

Lynnwood Recodifies Animal Code Following Fatal Attack by 109-Pound Dog Owned by Sitting Councilwoman



(CENTER) Sumo, the 109-pound, over 2-year-old male Dogo Argentino/Boxer mix owned by Lynnwood City Councilwoman Derica Escamilla, who has been terrorizing a South Lynnwood neighborhood for over two years. Two of Sumo's animal victims: (LEFT) Brandy, a 13-year-old 9.5-pound Pomeranian mix now deceased and (RIGHT) Margarita, a 16-year-old 6.9-pound Pomeranian mix who was attacked by Sumo and who's owner suspects to have died of grief six months after Brandy's death. Photo Sources: LPD and Chorna Castillo.

By KIENAN BRISCOE

LYNNWOOD—After weeks of deliberation, the Lynnwood City Council passed an ordinance (3405) at its Business Meeting Monday, December 8, re-codifying the Lynnwood Municipal Code regarding

animal control and what constitutes as a “dangerous animal.” In what the Lynnwood Times is calling Brandy’s Law, the ordinance takes effect on Tuesday, December 16, 2025.

The City of Lynnwood had requests – from two mem-

bers of the council and members of the community – to review, and update, its animal control ordinance. The requests followed reports that Lynnwood City Councilwoman Derica Escamilla’s dog, Sumo, has been terrorizing her neighborhood without the consequence of

being designated as a “dangerous animal.”

Escamilla’s dog has bitten two people, leaving one unable to work, and has bitten at least three dogs, contributing to the death of one—

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Larsen tours Lynnwood Neighborhood Center

By MARIO LOTMORE

LYNNWOOD—Congressman Rick Larsen (D-WA02) got to see firsthand the newly constructed Lynnwood Neighborhood Center (LNC) on November 21 after securing a \$3 million federal earmark in 2023 for the 40,000-square-foot facility that will serve over 20,000 community members annually when it opens in January 2026.

“I like to be involved with projects that help build the communities that I get to serve and getting the \$3 million earmark for Volunteers

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Representative Rick Larsen (D-WA02) with Volunteers of America Western Washington CEO Brian Smith (right) speaking with members of Cocoon House on Friday, November 21, 2025. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

Boeing completes \$4.7 billion acquisition of Spirit AeroSystems

By MARIO LOTMORE

EVERETT—The Boeing Company announced on Monday, December 8, it had completed its \$4.7 billion reacquisition of Spirit AeroSystems after selling it off in 2005 to investment firm Onex for \$900 million in cash plus the assumption of \$300 million in debt.

737 fuselage production in Wichita, Kansas. Source: The Boeing Company. “This is a pivotal moment in Boeing’s history and future success as we begin to integrate Spirit AeroSystems’ commercial and aftermarket operations and establish Spirit Defense,” said Kelly Ortberg, president and chief executive officer of The Boeing Company. “As we welcome our new teammates and bring our two companies together, our focus is on maintaining stability so we can continue delivering high quality airplanes, differentiated services, and advanced defense capabilities for our customers and the industry.”

Boeing’s acquisition includes all of Spirit’s Boeing-related commercial operations, including fuselages for the 737 program and major structures for the 767, 777 and 787 Dreamliner. It also includes commercially procured fuselages for the P-8 and KC-46.

The transaction also brings Boeing’s largest supplier of spare parts in house, expands Boeing’s global maintenance, repair and overhaul services footprint and adds to Boeing’s rotatable, lease, and exchange portfolio with Spirit’s aftermarket businesses.

Spirit Defense will continue to support its customers as an independent supplier to the defense industry to ensure uninterrupted support for its customers. It will act as a non-integrated subsidiary of Boeing Defense, Space & Security, aligning for financial reporting and select enterprise functional and site support, but maintaining independent governance and operations.

In addition, portions of Spirit AeroSystems’ operations in Belfast, Northern Ireland, have been acquired by Boeing, and the Belfast site will operate as an independent subsidiary branded as Short Brothers, a Boeing Company.

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AG Nick Brown proposes legislation to help fight against ICE raids in WA state

By **MARIO LOTMORE**

OLYMPIA—Washington Attorney General Nick Brown, joined by Senator Rebecca Saldaña (D-Seattle) and Representative Lillian Ortiz-Self (D-Mukilteo), announced on Friday, December 5, proposed legislation titled the Immigrant Worker Protection Act that aims to shield immigrant workers from fear and intimidation caused by federal immigration enforcement actions and to strengthen workplace protections in the state.

“When workers are scared that ICE will show up at their job at any moment to take anyone that looks like an immigrant, they’re less likely to speak out against wage theft or other abuses,” AG Brown said who committed to remaining steadfast to an “open and inclusive environment,” adding that the Immigrant Worker Protection Act would “level the playing field” for workers facing federal intimidation.

The proposed legislation would:

- Require employers notify employees with 72 hours when the federal government has requested their employment eligibility information such as I-9 documents.
- Prohibiting employers from voluntarily releasing workers’ private records without a subpoena or warrant.

- Make sure employers follow the law and only share employees’ personal data when a subpoena or judicial warrant has been issued.

Washington State Rep. Lillian Ortiz-Self discussing the human element to the proposed Immigrant Worker Protection Act for the legislature to approve in the 2026 Session. Source: Washington State Attorney General’s Office.

Rep. Lillian Ortiz-Self (D-Mukilteo), chair of the Washington State Latino Legislative Caucus, describes the Immigrant Worker Protection Act as a straightforward affirmation of the state’s core values of fairness, inclusion, and family unity.

“Every person who contributes to our state deserves dignity, respect, and protection,” Ortiz-Self said adding that undocumented immigrants paid \$96.7 billion in federal, state, and local taxes nationwide in 2022. “Washington is a state that believes in fairness, inclusion, and keeping families whole. And this legislation puts those values into action.”

She warned that the recent surges in federal I-9 audits and workplace enforcement actions—such as ICE raid at Mount Baker Roofing—are “sowing fear, destabilizing families and undermining community trust,” while creating labor shortages in critical economic

sectors such as agriculture, construction, hospitality, transportation, and warehousing.

State Senator Rebecca Saldaña (D-Seattle), shared that the Immigrant Worker Protection Act provides clarity and reassurance to both immigrant workers and the small-business owners who employ them.

“It’s not just the workers that are afraid. It’s the employers that are afraid,” Saldaña said. “It’s our restaurant owners and our car dealerships and the auto repair shop. It is about our grocery stores... Their workers are their neighbors. They’re their friends. They are the ones they go to the soccer games with. And they don’t know what their rights are as employers.”

AG Brown addressed concerns about the proposed

The Immigrant Worker Protection Act, Brown told the Lynnwood Times, includes standard enforcement mechanisms against employers to protect workers.

“There are penalties associated with failure to follow the law, which is pretty similar to many laws in Washington state,” Brown said. “If you don’t follow worker protection issues, there can be consequences of that. So that’s how I view the impact on employers.”

He framed the bill as protective of employers rather than punitive, telling the

Lynnwood Times that aggressive federal I-9 audits have repeatedly disrupted workplaces.

“We view this bill as a bill that also protects employers, that is good for businesses, that strengthens their opportunity to partner with their workforce,” Brown stated. “We’ve seen so many businesses—not only in this year but in years past—disrupted by really aggressive I-9 audits at their workplaces, so we want to make sure that businesses benefit from this bill as well.”

Two White Center entrepreneurs, Ana Castro of Salvadorian Bakery and Jessica Lopez of a Oaxaca grocery store and gift shop, shared that the current climate of fear because of ICE enforcement is not only harming workers and families, but also negatively impacting local commerce.

“As a small business owner, I want my employees to feel safe coming to work,” Castro said. “I will obey all federal law, but my employees deserve to know when their privacy is, their information is being shared. These laws give businesses owners guidance and answers about what to do when the federal immigration informants come to their businesses.”

“We don’t have enough customers.... It doesn’t matter if they have their legal status, they’re scared to go out because they are afraid to be snatched from the ICE and law enforcement,” Lopez said.

Gov allocates \$3.5M in emergency funds for flood relief

By **OFFICE OF GOVERNOR BOB FERGUSON**

SEATTLE—Governor Bob Ferguson on December 16 amended his emergency proclamation to provide emergency support in response to historic flooding across Washington.

Ferguson announced the amendment at a press conference today, December 16, alongside King County Executive Girmay Zahilay, Pierce County Executive Ryan Mello, Adjutant General Gent Welsh, Transportation Secretary Julie

Meredith, Director of Emergency Management Robert Ezelle, Erin McCann with the Red Cross, the FEMA Region 10 administrator, legislators, and other community leaders and emergency managers.

The amendment adds details about specific impacts across 14 counties, activating state cash and benefits assistance programs to provide emergency support to Washingtonians faster. Ferguson also announced that he is direct-

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Merry ‘Tax’-mas: Lynnwood approves millions of dollars in new taxes and fees starting in 2026

By **MARIO LOTMORE**

LYNNWOOD—New single-family home construction will jump at least \$9,652 (minimum of \$72,114 for multi-family dwellings) for one-time water and sewer connection fees for a homeowner or developer in Lynnwood, along with a 15% property tax rate increase and a 67% utility tax increase for existing residents following approvals by the Lynnwood City Council at its Monday, November 24th Business meeting.

