



Food System Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: January 27th, 2026

Time: 4:30-6:00pm

Location: Hybrid- 509 Girard Street & Zoom - <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88133101206>

Members Present: Rhys-Thorvald Hansen, Trevor Gearhart, Henry Fisher, Sean Hopps

Absent: Noelle Beecroft

Guests: Storm Rosenquist, Kristy Matta

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/Who
1	Roll Call, Determination of Quorum, Land Acknowledgement	
	Quorum Met. The meeting was called to order at 4:34 PM.	
2	Approve Meeting Minutes	
	Rhys motioned to approve November Minutes, Sean seconded, passes unanimously 4:38	
	Rhys motioned to approve January Minutes, Trevor seconded, passes unanimously 4:38	
3	Public Comment	
	Storm Rosenquist food systems student at WWU here to observe.	
4	Legislative Session	
	Rhys: No updates on legislative action concerning WIC at Mobile Markets highlighted by Cat Sieh of Twin Sisters from the last meeting that we sent a letter of support for.	
	Sean: Collective Bargaining Bill SB6045 has not been brought to the floor yet, please call your senators. The deadline is Feb 18th.	





		<p>Henry: no food access bills he's tracking but a bill for coordination/ farm to school programs is in the works.</p> <p>Rhys: flagged ESHB 2238 as another bill concerning Ag. Viability and food sovereignty efforts</p>	
5	March Public Event	<p>Kristy: March event is the 12th, please attend!</p> <p>Rhys: Kristy and Rhys attended the Eat Local First Trade Show hosted by Sustainable Connections and were excited about the FSC being a point of engagement. Hoping for more engagement with the committee. Guests at Eat Local First seem excited and curious.</p>	
6	Implementation Tracker	<p>Implementation tracker is intended to be a living document, currently committee-facing but working towards a public-facing document.</p> <p>Ideas for a public-facing document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -pdf of actions that have been completed -Section for actions paused and incomplete (CREP as example with narrative included on why) -third section for our current focus -“What are the data snapshots that are of most interest” <p>Trevor suggests something that allows the user to submit feedback on what they think might be important to focus on</p> <p>Discussion about</p>	
7	Food System Updates	<p>Food Access: County food bank network funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -granted 1.5 mil over 2 years and increased by 500k -can use 20% to purchase more food and pantry staples <p>How much is procurement from local farmers? None, funds , can be used at food bank discretion. Primarily focused on 3 distributors- charlies, CIS LLC wholesale for shelf stable and Wygel for dairy and proteins (aggregator);</p>	





		<p>Can this be added to the data dashboard</p> <p>WSDA has produced an Ag viability report that is worth reading https://cms.agr.wa.gov/WSDAKentico/Document/s/Pubs/AGR5-2512-009-AgViabilityStudy.pdf</p>	
8	<p>Agricultural Advisory Committee</p>	<p>Agricultural Advisory Committee invited Rhys to present on Food System plan, focusing on areas that overlapped with agriculture.</p> <p>Rhys participated in the February 11, 2025 Agricultural Advisory Meeting, and worked with the committee to identify meat processing as an area for collaboration.</p> <p>County code that prevented new meat processing operations will potentially be under review soon. Planning department has sent a request to County Council for approval to review and spend staff time.</p> <p>As a next step, Ag Advisory Committee has asked Food System Committee to send someone to their Meat Processing Sub-committee meetings to build a plan to collaborate.</p> <p>Whatcom Food Network could host a public event in fall or winter to educate and engage the community on this topic.</p> <p>Reactions to the invitation on the committee are mixed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Concern for the power dynamics between labor and farmers in an industry-led committee ● Desire for labor and environmental groups to be part of the process from the beginning ● Clarification that code revision focuses on altering the conditions to allow for economic development, it does not drive economic development ● Affirmation that this is a focus area for many small and independent farmers 	<p>Meat processing collaboration will be discussed again at the next meeting.</p>





		<p>Henry is interested, but would like committee support. Noelle is also suggested as this is an area she is interested in.</p> <p>Committee is asked to reflect on what conditions they would like in place to have a fair partnership between Food System Committee and Ag Advisory Committee.</p> <p>-</p>	
9	Data Grant	<p>Whatcom Food Network is applying for a Local Data Grant to fund a Community Food Assessment,.-Confirmed that some funds must be budgeted to update the Food Systems Dashboard.</p>	
11	New Business	<p>Henry: food access is a challenge in Whatcom, esp East County. Grocery delivery to east county particularly and has been a possible solution. Safeway may be interested. To hear back next month</p> <p>Rhys says Whatcom Food Network will be collecting data in March for the annual report and urges the committee to share any inclusions.</p>	
12	Adjournment	<p>Meeting adjourned at 5:36pm</p>	

Next Meeting: March 17th, 2026 4:30pm Location:Hybrid- 110 Unity Street.

