



Whatcom County Behavioral Health Advisory Committee (BHAC)
Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date/Time/Location: January 11, 2021 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Virtual GoToMeeting

Members Present: Bill Elfo, Mullane Harrington, Nick Evans, Mike Massanari, Anne Deacon, Wendy Jones, Susan Wood, Chris Phillips, Dave Reynolds, Dascomb Jamison

Members Absent: Kathy Kershner

Health Depart Staff/Guests: Ashley Geleynse, Health Department Coordinator; Joe Fuller, Health Department Program Specialist; Perry Mowery, Health Department Supervisor

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/Who
1. Welcome, Introductions and Announcements	The meeting was called to order. A quorum was present.	Chris
2. Approve Minutes of October 2020	Wendy moved to approve the October 2020 minutes as presented. Dac seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously and the motion passed.	Vote to approve minutes: Ayes 9, Nays 0, Abstain 0
3. Updates a. 2021 Budget	When the committee last met, we were looking at significant revenue shortfalls from sales tax as a result of COVID. Categories in which the budget was cut included behavioral health housing support, youth prevention, domestic violence perpetrator agreements, and jail behavioral health services where we received a new grant. Initially we were looking at about \$940k in cuts, but most of that amount was made up through other funds, and there is very little negative impact expected as a result. The county will communicate with this committee if there are more cuts to the behavioral health fund due to a decrease in sales tax revenue.	Anne
b. Annual Report	The 2019 Annual Report will go up on the Health Department's website soon. From a financial standpoint, we were about \$200K under budget in 2019, and started new programming. The full report will be sent out sometime in the next month.	Anne



<p>c. Behavioral Health Crisis Response Expansion</p>	<p>The county is facilitating a planning and design process to expand behavioral health services in collaboration with police, sheriff, EMS, treatment providers, including the GRACE team. The three goals of the expansion project are to: improve outcomes for people experiencing behavioral health (BH) crises, enhance integrated systems of behavioral health response, and support, and safe reduction of unnecessary law enforcement dispatches. Anne shared a Gantt Chart outlining the tasks and timelines associated with the expansion. The planning team expects to have the expansion of an existing program, and/or a new pilot program in place in the City of Bellingham by the end of May.</p>	<p>Anne</p>
<p>d. Crisis Stabilization Center (CSC)</p>	<p>The Bellingham Herald released an article about the opening of the Crisis Stabilization Center (CSC). The Center has two 16-bed treatment units, one for mental health stabilization, and one for substance withdrawal management (detox), with 24-7 nursing at the facility. We are working out processes with law enforcement and EMS for drop offs, including holding people at the facility until a mental health professional can assess them. Both sides are voluntary, but we are working with the mental health side to be funded as involuntary. The project came in under budget, so we feel confident that we will have the operational funding needed. While residents from other counties are welcome at the center, Whatcom County residents will be prioritized first. The committee discussed the idea of adding murals to the walls at the center to make it more inviting to clients.</p>	<p>Anne</p>
<p>e. BH Trends Report</p>	<p>The Behavioral Health Impact report from DOH was sent out to the committee prior to the meeting. The report makes predictions about the impacts of COVID-19 on the lives of our citizens.</p>	<p>Anne</p>
<p>4. One Tenth of 1% New Sales Tax</p>	<p>There's a state statute that allows counties to increase local sales tax by one tenth of 1% for housing and behavioral health support. This tax can be voted on by the County Council, which could be preferable to passing it through the city because the county can bring in more money, and because the county has a human services division to administer the funds. 60% would go to support affordable housing, and 40% to support behavioral health services. The current one tenth of 1% behavioral health sales tax brings in about \$4-5M a year.</p> <p>The committee discussed the possible tax increase, including timing, the impacts, and possible dispersion across the county. Anne identified housing, families with children, and criminal justice diversion as three areas for which the new fund could be used If passed. The County would look to the Committee for help in allocating the 40% behavioral health dollars. The committee asked for a more detailed plan outlining how the funds could be used for the purposes of discussion at the next meeting.</p>	<p>Anne Everyone</p>