Finance Director Michelle Meyer told the council that even with the approved levy increase and previously adopted utility-tax and fee adjustments, the city remains roughly \$5 million short of closing the 2026 gap under current revenue forecasts. Additional cuts or new revenue sources may be required next year if sales tax and development-related revenues do not rebound, she added.

The Council is considering increasing the city’s sales tax—currently the state’s highest. If approved, the increased tax burden overwhelmingly will be from non-Lynnwood residents who shop in the city—Snohomish County’s retail Mecca.

2026 PROPERTY TAX LEVY

In a contentious meeting Monday night, the Lynnwood City Council voted 4-3 to raise the city’s 2026 property tax levy by 14.9254%, setting the rate at \$0.77 per

\$1,000 of assessed value, up from the current \$0.67. The increase is projected to generate an additional \$1.7 million, bringing the total levy to approximately \$8.9 million — a 23.4% revenue increase over 2025. The council’s decision adds roughly \$85 per year (or \$7 per month) to the tax bill of the average single-family home.

Voting in favor of the final motion were Councilmembers Robert Leutwyler, Derica Escamilla, Patrick Decker, and George Hurst. Opposed were Councilmembers Josh Binda, David Parshall, and Nick Coelho.

Councilman Hurst, who proposed the \$8.9 million compromise that ultimately passed, expressed significant reservations about maximizing the levy.

“If we take all the banked capacity this year, we’re left with only 1% annual increases going forward — exactly what happened in Edmonds, where voters recently rejected a levy lid lift,” Hurst said.

An amendment by Councilmembers Binda and Coelho to push for the maximum banked capacity rate of \$0.95 per \$1,000—raising the levy to \$11.05 million (a 53% property tax increase) and \$209/year for the average home—failed 2-5.

The 2026 property tax levy increase is part of a broader councilmanic effort to close an estimated \$8 million shortfall

in the 2025-2026 biennial budget, driven by a \$70 million Community Justice Center bond debt, loss of one-time federal funds (ARPA and COPS grants), and slowed development/economic activity according to Finance Director Michelle Meyer.

“This is not a panic knee-jerk reaction,” said Councilman Leutwyler. “We have a \$70 million bond obligation for the Community Justice Center that a prior council approved without corresponding revenue. It is now our job to figure out how to pay for it.”

Councilmember Escamilla floated the idea of pausing jail operations and then immediately clarified she was not calling for permanent closure.

“But you know what they don’t use every day? It’s a necessity. It’s... It’s the police,” Councilwoman Escamilla said. “We need the police. We will always need the police. We don’t need a jail. We don’t. And I’m not... It was a wild, like, oh, let’s just get rid of it. I mean, thinking about it from the community’s perspective of only if you do bad things and you break the law, will you end up in that jail?”

Councilwoman Escamilla is no stranger to law enforcement; her home was raided in May 2024 and her brother spent a night in the Lynnwood Jail in August 2025 for third-degree theft following an alleged incident involving stolen packages and mail from a residential porch.

After pushback from Councilman Decker and others, Escamilla back-pedaled and clarified that she does not want to permanently close or get rid of the jail.

“What I simply suggested was a pause, maybe while we recalibrate just the jail... I’m not trying to close our jail or anything like that,” she said.

GENERAL FACILITY CHARGES FOR WATER AND SEWER UTILITY

In a 5-2 vote, the Lynnwood City Council approved Ordinance 3498, establishing the city’s first-ever General Facility Charge (GFC) for the Water Utility. The one-time connection fee, which applies only to new development and not to existing customers, ranges from \$1,932 to \$64,394 per water meter depending on meter size (based on a rate of \$1,932 per meter capacity equivalent, or MCE).

Meter Size	MCE FACTOR
3/4"	1
1"	1.67
1.5"	3.33
2"	5.33
3"	10
4"	16.67
6"	33.33

Voting in favor of the final measure were Council members Coelho, Leutwyler, Parshall, Binda, and Decker; opposed were Council members Hurst and Escamilla.

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 **LEISURE CARE**



Rabbi Paltiel honors friend Rabbi Schlanger who was killed in Hanukkah terrorist attack

By MARIO LOTMORE

LYNNWOOD—Rabbi Berel Paltiel of Snohaimish of Chabad Snohomish County released the following statement on the Hanukkah event terrorist attack at Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia:

“We are devastated and absolutely heartbroken.

“Rabbi Eli Schlanger was my colleague, a fellow Chabad rabbi, and someone I remember from yeshiva. This loss is painfully personal. Eli was a light, as were the eleven precious, innocent people who were brutally murdered in an act of pure evil.

“Rabbi Eli represented life; the terrorists represented death. He represented love; they represented hate. He represented the spark of G-dliness within every human being; they represented the most vile and destructive evil that exists in our world. Rabbi Eli lived what he taught. He was a rabbi, a chaplain, a husband, a father, and a builder of community. He stood for dignity, warmth, and unwavering faith in the goodness of humanity.

“I know that many people are afraid, and that fear is both real and understandable. But even in moments of deep pain, perspective matters, and I want to explain why we are not canceling our planned public menorah lighting here in Lynnwood next week.

“Antisemitism is real and deeply troubling, but it does not define our society or our community. The overwhelming majority of people are good, kind, and compassionate, and we are blessed to live in a country, and in a county, where leadership, institutions, and neighbors stand firmly on the side of freedom, dignity, and light. That reality matters. It gives us both strength and responsibility.



Rabbi Berel Paltiel at the Menorah Lighting and Gelt Drop 2024. Source: Snohaimish of Chabad Snohomish County.

“And it is precisely because of this that we are not cancelling our public menorah lighting.

“Next Sunday, December 21 at 4:00 PM, we will gather as planned at the Lynnwood Light Rail Station. We will do so openly, joyously, and with pride. Police have been an active presence at our menorah lightings every year, and this year we are in close contact with local and regional agencies regarding security and safety measures. We will continue collaborating and fine-tuning those measures in the days ahead, as the safety and security of all attendees is our absolute top priority.

“If we retreat, if we hide, we allow fear to define our reality. But fear is not the truth of our world, and it is not the truth of our community. The vast majority of people choose decency over hate and light over darkness.

“I walk openly and proudly as a Jew throughout Lynnwood and Snohomish County, and I have encountered not hatred, but warmth, solidarity, and genu-

illuminate our world.”

SNOHOMISH COUNTY’S GIANT MENORAH LIGHTING CELEBRATION FOR DECEMBER 21

Snohaimish Chabad of Snohomish County invites the public to celebrate the Festival of Lights with the 14th annual Giant Menorah Lighting & Celebration.

The Lynnwood Giant Menorah Lighting & Celebration will take place at 4:00 pm on Sunday, December 21, at the Lynnwood City Center Light Rail Station. The event will feature the kindling of the giant nine-foot Menorah, delicious Holiday treats, face painting, balloon twisting, personal Menorah kits, and a Hanukkah musical performance by the Seattle based Klez Katz Klezmer band.

Special this year: ladder truck from South County Fire will create an unforgettable experience for the kids with a thrilling “Gelt Drop,” showering chocolate coins from above!

ine care.

“So today, I call on my Jewish brothers and sisters, and on the wider Snohomish County community, to join us. Come stand tall. Come spread light. Come show, together, that darkness never has the final word.

“Our hearts are with the good people of Sydney. We will stand tall to honor the memory and the legacy of the pure victims, to shine their light, and to pray for the recovery of the injured.

“May the memory of Rabbi Eli Schlanger and all the innocent victims be a blessing, and may their light continue to

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Odyssey Coins-2, a museum as much as a collectible coin store

By KIENAN BRISCOE

EVERETT—Located on Evergreen Way, in the South Forest Park neighborhood of Everett, lies Odyssey Coins-2, a hidden gem collectible coin store that’s just as much a living museum as it is a storefront.

For 43 years and counting, Odyssey Coins-2 has offered rare, antique, coins, bullion, military artifacts and historic firearm accessories to Everett history buffs, coin collectors, and more. Its named Odyssey Coins-2 to differentiate it from the previous owner’s Odyssey Coins store in Montana.

Current owner Ross Angeledes – who is the store’s fourth owner – was a customer of Odyssey Coins for many years, growing up as an ardent coin collector. When the store’s previous owner, Rich, began to experience health problems Angeledes – who was just a few years away from retirement and wasn’t sure what he wanted to do with his free time – offered to buy the store to keep it afloat in the year 2000.

Angeledes kept the staff, both knowing them well as a customer and being impressed with their encyclopedic knowledge of coins, history, and military surplus, while continuing to work as a QFC manager until he officially retired in 2003. At that time, he made it his “full time home,” he said.

“I have a real passion for history and collecting. It’s kind of like a dream come true to be able to see, for the first time, every new estate that comes in because that’s where the fun is in treasure hunting,” said Angeledes.

Angeledes’ fascination with coins was inspired by his late grandfather, Russell Pratt, during the mid, to late, 1960’s. He immediately “took a real shining to it,” he informed the Lynnwood Times, and made it his mission to learn as much as he could on the subject. This was, of course, before the internet so it involved reading virtually every book he could find and quickly becoming something of an expert.

