, and local groups. Housing, economic development, job creation, and childcare were
82 areas Councilmembers wanted to see future growth and partnership. Port of Friday Harbor Director Todd
83 Nicholson requested to be included in future meetings. Kulseth was grateful to the County for their hiring of
84 Hudson. Councilmembers concluded with positive comments, thanks to Town and County Clerks and staff, desire
85 for continued collaboration, and the inclusion of other local partners in future meetings, to include the Port of
86 Friday Harbor.

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88 **Citizen Response/Public Comment**

89 At 11:40 a.m., McVeigh invited public comment. County resident Richard (Dick) Grout was encouraged by the joint
90 meeting.

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92 **ADJOURN**

93 At 11:42 a.m., McVeigh adjourned the meeting.

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95 These minutes were approved by the motion of the Town Council and the County Council. The original document
96 is retained by the Clerk in the Town Council's and County Council's permanent records. Attest: Jennifer Krembs,
97 Town of Friday Harbor Clerk and Sally Rogers, Clerk to the County Council.

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