



Whatcom County Housing Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date/Time/Location: February 8, 2018, 8:30-10:00 a.m. – Whatcom County Health Department, 509 Girard Street, Bellingham

WCHAC Members Present: Samya Lutz, Jennifer Moon, Paul Schissler, Regina Delahunt, Debbie Paton, Kyle Christensen, Karen Burke

WCHAC Members Absent: Emily O'Connor, Ed Moran, John Harmon, Bob Libolt, Gary Williams

Whatcom Co. Health Dept. Staff/Guests: Barbara Johnson-Vinna, Human Services Housing Specialist; Chris D'Onofrio, Health Dept. Human Services Clerk; Anne Deacon, Human Services Manager; Laura Harker, Interfaith Coalition, Director, Sarah Lane, Interfaith Coalition, Family Promise Director; Starleen Maharaj-Lewis, Unity Care NW, Community Health Worker

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/Who
1. Call to order, introductions	Introductions Chairperson Emily O'Connor was absent so vice-chair Debbie Patton chaired the meeting.	Barbara Johnson-Vinna
2. Agenda Review	Mike Parker was unable to report on Whatcom Homeless Service Center, his section to be covered by Barbara Johnson-Vinna.	Barbara
3. Public Comment	Karen Burke announced a new behavioral health program in development at Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services that will serve approximately 25 clients, most of whom are homeless. They will partner with Unity Care NW, Catholic Community Services, Compass Health, and Lake Whatcom Treatment Center to support people with mental illness or substance use disorder who have experienced domestic violence or sexual assault.	Karen Burke
4. New Business		Ayes: 4 Abstain: 3 Motion Passed
A. <i>December Minutes Approval</i>	Samya made a motion that the minutes from December's meeting be approved as presented. Paul seconded the motion. The committee voted and the motion passed.	
B. <i>Update on Member Terms</i>	WCHD Human Services Clerk updated member term status in conjunction with the executive's office and asked for updated contact information for committee members where applicable. New roster distributed to members.	
C. <i>Introduction of new Small Cities Representative</i>	Kyle Christensen is the recently elected Mayor of Sumas and the committee's new Small Cities Representative	



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<p>5. Reports/Updates</p> <p>a. Family Promise (Interfaith Coalition)</p> <p>b. Real Estate Excise Tax</p> <p>c. Legislative Update</p>	<p><i>Family Promise</i> program is being newly implemented by Interfaith Coalition. The program uses a day center (on Deemer Road) and rotating group of local congregations to house up to fourteen homeless individuals in Whatcom County. The low-barrier project can work with all family types, but it is important that the families are a good fit. For more information about the program see the handout or visit the Whatcom County Housing Advisory website at http://whatcomcounty.us/639/Whatcom-County-Housing-Advisory-Committee</p> <p>The real estate excise tax is collected by all of the cities and towns in Whatcom County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new allowable use has been added to State Law for construction/acquisition of facilities that assist people who have been homeless, including permanent supportive housing, but the tax will not increase • To participate, jurisdictions might need to apply funds to publicly funded projects like public housing (more clarity needed here); <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Real estate excise tax is traditionally used for public utilities, streets, and parks <p>Capital budget from last year’s legislative session was passed in January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes funding for Whatcom’s Crisis Triage Center (on Division Street in Irongate neighborhood) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The triage center will undergo a much needed expansion from 13 to 32 beds for mental health respite and supervised detox services ○ County may release funds currently held for construction if project doesn’t run over budget ○ If funds are released they will return to behavioral health project fund as a source of potential revenue for additional housing case management for people with behavioral health disorders <p>Representative Macri’s House Bill 1570 to raise document recording fees is moving through the legislature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will raise fee from \$40 to \$62 and also remove the “sunset” on the current fee (make it permanent) <p>House Bill 2437 would allow counties to retain sales tax (equal to 0.03% of sale price) that is currently being passed on to the State’s general fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Whatcom County, this amounts to about \$1.2 million and would help local jurisdictions have better control over their situations and respond to their specific communities. • There is bipartisan and local support from Whatcom County executive and county mayors • This bill would allow municipalities to use the funds to create bonding measures • Allows for O&M of <u>new</u> housing units, such as 22 North if bills passes soon enough • Will <u>not</u> allow for payment of rental assistance programs <p>The timing of Housing Trust Fund awards and the delay of capital budget created challenges for the award process, so another round of applications will be open in June</p>	<p>Sarah Lane</p> <p>Paul Schissler</p> <p>Barbara</p>



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d. City of Bellingham Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Authority’s former Aloha Motel site project on Samish Way is a contender, but the trust fund’s preference for projects that serve over 75% formerly homeless individuals makes the project unlikely to receive an award <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A bill (Hatch-Cantwell) attached to the federal budget that would increase available funding for housing project may provide an opportunity for additional funding paths for projects that serve fewer than 75% formerly homeless <p>Consolidated Plan Survey just closed, but early numbers are available and the response rate is high (see handout).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey results indicate plan is in line with community’s wishes, so no broad changes expected • Some specific geographic (neighborhood-based) priorities will be removed, allowing for more flexibility throughout the city <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This allows for more equitable policies and prevention of gentrification through more targeted affordable housing projects • Support for development of emergency shelter in a safe, permanent location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is in reference to finding a replacement for the drop-in center (Lighthouse) that cannot have its permits renewed. A new 24-hour low-barrier shelter location is being sought <p>Open House at Library- March 26 from 6:00-7:30pm to talk about consolidated plan</p>	Samya Lutz
e. Unity Care NW Community Health Worker Position and Project Connect	<p>Community Health Worker model builds individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency through a range of activities, such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support and advocacy. Starleen Maharaj-Lewis’s work will include a focus on housing security.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starleen will work be at the “family unit” level, and has pilot sites at Whatcom Community College, Options and Ferndale High Schools, and the Maple Alley Inn; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Her work will expand to cover all of Whatcom County • Much of her work will be with younger adults, many of whom have need for behavioral health support • For more information, see the handout or visit http://whatcomcounty.us/639/Whatcom-County-Housing-Advisory-Committe for documents • Unity Care NW has a Homeless Access Day every second Saturday of the month 	Starleen Maharaj-Lewis
f. Whatcom Homeless Service Center News	<p>Whatcom Homeless Service Center (WHSC) recently participated in an Advocacy Day in Olympia, and introduced many first-timers to advocacy work.</p>	Barbara Johnson-Vinna



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g. Local Plan Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Representatives from Opportunity Council, Lydia Place, and Mercy Housing participated. WHSC is working on an event for 3/22 focusing on housing for Veterans and strategies for 2018; check with Mike Parker for more information <p>Barbara is working on the plan update, and has emphasized the integration of housing and other health services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● She will meet with WHSC soon to discuss available data, needed data, and data collection strategies ● Whatcom County Coalition to End Homelessness is considering a larger meeting to encourage public participation and input into the next phase of the plan ● East Whatcom Regional Resource Center identified as an important partner in the plan's development ● Barbara will attend a Small Cities Caucus to gather input from the broader community 	Barbara Johnson-Vinna
6. ADJOURN		
<i>NEXT MEETING</i>	<p>Next regular meeting April 12th, 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.</p> <p>Whatcom County Health Department - Admin. Conference Room</p>	