Angeledes meticulous research on collectible coins even involved learning ancient languages – to decipher the coinage and monetary systems.

When Angeledes pursued a college degree in history, he found himself writing all his papers on his fixation; subjects such as the economics of the Roman Empire, how a particular Emperor arrived at a precious metal, and so on. According to Angeledes, his history professors at the time were fascinated because they had never seen papers like this before. This eventually led to a

teaching position on the subject. In the collecting community, according to Angeledes, it becomes “something of a game” to bring in a collectible and see if they can “stump” a numismatist (a broad term referring to someone who deals with collectible coins) in a shop, but so far Angeledes hasn’t been stumped yet, he said.

Most of Odyssey Coins-2’s inventory comes from estates. According to Angeledes whenever you go through an old estate there are typically always four things that are always found: coins and bullion, jewelry, military artifacts, and guns and ammo. Because of this, it is these four things that Odyssey Coins has built its business around.

“It’s amazing what you find. I’m not a jewelry store, per say, I basically sell the jewelry that we find at metal value; we treat it more like bullion,” said Angeles. “But that’s been popular for those who collect antique jewelry – because most of the stuff you find in estates is older. I get people in here that buy 30, 40, pieces of it because they can’t find it anywhere else and they’re always stunned to find it goes for its weight in silver or gold.”

Separate to obtaining its inventory through estates primarily, however, Odyssey Coins-2 does adopt a ‘buy and sell’ model. Occasionally they even offer their expertise to patrons who simply need to assess the value of a certain object.

Odyssey Coins-2’s staff is well known for their passion for history, collectibles, and being endlessly knowledgeable on the subjects. This passion seeps into their love, and care, for what they do.

For example, Odyssey Coins-2 recently came into possession of an estate from a Purple Heart. The staff member who handles the military surplus went above, and beyond, in tracking down all documentation he could on the person who had earned it (military accommodations, newspaper clippings, documents, story, and so on) to put it together as a set.

“When it comes to things like that, we’re very careful with who we sell to. Obviously, the family gets first dibs, but we make sure that it goes to someone who, not only will respect it, and be interested in the person who owned it, but be interested in its history,” said Angeles.

At Odyssey Coins-2’s you can expect to find old military uniforms, knives, swords, historic firearms, and even memorabilia that some consider to be slightly uncomfortable – such as items that belonged to the Soviets, Nazis, and



All photos courtesy of Odyssey Coins-2

Confederates.

To Angeledes, however, he has no qualms carrying objects like this because “we won,” he said.

“These are representative of our victory. They’re spoils of war that our men were encouraged by the armed forces to bring back,” said Angeledes. “When you look at it that way, it’s kind of an amazing feeling...I feel some people forget history and when you do that it only ends poorly. For people to see the things we’ve done before, as a country, and what we’ve managed to step up and do in times of great need is important and we serve as a place where people can be reminded of that.”

Though Odyssey Coins-2 is, at its core, a business – which, according to Angeledes is necessary in order to keep the lights on – Angeledes has no problem with people coming in just to admire, and appreciate, the historical items on display, much like a museum...in fact, he encourages it.

“Even if collectors aren’t able to buy these things, we let them handle them, take a picture of them, and enjoy them.

What’s the point of locking these things away where people can’t see this piece of history?” said Angeledes.

Despite Angeledes collecting historic coins and artifacts for, going on, 60+ years, sometimes the items that pass through his shop still surprise him. For example, he obtained a coin from the ancient city of Tyre dating back to over 3,000 years ago – at a time when Tyre was known for its pristine minting and served as a leader of wealth in the ancient world. What’s more, this coin was a coin used for the 30 pieces of silver in the Bible – the payment Judas Iscariot received from the chief priests to betray Jesus.

“It’s just such a powerful piece of history,” said Angeledes. “It’s a feeling I can’t describe. It’s such a powerful feeling to hold something like that, that played such a powerful role in history.”

Odyssey Coins-2 is located at 5215 Evergreen Way in Everett, Washington. It’s open every day (except Sundays) from 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays, and 6 p.m. every other day of the week.



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Lynnwood City Council ends 2025 with a bang, now pay more in 2026

By **MARIO LOTMORE**

LYNNWOOD—At its final 2025 meeting for the year on December 8, attended by over 120 people, Lynnwood City Council swore in Mayor-elect George Hurst and new councilmembers, honored outgoing leaders, then approved (4-3) a 14.7% permit/fee hike and 33% business license increase; unanimously passed 2.7% COLA for city employees; authorized drafting a voter-free 0.1% public safety sales tax; and enacted “Brandy’s Law” tightening dangerous animal control codes.

At its previous Business Meeting on Monday, November 24th, the council approved millions of dollars in new taxes in fees to help close the City’s \$10.7 million budget deficit.

Permit & Fee Increases

The Council approved with a vote of 4-3, a 14.7% across-the-board increase for all permits and fees administered by Business Development Services (DBS). The proposal is projected to generate up to \$2 million in new revenue. DBS estimates Lynnwood’s 2026 major project pipeline at \$188–\$307 million in permit valuation.

All Fees and Charges impacted: Unified Development Code; Fire Permits, Inspections, and Service Fees; Streets and Sidewalks; Water; Sewer; One- and Two-Family Dwelling Plumbing and Mechanical Fees; Building, Single-Family, Electrical and Grading Fees; Commercial and Multifamily Plumbing and Mechanical Fee; and Environmental Fees.

Councilmembers Joshua Binda, Robert Leutwyler, Nick Coelho, and David Parshall voted to approve the measure; Councilmembers George Hurst, Derica Escamilla, and Patrick Decker dissented.

Business License Fees

The Council approved a 33% increase across all business license fees, that is expected to bring in \$556,850 in 2026 revenue.

Councilmembers Joshua Binda, Rob-



Mayor-elect George Hurst, wife and family at Monday, December 8, 2025, City Council meeting shortly after being sworn-in. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

ert Leutwyler, Nick Coelho, and David Parshall voted to approve the measure; Councilmembers George Hurst, Derica Escamilla, and Patrick Decker dissented.

2026 Salary Schedule Ordinance

The Council unanimously approved the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees’ (AFSCME) agreement and GSO salary schedules, which include a cost-of-living adjustment increase of 2.7%.

Human Resources Director Annie Vandenkooy urged the City Council on Monday, December 1, to approve a 2.7% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for the city’s 99 GSO employees in 2026, that was also budgeted in the adopted 2025-26 biennial budget. The 2.7% figure matches the 2026 COLA in the tentative AFSCME agreement, while police guilds are scheduled for a 4% increase and Teamsters 2.34%.

Historical data obtained by the Lynnwood Times over the past four years—2022 through 2025—show City of Lynnwood’s GSO employees have received a total COLA increase of 21.04%, or an average annual increase of 5.26%, which is in line with the CPI-W over the last four years. The CPI-W for years 2022 through 2025

equated to 20.3%, or an average annual increase of 5.075%.

However, the average annual increase of 5.26% for City of Lynnwood’s GSO employees over the last four years excludes Salary Grades 626 and 627—Director Level Positions who are the highest paid GSO employees with starting salaries between \$75.50 and \$83.80 per hour in 2025.

At its December 12, 2022, meeting, the City Council approved the 2023 Salary Schedule to include an 8% increase for GSO employees with an amendment limiting 626 and 627 Salary Grades to 4%.

The 626 and 627 Salary Grades over the last four years have received a total COLA increase of 17.04%, or an average annual increase of 4.26%, which is 85% of CPI-W (approximately 16% annually below CPI-W).

Director Vandenkooy shared with councilmembers that the voluntary turnover/attrition rates for the City over the last 5 years is 12.5% and 80 employees are on active remote/hybrid work agreements.

Wages and benefits currently consume approximately 70% of General Fund expenditures with GSO and AFSCME employees together representing two-thirds of payroll obligations.

Public Safety Sales Tax Measure

The Council approved with a vote of 5-2, a resolution to authorize Mayor Christine Frizzell to prepare an ordinance for consideration of a proposed 0.1% Public Safety Sales Tax. Councilmembers Patrick Decker, Robert Leutwyler, Nick Coelho, George Hurst, and David Parshall voted to approve the measure; dissenting were Derica Escamilla and Josh Binda.

Introduced by Council President Nick Coelho and supported by Councilman Robert Luetwyler, the ordinance would impose a councilmanic—no voter approval required—0.1% sales and use tax dedicated to public safety and criminal justice purposes. If enacted by the council and pre-conditions approved by the Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC), the tax would raise Lynnwood’s sales tax rate from 10.6% to 10.7%—the highest in Washington state.

The authority stems from House Bill 2015 (RCW 82.14.345), that took effective July 27, 2025, allowing cities to impose a 0.1% public safety sales tax without a public vote only if the municipality meet the same stringent eligibility requirements required for a separate \$100 million state grant program administered by CJTC. Compliance with these requirements is mandatory to collect the sales tax, even if the city never applies for the grant funds.

