

CLEARANCES	Initial	Date	Date Received in Council Office:	Agenda date	Assigned to:
Originator: Executive		6-22-93		6-22-93	Council/Intro
Division Head:				8/3/93	Council
Dept. Head:					
Prosecutor:					
Purchasing/Budget:					
Executive:					

SUBJECT:

Ordinance to establish responsibility for burial of indigent remains, to replace the emergency ordinance that expires on the 61st day after becoming effective.

ATTACHMENTS:

Proposed ordinance

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

Please complete sections of box as appropriate & explain the item below.

Related County contract #:	Should Clerk schedule a hearing? NO /x / YES / / Requested date:
Amount budgeted for this item/project: \$ - 0 -	Is it (or will it be) within budget? YES / / NO /x / (Please explain below)
Budget line item number(s): n/a	No budget amount has been provided for at this time.

The state Legislature, in this last session, has determined that the Department of Social and Health Services will no longer be paying for burial of indigent remains as of June 30th this year, so the burden falls back to the county. The County Executive Office was notified of this fact on June 4th, 1993. This proposed emergency ordinance allows the County to cremate those remains that are indigent and unclaimed by family, church organizations and/or friends. This proposal is a minimalist approach compared with the State Department of Social and Health Services that was providing burials and services for most of those applying without careful screening. The total State cost for Whatcom County approaches \$75,000 for a twelve month period. Most all of those cases involved claimed bodies, so we project a significantly lower cost for the county program as recommended.

ORIGINATOR'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Pass as recommended.

COMMITTEE ACTION TAKEN:

COUNCIL ACTION TAKEN:

6/22/93: Introduced
 8/3/93: Council adopted the ordinance. 7-0.

Related File Numbers:

Ordinance or Resolution Number (this item only): Ord 93-053

ORDINANCE NO. 93-053

**ESTABLISHMENT OF COUNTY
RESPONSIBILITY FOR DISPOSITION
OF INDIGENT HUMAN REMAINS**

WHEREAS, RCW 36.39.030 requires the county legislative authority to "provide for the disposition of the remains of any indigent person...who dies within the county and whose body is unclaimed by relatives or church organizations"; and

WHEREAS, the State of Washington, Department of Social and Health Services, previously provided and paid for such disposition prior to July 1, 1993 so as to preclude the need for the county to make such provision; and

WHEREAS, the State has declined to continue to provide such services; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Whatcom County Council that this ordinance is hereby enacted to provide for such services:

Section 1. ADMINISTRATION OF ORDINANCE - The County Medical Examiner, as provided in RCW 68.50.010, shall have responsibility for accepting jurisdiction for the remains of a person that are unclaimed by friends or relatives. Whenever friends, a church organization or appropriate relatives, who have legal responsibility for disposing of the remains, as identified in RCW 68.50.160, claim the body, Whatcom County will not accept jurisdiction or financial responsibility for disposition.

Section 2. ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY - The County Medical Examiner, with assistance from the County Sheriff's department and/or other law enforcement agencies shall attempt to notify friends, relatives or religious organizations that may desire to claim the remains of an unclaimed body and provide for disposition. If no friends, relatives or church organization can be found to claim the body, the Medical Examiner shall accept jurisdiction.

Section 3. PROVISION OF CREMATION AT COUNTY EXPENSE - The County Medical Examiner, after accepting jurisdiction for indigent unclaimed human remains, shall arrange for the transportation and cremation of such remains at county expense.

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4 Section 4. DISPOSITION OF REMAINS - The County Medical Examiner shall provide
5 for the disposition of the ashes of the cremated indigent remains in a common vault
6 designed for such or may release them to friends or relatives.
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8 Section 5. PAYMENT FOR CREMATION OF REMAINS - Whenever the Medical
9 Examiner accepts jurisdiction of unclaimed indigent human remains and authorizes
10 cremation, the organization conducting the cremation shall bill the Medical Examiner,
11 who will approve the payment and forward the invoice to the County Auditor for warrant
12 preparation.
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17 ADOPTED this 3rd day of August, 1993.

18
19 WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
20 WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

21 ATTEST:

22 Barbara Maher Marge Laidlaw
23 for Ramona Reeves, Council Clerk Marge Laidlaw, Chair

24
25 APPROVED AS TO FORM:

() Approved () Denied

26
27
28 [Signature]
29 Civil Deputy Prosecutor

Shirley Van Zanten
Shirley Van Zanten, Executive
Date: _____