



**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

50 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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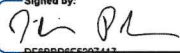
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COUNTY COUNCIL  
SAN JUAN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Signed by:  
  
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Kari McVeigh  
District 1

Signed by:  
  
DF68B86F5207417...  
Justin Paulsen  
District 2

Excused  
Jane Fuller  
District 3

ATTEST: Clerk to the Council

Signed by:  
  
DFAA8E85CA4142B...  
By: Sally Rogers  
Date: 12/30/2025

Minutes approved by San Juan County Council on April 15, 2025.