Key eligibility requirements for both the public safety sales tax and grant include:

- Adoption of policies aligned with Attorney General guidance on citizenship status, duty to intervene, de-escalation, use of force, and police dogs
- Full participation in specified CJTC trainings (behavioral health, first aid, crisis intervention—at least 25% of officers—and gender-based violence—100% completion by required officers)
- Policies for court-ordered firearm relinquishment and volunteer supervision restrictions

Continued **PAGE 7**

from page 1 **BOEING**

Spirit AeroSystems’ commercial and aftermarket operations in Wichita, Kansas; Dallas, Texas; and Tulsa, Oklahoma, as well as Spirit’s Aerospace Innovation Center in Prestwick, Scotland, will begin to integrate into Boeing. Approximately 15,000 teammates across the five sites are becoming a part of Boeing.

“Kansas’ aviation expertise reaches far beyond our borders,” said Kansas Governor Laura Kelly. “We help manufacture the aircraft the world relies on. Boeing’s acquisition of Spirit AeroSystems underscores the global significance of the work happening in our state and positions Kansas to continue shaping the future of aerospace innovation for decades to come.”

“Wichita would not be the Air Capital of the World without the extraordinary engineers, designers and manufacturers who have invested in our aerospace industry and made Kansas their home,” said U.S. Senator Jerry Moran. “Boeing’s acquisition of Spirit AeroSystems will help build bridges between Seattle and Wichita and bring new opportunities to the Air Capital of the World. I welcome Boeing back to Wichita and look forward to working with them to build a lasting relationship with the community and its workforce, as well as current and future suppliers, to continue building on the growth we have seen in recent years.”

“Today’s announcement is a great recognition of the world-class talent we have in Wichita,” said U.S. Senator Roger Marshall. “Our workers and the unions that represent them have kept America as the gold standard in aerospace, and

they deserve to be at the center of any future investment. I’m grateful that this agreement further solidifies Wichita’s prestige in the industry.”

“Kansas has a rich aviation history, and our region continues to lead the way in designing, developing and manufacturing world-class aircraft that serve the

world,” said U.S. Congressman Ron Estes. “Boeing’s acquisition of Spirit AeroSystems continues to build on the successes of a century of U.S. flight. As the flags change at the manufacturing facility in southeast Wichita, I will remain a steadfast advocate for the skilled workforce and

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from page 6 **LYNNWOOD CC**

- A CJTC-certified police chief with no disqualifying convictions
- Future compliance with statewide use-of-force data reporting

The \$100 million grant program which expires June 30, 2028, is restricted to:

- Hiring and retaining new (non-lateral) officers and co-responders
- Training and certain broader public safety initiatives
- Maximum state contribution of 75% of salary + benefits, capped at \$125,000 per position over three years (not annually).

The Department of Revenue (DOR) has a 75-day notification lead time to implement a new sales tax. CJTC has 45 days to review the documents and notify a city of any outstanding deficiencies. The city will then have 180 days to respond and correct any deficiencies.

Taking these timeframes into account, the earliest a sales tax would take effect in Lynnwood would be July 1, 2026, assuming it is approved by the council and sales tax conditions are confirmed by the CJTC no later than April 1, 2026. The January 1, 2026, tax update was due by October 17, 2025, and the deadline for the April 1, 2026, tax update is January 16, 2026.

If Lynnwood enacts a councilmanic 0.1% sales tax but fails to meet the qualifications by CJTC and still collects the tax revenues, the Washington state treasurer is required by law to withhold \$100,000 of revenue collections each month until Lynnwood comes into compliance, as verified by CJTC.

Brandy’s Law: Overhaul of Lynnwood’s Animal Control Code

Championed by Lynnwood City Council President Nick Coelho and councilman Patrick Decker, the Lynnwood Police Department and City Council clarified “dangerous animal” definitions, expanding to include attacks on domestic animals, requiring vet documentation for euthanasia, mandating secure fencing/restraint for potential-

ly dangerous dogs (misdemeanor violation), redefining severe injury, and clarifying cats are exempt from at-large prohibitions.

The City of Bothell’s municipal code served as benchmark legislation used to revise Lynnwood’s Animal Control Code.

Swearing-in Ceremonies

Mayor-elect George Hurst and Councilmembers Derica Escamilla, Robert Leutwyler, Isabel Mata, and Bryce Owings took the Oath of Office to commence elected office on January 1, 2026.



George Hurst, taking the Oath of Office on Monday, December 8, 2025. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

George Hurst, is Lynnwood’s new Mayor-elect. He has served as Lynnwood City Council since his election in 2015 and was re-elected in 2019 and 2023. A 32-year Lynnwood resident, he and his wife Pam raised four children who graduated from Lynnwood High School.

Hurst holds a BA in History/Political Science from the University of Washington and an MA in American History from UNC-Chapel Hill.

After 30+ years owning an electrical and commercial lighting business, he earned the Association of Washington Cities Certificate of Municipal Leadership in 2021.

Hurst has served as Council President (2021, 2022, 2024) and led efforts to create the South County Regional Fire Authority and consolidate Snohomish County’s 911 services.

from page 1 **LARSEN**

of America of Western Washington was a project that my whole staff enjoyed working on,” Rep. Larsen told the Lynnwood Times. “Now to see this center nearly open and to be part of making it happen is really gratifying.”

Larsen recently secured \$1 million in U.S. Department of Agriculture funding for the Lopez Island Family Resource Center’s Food Center that will include a community kitchen, shared farm stand, rental spaces, and gathering areas for pop-up shops—a similar community neighborhood center concept in San Juan County as the LNC.

Larsen is currently pushing a for a vote in the House of Representatives to extend Affordable Care Act (ACA) tax credits to prevent health care costs increasing “astronomically.” First introduced in the 2021 American Rescue Plan during the COVID-19 pandemic and later extended, ACA subsidies are scheduled to expire on December 31, 2025, that will result in higher health insurance premiums starting in 2026 for millions of enrollees.

“If we don’t extend those tax credits,

8,000 people will lose health care in my district,” Larsen said, “25,000 or so will see their health care premiums increase astronomically. So, health care remains a priority and helping people address the high cost of health care remains a top priority.”

To return recertification to every 12-months from the recent 6-month requirement following the passage of the One Big Beautiful Bill in July 2025, Larsen introduced the Patients Over Paperwork Act.

“Health care should be accessible and affordable for everyone,” said Rep. Larsen. “Most people who lose Medicaid coverage lose it because they forget to fill out a form or check a box, and the BUL [Big Ugly Law] doubles opportunities for a simple paperwork mistake to cost someone their access to health care. I am proud to introduce this bill to protect the 179,000 Medicaid enrollees that I represent.”

Led by VOAWW COO Kristi Meyers, Larsen explored the event center, senior services rooms which can serve up to 250 seniors, and the full-sized industrial community kitchen. Upstairs, Meyers showed Larsen the offices where mul-

His priorities include public safety, responsible growth management, affordable housing, and addressing homelessness through sound financial stewardship.



Derica Escamilla, after taking the Oath of Office on Monday, December 8, 2025. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

Derica Escamilla, appointed to Lynnwood City Council Position 1 in 2024, is a first-generation Mexican-American raised in Southern Texas and a proud Lynnwood resident since 2008. A Texas State University graduate with a degree in Resource and Environmental Studies, she has served on multiple city boards, including Economic Development, South Lynnwood Neighborhood Co-Design, and the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Her priorities include youth resources, mental health, homelessness, affordable housing, gang violence prevention, and infrastructure. She is driven to amplify underrepresented voices and build a stronger, more inclusive Lynnwood.



Robert Leutwyler, taking the Oath of Office on Monday, December 8, 2025. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

Robert Leutwyler, appointed to Lynnwood City Council Position 5 in

2025, is a U.S. Army veteran who served as an Infantry Platoon Leader in Afghanistan with the 2nd Infantry Division at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, earning the Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal, and Combat Infantryman Badge.

A Texas native and proud Pacific Northwest resident since 2011, he became a first-time homeowner in Lynnwood’s Meadowdale neighborhood in 2018. Leutwyler holds an MBA from the University of Washington Foster School of Business and works as a program manager in retirement and financial benefits.

Before his council appointment earlier this year, he had served on the Lynnwood Planning Commission since 2023.



Isabel Mata, taking the Oath of Office on Monday, December 8, 2025. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

Isabel Mata is a new Lynnwood City Councilwoman for Position 2 in 2025. A freelance writer and mindfulness meditation counselor, Councilwoman-elect Mata is active in the Jewish community, serving on the board of Limmud Seattle and with the Washington State Jewish Historical Society.

Her platform emphasized safety through co-response crisis teams, affordable housing via flexible zoning and city-owned units, support for local businesses over corporate chains, and greater inclusion—including dedicated spaces for queer and diverse religious communities.

She advocates transparent “co-govern- ing” through public forums and regu-

Continued **PAGE 11**

multiple community-driven nonprofits will set up shop: Medical Teams International, Child Strive, Latino Educational Training Institute, Center for Human Services, Cocoon House, Boys and Girls Club, and more.

Outside, Larsen got to see the full-sized playground provided by the Rotary Club of Lynnwood with its generous donation of \$24,000.

The Lynnwood Neighborhood Center (LNC) is a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified facility on 2.13 acres of land in central Lynnwood – sharing a parking lot with nearby Trinity Lutheran Church.

