

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Special Joint Meeting with the Skagit County Commissioners and Cities of Burlington, Mount Vernon and Sedro-Woolley Regarding North Star (Public Health, Chinook Conference Room, 301 Valley Mall Way, Suite 110, Mount Vernon)

Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn Moulton convened the special joint meeting with the Skagit County Commissioners and the Cities of Burlington, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley at 6:15 p.m.

1. Dinner and Networking
2. Call to Order and Roll Call:

Skagit County Chair Lisa Janicki, Anacortes Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn Molton, Burlington Mayor Bill Aslett, Mount Vernon Mayor Peter Donovan, and Sedro-Woolley Mayor Julia Johnson called the proceedings to order at 6:15 p.m.

Councilmembers present from the City of Anacortes included Ryan Walters, and Christine Cleland McGarth.

Skagit County Commissioner Ron Wesen and Commissioner Peter Browning were present

Councilmembers present from the City of Burlington included Elizabeth Turman-Bryant, Dr. Jesús Pérez-Linares, Kelsey Freeman, and James Stavig.

Councilmembers present from the City of Mount Vernon included Navor Tercero, Iris Carias, Melissa Beaton, and Mary Hudson.

Councilmembers present from the City of Sedro-Woolley included Allan Henderson, and JoEllen Kesti.

Other staff in attendance included Skagit County Public Health/Strategic Initiatives Director Monica Negrila, Skagit County Assistant Public Health Director Sarah Hinman, Skagit County Senior Public Health Analyst George Kosovich, Skagit County District Court Judge Jenifer Howson, Communications Coordinator Andrea Harrison, and Clerk of the Board of Skagit County Commissioners Linda Hammons.

3. Meeting Goals and Agenda Overview:

Ms. Negrila provided an overview of the agenda and meeting goals which included discussing the next steps for the opioid settlement funding, review of the draft Interlocal Agreement, exploring 2026 joint meetings, and sharing jurisdictional updates.

4. Public Comments:

Susan Hill of Skagit County commented on the opioid settlement funds listed in the City of Anacortes' budget and requested that the funds be allocated toward recovery efforts.

5. Opioid Settlement Funds – Joint Regional Proposals:

Mr. Kosovich provided a PowerPoint presentation outlining the background of the funds received by all jurisdictions from the eight settlements, which totaled \$2.6 million. He also shared feedback from meetings with City Councils, discussed the three project areas, and presented options for joint investments. Additionally, he reviewed the projected timeline for the STAR Center, noting that the ribbon-cutting ceremony was scheduled for December 16, 2025, with the move-in expected on February 1, 2026. He further noted that Pioneer Human Services was currently contracting with insurers.

Mr. Kosovich went on to discuss options for pooling funds, which included: direct allocation to a service provider, a two-step Council action, and a one-step Council action with specific parameters.

Ms. Negrila invited Councilmembers to ask questions.

City of Anacortes:

Councilmember Walters suggested changes to the leadership team appointments. Mayor Pro Tem Moulton asked questions and discussed taking a more deliberate approach to building the STAR Center.

City of Burlington:

Councilmember Turman-Bryant asked questions about funding for the STAR Center. Councilmember Stavig asked questions about the contractors and the duration of the startup contract. Mayor Aslett said that the opioid funding was part of their budget process.

City of Mount Vernon:

Councilmember Beaton read a statement in support of pooling resources in order to streamline resources to get help to people in need. Councilmember Tercero asked whether future councils would be bound by the current council's funding decisions. Councilmember Hudson shared comments regarding funding requests.

City of Sedro-Woolley:

Councilmember Henderson discussed the proposed 80/20 funding split, noted that the Skagit County Drug Taskforce was facing a budget shortfall, and addressed topics including bridge housing and STAR Center funding, which was part of the overall budget process.

Skagit County:

Chair Janicki emphasized the importance of having a facility within the community that could meet local needs. Commissioner Browning expressed support for bridge housing, and Commissioner Wesen voiced support for collaboration between the Cities and the County.

6. Draft Interlocal Agreement (ILA) - Formalizing North Star:

Discussion ensued about proposed potential edits to the Interlocal Agreement with action to take place by the end of the year.

7. 2026 Joint Meetings:

The group expressed support for continuing to engage in joint meetings in 2026.

8. Roundtable: Jurisdictional Cross-Sharing:

Chair Janicki noted that North Star would be presented with an award at the Washington State Association of Counties County Leadership Conference in Spokane on November 20, 2025.

City of Sedro-Woolley Councilmember Henderson spoke about the City actively using House Bill 1590 funds to support affordable housing development and related services. City of Burlington Councilmember Linares spoke about the City's ongoing efforts to increase transparency and better engagement with the community.

City of Mount Vernon Councilmember Tercero spoke about helping Community Action of Skagit County complete the Kulshan View Affordable Housing Project.

Cit of Mount Vernon Councilmember Carias spoke about helping to provide safe and stable housing for the farmworker community.

City of Burlington Mayor Aslett commented on the Volunteers of America's Ballington Flats affordable housing development in Burlington, as well as the overall increase in apartment construction throughout the city.

9. Summary and Next Steps:

Discussion ensued about sending the updated Interlocal Agreement back to the Cities and County legal counsels for review and possibly acting on it by the end of the year.

Topics for future meetings were discussed which included: mapping out the funding provided by the Cities and County to the community; updates to Comprehensive Plans; unfunded requests; preparing a detailed presentation on multifamily tax exemption programs (8, 12, 20-year options), including experts/housing staff.

Link to meeting documents:

<https://www.skagitcounty.net/CountyCommissioners/Documents/AgendaPackets/11032025.zip>

**Note, due to technical difficulties, this meeting was not recorded.*

III. ADJOURNMENT:

Skagit County Chair Janicki, City of Anacortes Mayor Pro Tem Moulton, City of Burlington Mayor Aslett, City of Mount Vernon Mayor Donovan, and City of Sedro-Woolley Mayor Johnson adjourned the proceedings at 8:02 p.m.