



ADDITIONAL MEETING
MATERIALS
KING COUNTY
COUNCIL



King County

Metropolitan King County Council

STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item:	14	Name:	Jeff Muhm
Proposed No.:	2025-0110	Date:	April 1, 2025

SUBJECT

Proposed Motion 2025-0110 would appoint an Acting King County Executive to serve until the King County Council selects an appointed County Executive to serve until a successor is elected in the next general election and qualified.

SUMMARY

On March 28, 2025, King County Executive Dow Constantine accepted the position of Chief Executive Officer of Sound Transit and announced his resignation as King County Executive effective March 31, 2025 at 11:59:59 p.m. RCW 36.16.110(1). The King County Charter Section 680.10 governs the Council's role in filling the vacancy created by Constantine resignation. Proposed Motion 2025-0110 would follow the process set forth in the Charter to appoint Shannon Braddock, formerly the Deputy County Executive and now Interim County Executive, as the Acting County Executive. Under the Charter, the Acting King County Executive serves until the Council selects an appointed King County Executive to serve until a successor is elected and qualified in November of 2025.

BACKGROUND

Executive Constantine previously and properly designated then-Deputy County Executive Shannon Braddock to serve as Interim Executive in the event a vacancy occurred in the Executive office.¹ Ms. Braddock will begin serving as Interim County Executive immediately upon Executive Constantine's effective resignation. As the Interim County Executive, Ms. Braddock "shall exercise all the powers and duties of the office granted by this charter and general law until an acting official is appointed"² by the Council.

The King County Charter and Washington state law set forth the actions the Council must take to fill a vacancy in a non-partisan county elective office. These processes are discussed below in the analysis section of the staff report. Even though Ms. Braddock

¹ Executive Order ACO-8-1-40 EO, dated July 10, 2024, which designates Ms. Braddock, is signed, the signature notarized, and the designation is filed with the recorder's office.

² King County Charter Section 680.10

will be serving as Interim Executive, both state law and the King County Charter require the Council take actions to fill the vacancy created by Dow Constantine's resignation.

ANALYSIS

RCW 36.16.110 requires the Council, at its next regular (or special) meeting after being apprised of the vacancy, fill the vacancy and, once filled, the appointee serves until the successor is elected, the election is certified (late November), and the successor is qualified (i.e. post bond and sworn in). The intent of RCW 36.16.110 is to not let an elective office remain vacant. However, the County's Charter provides failsafe measures to ensure that the Executive position is never operationally vacant and provides intervening steps in the selection process that are not inconsistent with state law.

Executive Constantine complied with the Charter and properly designated Shannon Braddock as the Interim Executive. In effect, the Interim Executive is the previous Executive's choice to temporarily run the executive branch until the Council can take action. The Charter also gives the Council an opportunity to place a person temporarily in the position as Executive by selecting an Acting Executive. The Council's selected Acting Executive replaces the previous Executive's choice of Interim Executive. However, again, to preserve continuity, the Charter limits the pool of persons from which the Council may choose to appoint the Acting Executive. Only those persons who served "as a deputy or assistant in such office at the time the vacancy" are eligible for the acting position. The Acting Executive is to "perform all necessary duties to continue normal office operations" and serves until the Council appoints, "pursuant to general law for nonpartisan county elective offices" a qualified person³ to hold the Executive position.

Note, as was done in 2009 in the Kurt Triplett Executive appointment⁴, the Council may also choose to forgo appointing an Acting County Executive. In that case, Kurt Triplett was the Interim Executive. The Council appointed him Executive, skipping the acting stage of the process. Triplett served until Dow Constantine was elected at the November 2029 general election, that election was certified, and Constantine qualified to serve as County Executive.

Proposed Motion 2025-0110 would comport with the requirements in RCW 36.16.110 that the Council appoint a qualified person to fill the vacancy at its next regular meeting; as well as the authority under the County's Charter to select an Acting Executive to temporarily hold the office until the Council makes its appointment of the Executive, who would then serve until a successor is elected at the November 2025 general election and qualified (i.e. bond posted, sworn in, and bond and oath filed).

³ The relevant qualifications for the Executive position are in Charter Sec. 630: "Each county officer holding an elective office shall be, at the time of the officer's appointment or election and at all times while the officer holds office, at least twenty-one years of age, a citizen of the United States and a resident and registered voter of King County ...

⁴ Ron Sims resigned effective May 8, 2009. Triplett was the designated Interim Executive. A motion was introduced on May 11, 2009, and the Council appointed Triplett Executive on May 18, 2009.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Motion 2025-0110
2. Executive Constantine's resignation letter



King County

Dow Constantine

King County Executive

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March 28, 2025

The Honorable Girmay Zahilay
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Council Chair Zahilay:

With gratitude to the people of King County for having been allowed to serve, I hereby resign the office of King County Executive, effective March 31, 2025 at 11:59:59 p.m. The following day, I will assume the role of Chief Executive Officer of Sound Transit.

This letter also affirms that King County Deputy Executive Shannon Braddock will immediately assume the duties of Executive, as set forth in the [line of succession memo](#) dated July 10, 2024. Per the King County Charter, this order confers on Ms. Braddock the authority to exercise all powers of the office of Executive upon my resignation, subject to subsequent action of the King County Council.

Sincerely,

Dow Constantine

King County Executive

cc: King County Councilmembers
ATTN: Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council