The facility will house a VOA Community Resource Center, medical, dental and behavioral health clinics, an early childcare education and assistance program (ECEAP) preschool, a Boys & Girls club, technology lab, adult day programs, community events and gatherings, culturally specific programs, refugee and immigrant assistance, a commercial kitchen and café, and classes, trainings and workshops serving the areas of Lynnwood, Edmonds, Shoreline, and communities across the area.

Phase I of the project, which encompassed site preparation, reached completion back in 2019 and construction broke ground in April of 2024.

The \$26.6 million project is nearly fully funded with only \$1 million left to go. Funding partners include federal partners, state partners, county partners, and local cities including Lynnwood, Edmonds, and Mountlake Terrace. Rick Steves announced back in July he plans to match the remaining \$1 million.

Key contributors to the project have been Rick Steves with a \$3 million gift, \$2.2 million in funding from the Washington state’s capital budget in 2018 thanks to District 32 Reps. Ruth Kagi (1999 to 2019) and Cindy Ryu, the Snohomish County Council with a donation of \$1 million in ARPA funds, and the City of Lynnwood with \$1 million of ARPA funds.

Volunteers of America Western Washington is currently seeking volunteers, for each of its 8 different service areas that house their programs. To apply for volunteer opportunities, visit: volunteer.voaww.org.

Sen Liias and Sno-Isle staff visit future site of new Mariner Library Community Campus

By KIENAN BRISCOE

EVERETT—In South Everett’s Mariner neighborhood, located at the north-east corner of 4th Ave West and 128th Street Southwest, an excavation crew are currently hard at work demolishing an old Patty’s Eggnest, who’s owners sold the restaurant to Sno-Isle Libraries in 2024. In its stead will be a new permanent library built from nearly a decade of gauging community interests while offering a much-needed third place for the residents of South Everett.

Right across the street, in a shopping complex connected to a Safeway, a Sno-Isle “demo” library opened in 2017. These demonstration libraries are Sno-Isle pilot programs, temporary libraries typically leasing out spaces in communities that don’t have a permanent library facility yet. It serves as a steppingstone, the library says, to showcase everything a public library system has to offer its community.

When the new Mariner Library opens — in the next 10 years or so, according to Senator Marko Liias who is spearheading the state funding efforts — it will be Sno-Isle Libraries first ever newly constructed library, from the ground up, based upon the success of a demonstration library model, and solely tailored to the needs of the community members who will be using it.

Though Sno-Isle’s Camano Island location was the first library to be based on a successful demo library, it was an acquired, existing, building. The newly constructed Sno-Isle Library in Lake Stevens (which opened last year) is an example of a facility built from scratch, but it was not based on a demonstration library’s success.

Senator Liias joined Sno-Isle Libraries Executive Director Eric Howard, and



Sno-Isle Libraries staff (including Executive Director Eric Howard, middle) stand with Washington State Senator Marko Liias in front of an old Patty’s Eggnest, being demolished to make way for a new permanent library in South Everett’s Mariner neighborhood. Photo: Kienan Briscoe, Lynnwood Times

Sno-Isle staff, on Tuesday, November 25, to tour the future site, while Arlington-based general contractor Skycorp LTD were busy at work tearing down the old diner and carefully sorting through its materials for recycling. Skycorp estimates that by the end of the demolition process they’ll have recycled 90-95% of the materials with the wood being used for fuel, and metals being repurposed for other uses.

It’s a longer demolition process than typical, Rodman “R.D.” Burley, Assistant Director of Facilities, Safety and Security, told the Lynnwood Times, but it was an intentional process, on Sno-Isle’s part, to be environmentally conscious and not just dump the old building scraps in a nearby landfill.

Once demolition ends, the ground will be levelled and graveled while Sno-Isle Libraries, and their architects at Johnston Architects, finalize a plan for the

building. As it stands, there are three draft concepts: one a 15,000 square foot building, one a 30,000 square foot building, and another a 50,000 square foot building. The main difference in space will be parking and the amount of community event rooms, Sno-Isle Executive Director Howard told the Lynnwood Times.

Which concept the library network chooses will depend on the findings of a “feasibility study” it plans to conduct in Fall of 2026.

“It’s increasingly hard to find areas that are free, where you can go and have a third space without feeling the obligation of buying a cup of coffee,” said Howard. “We also want our building to have flexible spaces in mind, because it’s hard to predict the purpose of a library 20 years from now.”

Back when Howard was first appoint-

ed to the Executive Director position by the Library’s Board of Trustees in November 2024, he told the Lynnwood Times he wanted to spend his first few months pursuing a robust community engagement effort, to get to know his community but also hear what they expect, and need, from their local library.

“I’ve learned from my many years of working in a library, that the trick is not to ask the community what it wants out of their library, it’s to ask what they need from their library,” said Howard. “Because they already have yesterday’s idea of what a library can offer them, but they don’t know all of the possibilities that we can offer.”

What he found, in South Everett’s Mariner neighborhood, is there really wasn’t any existing “third place” where residents could go, meet their neighbors, use the internet, have a quinceañera or family gathering, or seek career services or language services.

It was a point echoed by Senator Liias who told the Lynnwood Times when he approached the legislature about securing the approximately \$4 million price tag for the project, there were several projects like this all over the state competing for funds. What set this project aside from the rest, he noted, was that it was in a diverse, low-income, neighborhood that had no other third space option for residents.

With youth violence on the rise, and ongoing concern in South Everett (with steadily increasing incidents and arrests since 2020, according to Everett PD data), this becomes increasingly important for youths – to offer a safe, third place, to meet with friends, get off the streets, and seek guidance through the Sno-Isle Library’s various programs it

Continued **PAGE 11**

from page 3 **MERRY TAX-MAS**

An amendment to implement the water utility connection fee in a phased approach over a 4-year period, introduced by Councilwoman Escamilla, failed 3-4 with Council members Coelho, Leutwyler, Binda, and Decker dissenting.

Public Works Director Jared Bond explained that without the new one-time Water Utility fees, future capital costs would be shifted to monthly utility rates paid by current residents.

When asked why the City did not impose water connection charges back in the 2000s when Sewer GFCs were established, Bond told the Lynnwood Times that there “was an intention to do that during our last evaluation 3 years ago, but we never got back to it.”

Lynnwood’s growth over the last three years have been driven by multi-family dwellings near transit hubs like the Lynnwood City Center Station. Single-family completions have been low due to land constraints and Lynnwood’s Comprehensive Plan favoring zoning for density. New commercial development in Lynnwood is also limited because of space constraints and is tied to mixed-use developments.

Since 2022 seven multi-family structures have been built in Lynnwood—Avalon Alderwood, KINECT @ Lynnwood, Woods at Alderwood Phase 2,

Alexan Access, Novo on 52nd, Ember, and Koz Development—and 18 single-family homes providing some 2,300 housing units.

For multi-family developments, water service typically follows Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC) guidelines for sizing based on fixture units—a measure of demand. The Lynnwood Times estimated that each of the seven multi-family structures would have generated approximately \$64,394 to \$112,000 in water utility GFC revenue (a total of \$450,758 to \$784,000); and approximately \$34,776 for the 18 single-family homes for capital utility projects. This is based on the most likely water meter configurations from typical engineering practice in Washington State for transit-oriented, and mid-rise multifamily projects.

The council also approved Ordinance 3499, by the same 5-2 margin, an increase to the existing sewer GFC from approximately \$4,000 to \$11,720 per connection—a 193% increase per equivalent residential unit (ERU). According to LMC 14.51.050.C, a residential single unit property shall be assigned one ERU per unit as a sewer connection charge; whereas a residential multi-family unit property shall be assigned 0.75 ERU per unit.

Voting in favor of the measure were Council members Coelho, Leutwyler, Parshall, Binda, and Decker; opposed were Council members Hurst and Escamilla.

millia.

Councilman Hurst argued that the sudden increases could discourage middle housing and townhome development, stating, “We do want growth to pay for growth, but at the same time, we want housing to be more attainable in Lynnwood.” His calls for additional stakeholder engagement with builders before implementation went unanswered by fellow council members.

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are explicitly exempt from both the new Water Utility and the increased Sewer Utility charges, and Director Bond clarified there is no overlap with fees charged by the Alderwood Water & Wastewater District.

Bond shared with the Lynnwood Times that both Water and Sewer GFCs will “only be spent for capital projects, not operations.”

“In 2024, our sewer utility identified over \$200 million of needed projects over the next 6 years, and in 2025 the water utility identified \$445 million over the next 20 years,” Bond told the Lynnwood Times. “For our utilities, most projects we undertake are funded exclusively with local funds. That being said, the revenue for these utility projects comes from the monthly bills that our customers pay. These GFCs will help to keep those monthly bills lower, as it will lower the portion of the rate necessary to cover the capital project

expenses.”

Both the new water GFC and increased sewer GFC take effect January 1, 2026.

The new Enso mixed-use development with over 300 residential units and 4,200 sq ft retail, is scheduled for completion in the summer of 2026. If the old sewer GFC isn’t grandfathered in, the project could be facing an additional \$1.83 million (316 units x \$7,720 GFC increase in sewer fees x 0.75 ERU per unit) in sewer fees owed to the City of Lynnwood—this is not including sewer fees for retail space and an estimated \$112,000 in water connection fees.

