

**Whatcom County
Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board (DDAB)**

Health Education Center

May 20, 2019

4:30 - 6:00 PM

Board Members Present:

Ken Larson
Kathleen Harrigan
Megen Porter

Barry McHale
Todd Donovan
Jeffery Hart

Board members excused:

Aaron Perzigian

Board Members absent

Russ Sapienza

Guests Present:

Rod Duncan, DDA
Sylvia Williams, Private Citizen
Arissia Owen, Community Member
Kait Whiteside, Max Higbee Center

Beverly Porter, The Arc of Whatcom
Matt Carlson, Kulshan Supported Employment
Nicole Mathey, Kulshan Supported
Employment

Staff

Jessica Lee, DD Specialist; Amber Wolpers, CH Specialist; Ann Beck, HS Supervisor; Emily West, Coordinator

1.  Call to Order & Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Ken Larson and introductions conducted. Quorum was present.

2.  Minutes Approval

Kathleen motioned to approve minutes as presented. Motion seconded by Barry.

ACTION January 2019 minutes approved as presented. Aye 6, Nay 0



3. Supported Employment Presentation

Matt Carlson and Nicole Mathey with Kulshan Supported Employment gave a presentation on the work they do in assisting people with developmental disabilities find and maintain appropriate and meaningful employment.

- Kulshan has been in business since 1987
- They have 130+ clients, 115 of those clients are employed throughout the community.
- A Supported Employment Specialist works with clients to develop relationships with the client, employer, and co-workers to make sure the client has the support they need to do well at work.

- Kulshan has also purchased two houses that they rent out at affordable rates for people with disabilities.

Matt introduced Austin, a recent graduate who went through the County School to Work Program. Austin gave an overview of the work that he does preparing donuts, bagels, muffins, and packaging items at the Haggen's Bakery. He works five hours a day Monday through Friday and is the Union. Austin enjoys having financial independence.

4. Board Nominations and Election of New Member

ACTION 

The nominating committee met with Arissia Owen-Turner and are recommending her nomination to the DDAB. She has a 7 year old son who is on the Autism Spectrum and has a background in journalism. She is looking for ways to give back to the community and educate herself more on what resources and supports are out there.

A motion was made by Ken and seconded by Jeffery to approve the nomination of Arissia Owen-Turner as a board member.

ACTION: Recommend Arissia Owen-Turner's nomination to the DDAB Aye 6, Nay 0

5. Legislative Updates

Jessica handed out a summary of highlights from the final state budget which impact individuals with DD.

- **13% rate increase** for community residential providers (Supported Living) to reduce the wage gap and prevent a hiring crisis in these services.
- **Funding for 350 young adults exiting school** to receive employment and other services through the DDA Basic+ waiver. A portion of DDA eligible young adults are already on a waiver so are not included in this total.
- **Increase to the Special Education Funding Formula:** The increase was not as much as hoped, but is a start. Currently the formula "caps" the % of special education students a district is allowed to receive funding for. The majority of districts in Whatcom County exceed the 13% cap.
- **Funding for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)** to maintain its current service levels. DVR has been limiting services to higher needs clients and was at risk of having to end some services to stay within their budget this fiscal year. Funding allows DVR to continue current services.
- **Housing Trust Fund:** The Trust fund provides funding to build/purchase housing stock that is made available to low income individuals. \$5 million is set aside specifically for individuals

with developmental disabilities. Housing must be maintained for a minimum of 40 years for the use intended.

Department of Commerce ABLE Trust Program

[ABLE accounts](#) are now available in Washington State. Able accounts allow families to set aside resources for the benefit of individuals with disabilities, similar to a college savings plan. Eligibility for Medicaid programs typically limits the amount of money individuals can have in their bank account. Able accounts allow families to set resources aside for their family member's benefit while maintaining Medicaid eligibility. Resources set aside in an ABLE account are not counted toward the Medicaid resource limit. It can be more affordable and simpler than setting up a special needs trust.

6. Pilot-Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

In April early childhood home visitors for infants and toddlers with disabilities and delays and other received training on reflective practices as part of a County pilot. The training and on-going consultation over the next year will focus on building the expertise and skill of early intervention supervisors and their staff to implement best practices in infant mental health.

- Often home visitors are serving at-risk children and families who may be impacted by trauma, mental health and other issues.
- Reflective supervision allows home visiting staff to assess their own performance, process complex emotions, identify where they need help and develop a coordinated approach to serving the needs of complex families.
- Reflective supervision has been found to improve child/family outcomes and reduce staff turn-over and burn-out.

7. Draft County Plan

The County Developmental Disabilities Plan is due for renewal. Proposed updates were shared and discussed. The plan includes demographic data, a brief summary of the DD service system, and outcomes specific to the work that is provided by the County.

Previous plan data was compared to updates and the following trends identified.

- Increase in the number of individuals enrolled with the Developmental Disabilities Administration
- Increase in the number of children 0-2 receiving early intervention services.
- Decrease in the number of DDA enrollees without a paid service
- Increase in employment outcomes, wages and businesses hiring individuals with DD.
- Increase in the numbers of individuals accessing the Single Entry Access to Services (SEAS) referral line for children with suspected disabilities and delays.
- Increase in the number of parents in peer-facilitated support groups.

The DDAB funding priorities approved 7/24/17 for local funds were also reviewed, with a small amendment proposed to the third priority area "Promoting Community Awareness and Inclusion" strategy C. The amendment strengthens the language from "advocate for" to "build the capacity of"

generic community services and infrastructure to service individuals with DD including housing, transportation health, recreation and other services. The County is exploring whether or not part of the millage fund balance can be used to match funding for affordable housing efforts specific to individuals with DD. A final board vote to affirm and amend the DDAB funding priorities will occur in July.

A recommendation was made to add additional language to the County plan to ensure alignment with the board priorities.

8. Public Comment:

- Max Higbee Center is looking for a bigger space for their programs. They currently have a waitlist of 25 without any outreach. Max Higbee does community based recreation programs aiming to create personal enrichment and enjoyment, encourages personal growth, and increases community engagements. They serve 400 people annually and 152 of those members go to their location on Bay Street for weekly recreation activities. They currently have a contract with DDA for respite services.
- Ron Duncan with DDA shared that Scott Watling will be the new Field Services Administrator for the five counties in our region. They have posted Scott's position as the Children's Supervisor in the Bellingham office.
- Thursday May 23 there is an ABLE Act Presentation at 6:00 p.m. at Max Higbee
- An Application Night is being held at the Health Education Center from 6-7:30 p.m. on 5/22. SSI, DDA, DDR will be there to help fill out applications.
- The 2019 Community Summit is June 11 to 13 in Wenatchee.

7. Meeting Adjourned: Meeting was adjourned by Ken Larson at 6:00 p.m.

Next Meeting: Monday, July 22, 2019. This meeting will be at the Health Education Center, 3333 Squalicum Parkway.

Respectfully submitted by Emily West, Coordinator

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