



King County

Metropolitan King County Council

STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item:	26	Name:	Jeff Muhm
Proposed No.:	2025-0114	Date:	April 15, 2025

SUBJECT

Proposed Motion 2025-0114 would appoint Shannon Braddock as King County Executive to serve until a successor is elected in the next general election and qualified.

SUMMARY

The King County Charter Section 680.10 governs the Council’s role in filling the vacancies in non-partisan county elective offices. Proposed Motion 2025-0114 would complete the process set forth in the Charter to appoint Shannon Braddock, formerly the Deputy County Executive and now Acting County Executive, as County Executive. Under the Charter, the appointed King County Executive serves until a successor is elected and qualified in November of 2025.

BACKGROUND

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.

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. On April 1, 2025, the Council passed Motion 16794 appointing Shannon Braddock as the Acting King County Executive following Mr. Constantine’s resignation. Then-Executive Constantine had previously 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 began serving as Interim County Executive immediately upon Executive Constantine’s effective resignation on April 1, and then as Acting County Executive following the Council’s passage of Motion 16794 the same day.²

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 Under King County Charter Section 680.10, the Interim County Executive “shall exercise all the powers and duties of the office granted by this charter and general law until an acting official is appointed” by the Council.

The King County Charter also requires that the Council take action to fill the vacancy by appointing a qualified person to serve as King County Executive in a non-acting capacity until a successor is elected and qualified in the November general election.

ANALYSIS

After the Council is appraised of a vacancy in the office of county executive, RCW 36.16.110 requires the Council, at its next regular (or special) meeting, 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. The Charter also gives the Council an opportunity to place a person temporarily in the position as Executive by selecting an Acting Executive. 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 position⁴. The Council's action to appoint Ms. Braddock as Acting Executive on April 1, 2025 complied with the Charter as Ms. Braddock previously served as Deputy County Executive at the time the vacancy occurred.

After appointing an Acting Executive, the Charter then requires the Council to appoint a qualified person to serve as County Executive until a successor is elected and qualified. Proposed Motion 2025-0114 would fulfill the Council's obligations found in the Charter for filling a vacancy in the office of County Executive by appointing a qualified person to 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).

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Motion 2025-0114

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 Note, as was done in 2009 in the Kurt Triplett Executive appointment, 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.