The upcoming Northline Village with its 1,369 residential units and 250,000+ sq ft in retail/office/entertainment adjacent to the Lynnwood City Center light rail station is scheduled to break ground in 2026 which has been delayed for years due to financing constraints—from the COVID-19 pandemic—and lease termination agreements. The new GFC rates added at least \$500,000 for residential dwellings plus hundreds of the thousands of dollars for retail spaces in water connection fees; and at least \$7.9 million in for residential dwellings plus hundreds of the thousands of dollars for retail spaces in sewer connection fees.

LMC SECTION 3.41.030(E) UPDATE FOR UTILITY TAX

Continued **PAGE 11**

Vaughn’s Teaching Farm and Kitchen holds 5th annual Christmas on the Farm

By **ELISABETH BRADLEY**

LYNNWOOD—As Christmas draws ever closer, and the hustle and bustle of the holidays gets into full-swing, Lynnwood residents may find themselves hard-pressed to slow down and soak in the magic of the season. Luckily, a golden opportunity lies right in their own backyards at Vaughns Teaching Farm and Kitchen, who just hosted their 5th annual Christmas on the Farm event last weekend – A time of festive lights, warm cocoa and maybe even a visit from Santa.

Christmas on the Farm began in 2020 when owners Eric and Rachel Vaughn, both Lynnwood residents for going on 33 years, wanted to bring a sense of community to their neighbors during Christmas, when social distancing and isolation were common practices. Fortunately, their multi-acre family farm was just the thing to accommodate their dream safely and is still going strong today.

This year the magic continues, with festive light displays along decorated walkways, a roaring bonfire where people can sit and enjoy a cup of hot cocoa and freshly made red velvet donuts.

There are plenty of offerings for the little ones as well, with co-owner Rachel Vaughn being passionate about offering a safe, farm centered experience for kids.

“We are a little farm for little people, and the holiday offerings for the kids reflect just that,” said Vaughn. “Parents can relax and rest assured while their kids run and play amongst the enclosed displays of tractors and crops adorned with lights, get their hands dirty making mud pies at the mini mud pie kitchen, blow a bubble or two, and pet a farm animal before they head off to bed.”

While this year’s Christmas on the Farm has come to a close, Rachel and Eric Vaughn are strong advocates for what they call “agrotourism” – A chance for people who may be unaccustomed to life on a farm to get the farm to table experience.

“We want to connect people to their food,” said Rachel Vaughn, adding that her farm is committed to offering family friendly farm centered activities and events year-round.

Those who did not get a chance to visit Vaughn’s Teaching Farm and Kitchen this season, can visit them this spring to learn more about the farming experience.



(TOP) Vaughn’s Teaching Farm and Kitchen’s Christmas on the Farm. Photo: Elisabeth Bradley, Lynnwood Times.



(TOP LEFT) Santa at Vaughn’s Teaching Farm and Kitchen. (TOP RIGHT) Vaughn’s Christmas on the Farm. (BOTTOM LEFT) Freshly baked red velvet donuts at Vaughn’s Teaching Farm and Kitchen. (BOTTOM CENTER) Guests enjoy a warm bonfire at Vaughn’s Teaching Farm and Kitchen. (BOTTOM RIGHT) Eric and Rachel Vaughn. Photo: Elisabeth Bradley, Lynnwood Times



2026 Legislative Kickoff: April Berg, Sam Low, Carolyn Eslick, Marko Liias talk transportation, new taxes, housing

By KIENAN BRISCOE

EVERETT—The Economic Alliance of Snohomish County held a Legislative Kickoff event on Wednesday, December 10, featuring a panel discussion with Washington State Representatives Sam Low (R-39), April Berg (D-44), Carolyn Eslick (R-39), and Washington State Senator Marko Liias (D-21). Topics of conversation spanned the lawmakers' priorities going into the 2026 legislative session, and an array of topics from transportation; to budgets and taxes; to clean energy; to jobs; to housing and more.

EASC's Legislative Kickoff event is a premier event that unites business leaders and elected officials to advocate for policies that drive the success of the local economy. As Snohomish County's largest business advocacy organization, EASC strives to be business leaders' voice in Olympia, representing the needs of industries across the region.

The event provides a critical platform for the local business community to engage directly with legislators before they head into session.

The event took place at Imagine Children's Museum in Everett, beginning with a 9 a.m. breakfast and coffee mingling hour, following by some opening remarks by Ray Stephanson, President and CEO of EASC.

Rich White, Government Relations Manager for the Boeing Company – one of the event's key sponsors – then shared some remarks saying, with more Boeing employees living in Snohomish County than anywhere else in the world, it's a "special place" for the aerospace manufacturing giant.

"On behalf of the 34,000 Boeing employees who work in the county, as well as the 30,000 Boeing employees who live in the county, it's a great honor to be here, to introduce this event," said White.

Robert Knoll, Senior Government Affairs Rep for Puget Sound Energy (PSE) then took the stage to moderate the discussion with special guests Rep. Berg, Rep. Low, Rep. Eslick, and Sen. Liias.

After a quick lighting round of "fun facts," Senator Liias took the first question, which had to do with keeping Move Ahead Washington afloat – particularly the US2 trestle replacement and Everett Link extension – with the state's reduced transportation budget.

Sen. Liias deferred to the passing of ESSB5801, which was a bipartisan revenue package that increased the state gas tax (at a rate of 6 cents per gallon) to address maintenance preservation and increased costs for major projects.

On the Senate end, Liias continued, members have set aside money generated from this tax increase to deal with rising costs of supplies, but also complete Move Ahead projects.

"Finishing 522, building the trestle, are core priorities for our community. We have the funds in the outlook, but we need to make some tough decisions and prioritize projects," said Liias adding stagnant job growth in Washington is also a cause. "I think there is a yellow, if not red, light blinking on our economy but I'm committed, on my part, to creating thousands of jobs across the state with our budget, to try and mitigate what we're seeing at the national



From left to right: Robert Knoll, Senior Government Affairs Rep for Puget Sound Energy, Representative April Berg, Representative Sam Low, Representative Carolyn Eslick, and Senator Marko Liias. Photo: Kienan Briscoe, Lynnwood Times

economy."

Rep. Low was then asked what permitting, or procurement, strategies could be expected, at the House Transportation Committee level, to deal with cost overruns on infrastructure projects.

Low's solution was to do more in the private sector, through public-private partnerships.

"We struggled in Olympia with transportation issues, with the cost overruns – which have been incredible and a lot of projects overbudget into the billions of dollars. What that does is slows up the rest of the projects here in Snohomish County," said Low.

The good news, he added, was construction has just started on the Snohomish River Bridge with other projects in the pipeline.

To ensure freight and cargo shipments aren't deprioritized, Sen. Liias added he's been pushing for Supply Chain Infrastructure Grant Program – with the Port of Everett in mind. As of now there isn't any dedicated funding for ports like what exists for freight rail, according to Liias, yet the Port of Everett is one of the largest ports on the west coast and pivotal in bringing in materials for the Boeing Company.

Moving on to business climate, Rep. Eslick was asked what her priorities are this session, particularly regarding reducing administrative burdens, permit streamlining, and B&O taxes.

Washington State ranks 42nd in the United States for business climate, Eslick noted chalking that up to "more regulations."

"I will fight to my death on a 5% tax on payroll. We know that Seattle did that and we know that Amazon moved to Bellevue because of that," said Eslick. "That is only a hindrance to us and that's one of the reasons our unemployment is so high. We need to start protecting our employees and our workforce."

Eslick applauded the RAP program up in Marysville for training, and educating, the next generation of workers and said she would be supporting that pro-

gram and others like it. She also added that this session she will be fighting for families first and making sure business is still viable in Washington State.

Liias echoed the support for trade training, and career pipeline programs, but also stressed emphasis on higher education.

Rep. Berg then took the next questions, regarding sales tax revenue and how the Finance Committee is preparing for unintended impacts to service providers. The question was directly referring to ESSB5814, which went into effect October 1, and adds certain excise taxes on services.

"We know that our economy is moving away from consumption and moving more towards services, so that was part of the thinking of charging sales tax on services. That said, it was absolutely imperfect in lots of ways," said Berg. "We are collecting a lot of feedback from communities, from school districts, and municipalities. There will be some clarifications on it so folks across the state will now who we're charging, and how, and on what."

A lot of those clarifications, Berg added, will revolve around sourcing with sales tax being charged on destination. The upside, Berg said, is there should be a bump in sales tax revenue which she called potential "accidental good news."

Berg was also asked about slow employment growth in the most recent economic forecast, and how the legislature would support existing workforce training grants – especially in healthcare, construction, and advanced manufacturing.

"We are in a deficit, and it seems to be growing every day I wake up. We've also had stagnant employment growth. According to financial analysis we are in, what could be considered, a recession," said Berg. "I think what you can expect to see this year is maintaining our commitments and really trying to keep to the ethics of promises made, promises kept."

In addition, Berg said the legislature will need to get creative to offset capital dollars and maintain workforce,

especially in advanced manufacturing. But she was confident the state would successfully get through the worst of it on top.

The topic of childcare accessibility and affordability went to Rep. Eslick – who sponsored House Bill 1648 which modified childcare provider qualifications. Though the bill was a start, Eslick said she will continue to look at permit streamlining, modifying licensing, and changing childcare workers in schools to be able to work 6 hours, instead of the state mandated 4, as well as a possible B&O incentive.

Regarding Housing and Land use, Rep. Berg addressed condo and rental reform, anticipating the topic to gain momentum in this session to obtain home ownership for young professionals.

It's a topic "near and dear" to Rep. Berg's heart, she said, especially despite her district in Mill Creek, which was built out as an HOA, having strong feelings about condo reform.

Rep. Low added to Rep. Berg's points, talking about annexation as a possibility, but ultimately said these decisions are best left up to his constituents to decide.

The last conversation topic involved transparency and updating/reforming the state's Public Records Act, of which Rep. Eslick said she "doesn't know what that looks like," but she "would support it," adding that she only has one phone knowing its contents would be subject to a PRR but has "nothing to hide."

Concluding the panel, the speakers were given a "lighting round" of questions on a variety of topics where they had just 30-seconds to answer each.

Wednesday's Legislative Kickoff event was sponsored by Puget Sound Energy and the Boeing Company, with other sponsors including Community Transit, WSU Everett, Desimone Consulting Group, Heritage Bank, Astound, Herald Media, North Sound Media, Imagine Children's Museum, and Navi's Catering Kitchen – who provided the delicious breakfast.

from page 7 **LYNNWOOD CC**

lar “Coffee with a Council Member” events to boost civic engagement in the growing city.



Bryce Owings, after taking the Oath of Office on Monday, December 8, 2025. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

Bryce Owings, a lifelong Lynnwood resident, Union Carpenter, husband, and father of three, is the new Lynnwood City Councilman for Position 3 having defeated incumbent Joshua Binda.

His priorities include balanced housing that protects single-family neighborhoods while bringing back condos, attracting homeowners, partnering with organizations like Union Gospel Mission to address homelessness, and boosting local jobs through community-labor agreements.

A graduate of Mountlake Terrace High School with deep roots in Lynnwood’s parks and community, Owings promises transparent, approachable leadership so families can continue calling Lynnwood home.

Community Proclamations

The Council honored outgoing officials Mayor Christine Frizzell, Josh Binda, and Patrick Decker for their service to Lynnwood.



Mayor Christine Frizzell, thanking all 120 attendees of Monday, December 8, 2025, City Council meeting for being their mayor for the last four years. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

Christine Frizzell served as Mayor of Lynnwood from 2022–2025 after four years on the City Council. A lifelong Lynnwood resident and Meadowdale High graduate, she began her career at the Lynnwood Library, later becoming a self-employed accountant for over 30 years while raising two daughters, mostly as a single mom.

Deeply committed to community service, Mayor Frizzell has volunteered extensively with homelessness initiatives, single-mother mentoring, jail outreach, Lynnwood Rotary, Kids Fire Camp, and multiple nonprofit boards.

During her tenure, she represented Lynnwood on the Community Transit and Sound Transit boards, Economic Alliance Snohomish County, and served as interim South County Fire commissioner. Her leadership emphasized compassionate, community-root-

ed governance.

Board and Commission Appointments

The Council unanimously approved the following City of Lynnwood appointments:

- Reappoint to Lodging Tax Advisory Committee Member Leilani Wainui Kamala
- Reappoint of Board Members Matthew Cail (Position #2) and Dorina Katro (Position #3) to Planning Commission
- Reappoint Vanessa Villavicencio to the Human Services Commission

from page 8 **MERRY TAX-MAS**

In a 4-3 vote, the Lynnwood City Council approved Ordinance 3501, raising the City’s utility tax rate on water, sewer, surface water, and solid waste collection from 6% to 10% effective February 1, 2026—a 66.67% rate increase. The utility rate increase, the first in ten years, is projected to generate an additional \$1.9 million annually for the City’s General Fund, contributing to closing its multi-million-dollar budget shortfall.

Voting in favor of the final measure were Council members Coelho, Leutwyler, Parshall, and Binda; opposed were Council members Hurst, Decker, and Escamilla. An amendment proposed by Councilwoman Escamilla to limit the increase to 8% failed on a 3-4 vote, with Leutwyler, Decker, Coelho, and Parshall dissenting.

Councilman Leutwyler, sponsor the original motion, called the 10% rate “a compromised approach” that remains below many regional benchmarks despite a decade without adjustment.

Councilman Hurst, who voted against the final measure, warned that ongoing base-rate hikes combined with the new taxes would drive significant bill increases. Using his own household as an example, Hurst projected his bimonthly bill rising from approximately \$297 to \$356.

“This is just a tax on people, and I disagree with it” Hurst said. “Every household is required to have utilities. Every household is required to have actually garbage waste or waste contract. It just, no. We already have rates in place to pay for the waste. the water sewer and stormwater.”

OTHER KEY VOTES

Mid-biennial Budget Amendments

- Council approves adjustments to various fund accounts (General, Capital, Criminal Justice, REET, etc.): +\$8.89 million in Revenue and +\$9.7 million in Expenditures.
- Passes 7-0

2025 Comprehensive Plan Amendment List

- Council approves updates to the 2025 Comprehensive Plan
- Passes 7-0

Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) 2027-2032

- Council approves updates to its six-year plan of anticipated Transportation improvement projects
- Passes 7-0

APARTMENT FOR RENT

5 Minutes From Boeing

9919 4th Ave. W

Everett, WA

On Zillow OR:

TEXT 253-349-8796

Six-Year Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) 2027-2032

- Council approves updates to its six-year plan of anticipated Capital projects
- Passes 7-0

LMC Updates for Title 13

- The council approved updates and revisions to procedures for the City’s “Waterworks Utility” which refers to the water, sewer and surface water systems.
- Passes 7-0

from page 2 **BOB FERGUSON**

ing \$3.5 million in emergency funds to assist Washingtonians with relief and recovery. More details on the distribution of those funds will be available as soon as possible in the coming days.

Additionally, the Emergency Management Division is setting up Disaster Case Management, which will provide long-term assistance to Washingtonians to help them navigate available resources. Moreover, Washington state is actively working with FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, on applying for a Major Disaster Declaration. This declaration will unlock additional federal resources for individuals, governments and nonprofits.

“Our state is in the middle of a historic crisis, and it remains unpredictable,” Ferguson said. “We are not in the clear yet and Washingtonians must remain vigilant to stay safe. We are working around the clock to respond to this disaster. We will provide impacted communities the assistance they need as fast as possible.”

from page 8 **SNO-ISLE**

plans to offer here.

According to Senator Liias, there are over 90 different languages spoken at nearby Mariner High School – showcasing the diversity of the area, and with it, its diverse needs Sno-Isle plans to accommodate with its new library.

In addition to rooms which can be rented for social, and family gatherings, these programs will include BrainFuse tutoring services, in-person learning, events like story time for kids, career-based services (like referrals, resume assistants, etc.), and English language assistance.

What’s also unique to this project, Sen. Liias added, is that the site of the upcoming library is technically within unincorporated Snohomish County making it difficult to receive support from the nearby City of Everett, for example.

The future Mariner Library Community Campus is designed to become a central resource for approximately 230,000 residents in the unincorporat-

Ferguson urged Washingtonians to continue to pay attention to local evacuation orders and road closures.

There have been more than 1,200 rescues and evacuations across more than 10 counties in Washington state since the flooding began. As of Tuesday morning, thousands of Washingtonians were under evacuation orders, with more expected over the next 48 hours.

With the help of the National Guard, the Washington State Department of Transportation has reopened more than 60 roads since the storm systems began last week. As of Tuesday morning, there were closures on 13 state highways and seven road restrictions.

Several state highways have been severely damaged. A lengthy stretch of State Route 2 remains closed due to extensive damage. Additionally, Highway 12 is washed out northwest of Yakima. Repairs are underway.

Approximately 250 National Guard soldiers are still deployed to assist with the emergency response, including helping Washingtonians safely evacuate affected areas.

ed south Snohomish County area — a population that would rank as Washington’s third-largest city if incorporated. Its use will only extend further once the Everett Link light rail expansion opens in 2037 – 2041. Sound Transis plans to add a Mariner stop as one of its six stations along the 16-mile extension from Lynnwood to Everett, making the Mariner Library easier to access than ever before.

It’s still much too early to know what, exactly, the Mariner Library will have in store or even look like – since a finalized plan or rendering has yet to be determined. The \$4.5 million cost may even multiply by ten, said Senator Liias, by the time construction reaches completion – with supply cost increases, adjustments, parking, etc.

Regardless, as an Everett resident, born and raise, who has a close passion to the project, Sen. Liias said that he will plan to continue championing for funding at the legislature which may become easier to secure as the construction process progresses forward.

from page 1 **BRANDY’S LAW**

all in less than a year. The survivors of these attacks told the Lynnwood Times that they believe the dog is a “public safety threat” to the neighborhood, and that the Lynnwood City Council is attempting a “cover-up” to protect her.

Despite Escamilla’s personal involvement in council’s animal ordinance update discussions, she did not recuse herself from voting on the matter.

When asked, after Monday’s vote, why she did not recuse herself from the voting process due to conflict of interest she replied she had “lived experience.”

“I think we all have lived experiences when we come up here to vote, you also heard President Coelho talk about his business being broke into and his sales tax,” said Councilwoman Escamilla. “I think us having lived experiences, and having a background in them, actually makes for better votes and different opinions because you’ve actually been through it.”

BRANDY’S LAW AND ANIMAL JUSTICE

Following Lynnwood City Council’s passing of Ordinance 3405, and by extension recodifying its animal control laws, Chona Castillo, the owner of the two, now deceased, Pomeranians who were both viciously attacked by Councilwoman Escamilla’s dog Sumo back in October 2024, told the Lynnwood Times he felt a “bit of closure,” knowing that if a similar incident were to happen again “she [Escamilla] wouldn’t get away with it.”

“For me, personally, I’m really happy [Brandy’s law] passed. I’m not pointing fingers at Councilwoman Escamilla – it’s for anyone who, if they have to go through this, there’s a law that will protect them,” said Castillo. “All we’ve been asking for his accountability and responsibility. She was pointing fingers at us when we had done no damage, we actually had to deal with the damage but she was pointing fingers at us as if we caused the damage. That was really painful because at the end of the day, she didn’t lose a dog. She didn’t have to go through this trauma.”

Castillo added that his late dog Brandy was “such a sweet” dog and would never cause anyone, or any other dog, which made her passing “so much more painful.” While Castillo is pleased Brandy’s Law passed, he added that “it sucks” it had to happen now, when he can never see his beloved dog again.

Brandy’s Law is what Castillo, and his family, have come to refer to Ordinance 3405 as – in memory of their 13-year-old 9.5-pound Pomeranian mix who had to be euthanized because of Escamilla’s dog’s attack.

SUMMARY OF COUNCIL’S ACTIONS AT MONDAY’S MEETING

Ordinance 3405 was an “informal addition” Monday, according to Council President Nick Coelho, who added the item at the end of the meeting during New Business. In other words, the item was not originally scheduled for discussion/vote in the agenda packet.

Coelho moved to adopt the ordinance, which amends sections of the Lynnwood Municipal Code Title 6 – regarding animals, which was seconded

by Council member Patrick Decker. Separate to the incidents involving Councilwoman Escamilla’s dog, Decker has mentioned in previous meetings that two close friends of his were also victim of a dangerous dog attack, prompting him to pursue the matter diligently.

Before the vote, however, Councilwoman Escamilla moved to amend the ordinance, striking a passage that states “killed a domestic animal without provocation while off the owner’s property,” seconded by Council member Joshua Binda.

Councilwoman Escamilla spoke to her motion, amending the language, stating “we don’t get to play God.”

“Either the animal was the cause of the death or not. If there’s a chance for the animal to survive, but the owners don’t have money, that’s a fiscal consequence that I don’t think we should be putting into policy,” said Escamilla.

In Escamilla’s personal experience, when her dog Sumo jumped the fence and viciously attacked two dogs while they walked passed her street, one of these dogs had to be euthanized due to the injuries caused by Sumo. Escamilla argued that it was not directly her dog Sumo’s doing, but the euthanasia that killed the dog, and that the dog’s death could have been prevented with proper surgery – a procedure the owners of the deceased dog could not afford to pay for and a procedure Escamilla at first refused to pay for, but later said she could have (after the dog was put down).

Council member Patrick Decker disagreed with Escamilla stating the city code would require the professional opinion of a practicing veterinarian which, he said, is as “definitive as it comes.”

“You can call it an opinion but if a doctor says you should take high blood pressure medicine, yes that’s an opinion but it’s their job to make that opinion and if a vet says that my animal should be put down, as a result of an attack by someone else’s dog, I’m not going to second guess that vet and this is not opinion-forming policy, this is a data-driven decision based on a professional who’s job it is to make those types of decisions,” said Decker.

Decker continued that Escamilla’s argument was unsound because if someone’s dog were to rip another person’s dog to pieces and that dog died due to blood loss, the fact of the matter is that dog died due to the actions of another person’s dog – even though “bleeding out” was the actual cause of death. What’s more, Decker continued, it helps the dangerous dog owner because the owner of the victimized dog can no longer make a claim that the attacking dog was the cause of death, five days later, without a professional determination. In other words, it removes ambiguity and assumption, replacing it with professional opinion.

When the City Attorney chimed in with her legal perspective Councilwoman Escamilla called for a “point of order.”

Escamilla also clashed with Lynnwood Police Department Investigations and Narcotics Commander Justin Gann regarding an email exchange between her and Gann, where Commander Gann didn’t reply to Escamilla’s request to

confirm with local veterinarian’s offices whether the new LMC language code would be something they could even enforce.

“I figured you didn’t reply because you know the answer,” said Escamilla, to which Commander Gann corrected: “I don’t know the answer.”

Councilman Decker called Escamilla’s response “ridiculous” and “gaslighting” to which Escamilla called a point of order, repeating this several times over Decker’s remarks. Regardless, Decker continued though her interruptions stating that, since Escamilla is under liability, the city would not give a legal opinion – something email exchanges, obtained by the Lynnwood Times, between Escamilla and Hearing Examiner John Galt confirmed. In those emails, Galt explicitly wrote to Escamilla that he does not discuss his legal opinions with defendants.

“The vet will not tell you that they’re dog needs to be put down, because your dog killed another dog, but they’re able to tell the owners of the dog, and they have,” said Decker. “So, when you say a vet can’t legally give that information it simply isn’t true.”

After some back-and-forth, council went to vote on Escamilla’s amendment, but it failed 2-5 with Escamilla and Binda being the only in-favor votes.

Council then returned to the original motion on the table, adopting the LMC code changes, but Escamilla moved to make another amendment striking the portions that require restraints, but this motion also failed 3-4 with Binda, Escamilla, and Councilman George Hurst voting in favor.

After this amendment failed, Escamilla, again, made a third motion to amend the LMC regarding penalties for unrestrained animals, lowering the maximum fine from \$1,000 to \$500. This motion failed 3-4 with Binda, Escamilla, and Hurst voting in favor.

Finally, council returned to the original motion – approving the LMC regarding animal control as written. The motion passed 5-2 with Councilmembers Binda and Escamilla voting against Brandy’s Law.

The new language of the LMC applies to incidents moving forward and non-retroactive incidents that happened in the past, as clarified by the City Attorney from a request by Council member Joshua Binda. However, all persons with a “potentially dangerous animal” classification must now comply with LMC requirements as of December 16, 2025.

WHAT ARE THE NEW ANIMAL CONTROL LAWS APPROVED BY COUNCIL?

After multiple requests, from residents and council members alike, to amend the city’s animal control laws, the Lynnwood Police Department reviewed the city’s current Municipal Code, working with nearby Bothell PD as an outside opinion, and, after some presentations to council and multiple deliberations, returned with some suggested edits to the city’s code.

These suggestions were then amended by council during discussions spanning from November 17 through December 1. The new language changes of Lyn-

nwood’s Municipal Code, as approved, are as follows:

- **A definitional clarification in LMC 6.02.015.F2 of a “Dangerous Animal” now includes:** Killed a domestic animal without provocation while off the owner’s property; or inflicts injuries requiring euthanasia of domestic animal while off the owner’s property. If the animal is euthanized, documentation must be provided that confirms this decision was recommended and supported by a licensed, practicing veterinarian.
- **A definitional clarification also in LMC 6.02.015.F3 of a “Dangerous Animal” now includes:** Been previously found to be potentially dangerous because of injury inflicted on a human or domestic animal, the owner having received notice of such, and the animal again aggressively bites, attacks or endangers the safety of humans or domestic animals after such notice has been provided under this section.
- **Adding a potentially dangerous animal declaration to LMC 6.02.023.C2e:** As the LMC currently reads: A statement of any restrictions placed on the animal or owner as a result of the declaration. The new law will read as follows: “2.e. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, it is unlawful for an owner of a potentially dangerous dog to permit the dog to be allowed or permitted to run free and physically unrestrained or off leash or not otherwise under physical restraint, unless within a fenced yard or similar restraint reasonably designed to prevent the dog from running free and physically unrestrained. The top of such fence shall be at least six feet in height as measured from the ground level, unless there is a secured top – full enclosure – to the fenced-in area, and that such fence or enclosure area shall comply with all applicable city codes. For purposes of this section, a dog solely under voice and/or signal control shall be considered to be “physically unrestrained.” Violation of this subsection shall constitute a misdemeanor, and may be punished by a fine not to exceed \$1,000 or imprisonment in jail not to exceed 90 days, or both such fine and imprisonment.”
- **LMC 6.02.070A – Animals running at large prohibited:** The LMC portion that reads No domestic animal, with the exception of cats, or exotic animal or livestock of any kind shall be permitted to run at large during any hours of the day or night, would has been reworded so that “with the exception of cats” was struck and an addition “cats shall be exempt from this code” added at the end. The language change makes no difference to the code, just adds clarity, the LPD said.

