



Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board

Monday, May 23rd, 2022 4:30-6:00 pm
Virtual Zoom Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present:

Alysa Oradat
Jeffrey Hart
Kathy Kershner
Gina Bing

Lindsay Foreman-Murray
Caroline Applebee
Raegen Miller

Board Members Excused:

Megan Porter
Valerie Billmire
David Charleston

Board Members Absent:

Guests Present:

Emily Aagard: Cascade Connections
Paul Simon DDA
Sheng Feng, DDA
Krishna Herrera, DVR

Shannon Neely, DDA
David Inscho, DDA
Patricia Alderete, DDA
Katherine Herring, DVR

Staff:

Jessica Lee, DD Specialist; Amy Freeto, DD Transition Coordinator; Ann Beck, Community Services Manager; Amanda Burnett, Community Services Supervisor

1.  Call to Order & Introductions

The meeting was called to order and introductions were conducted. Quorum was present.

2.  Minutes Approval

There were no objections to the March minutes as presented. Alysa moved to approve. Kathy seconded the motion. The board voted and the minutes were approved.

ACTION March 28th, 2022 minutes approved. Aye 7, Nay 0, Abstain 0



3. Housing for Individuals with DD

Invited guests shared information on housing topics, as requested by the board.

• Sheng Feng, DDA Affordable Housing Coordinator

Sheng reports he is working with the department of commerce to better identify the needs of DDA clients to improve access to affordable and equitable housing. DDA is providing an affordable housing report to the legislature, due in December 2022. The report will seek to identify current need and how we can better support housing developers to meet the need of people with disabilities. *Link* [DDA Affordable Housing Study](#)

- Housing developers can either be those that build affordable units, or who pursue funding for the purpose of buying existing properties to be used for a specific population.
- 13 million set aside for new DD units/developers within the DD [Housing Trust Fund](#) set aside through the Department of Commerce.
- DDA is looking for more housing developers to pursue funding to purchase and or to set aside units in larger developments specifically set aside for individual with DD.
- The increase in housing costs has made the job of developers more challenging.
- Three typical categories of housing; larger housing complexes with 5-10% set aside for DD Clients, scattered single family home (can be several clients living together), Adult Family Homes.
- Typically, clients pay no more than 30% of monthly income for rent. An increase in housing costs is making this more challenging.

• David Inscho, DDA Case Manager

David primarily supports adults who live in adult family homes. (AFH) He explained more about the AFH licensing process. DDA *Link* [AFH Look up tool](#) [AFH Fact Sheet](#)

The group discussed resources available to start an AFH, as well as AFH participant requirements.

- The City of Bellingham has a low interest loan program. <https://cob.org/wp-content/uploads/hrp-pilot-programs.pdf>
- Sheng shared that DOH licenses AFH <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/residential-care-services/about-adult-family-homes>.
- Shen indicated that he might have some connections with AFH owners who might be willing to educate or mentor those interested in starting an AFH. The Housing Trust fund might also be a resource for the purchase of a home to be used as an AFH.
- David indicated the licensing process provides guidance for the requirements needed for the physical space as well as the requirements to provide care. F
- Currently there are 5 AFH serving individuals with DD in Whatcom County, and none currently have openings. David shared that while staying local is always preferred that there are more AFH options in Snohomish and King Counties.

- Requirements for individuals: AFH can be private pay. Most DDA clients require a placement in a home that accepts Medicaid and contribute a portion of their Social Security and earned income toward the cost of care. Important for DDA eligible folks to have a conversation with their case manager if they are interested in this option.
- Most individuals in residential settings are left with around \$72/month in spending month after they contribute to their cost of care. Kathy indicated that if that dollar amount is in state rules, legislators can help to increase that amount.
- AFH primarily provide day to day support. (Hygiene, meals, shopping.) Transportation varies from home to home. Support for recreational activities may also vary. Important discussion to have.
- The [shared living model](#) was also briefly discussed by Jessica. This model is privately organized by individuals and their families.

• **Caroline Applebee, Holly Community Services** *Link* [Supported Living Fact Sheet](#)

Caroline gave a report on the services her organization provides, which is contracted with DDA as a Supported Living provider. DDA contracts with organizations to provide the staffing and clients pay their own rent. She explained that their clients are mostly living in single family homes and clustered apartments, often with roommates. Staff assistance looks different for each client which -varies from 24/7 support to checking in with clients several times a week. Level of support is client specific to what they need/are eligible for. All their clients pay their own rent. Caroline relays that staffing is their number one barrier, right behind that is lack of housing. There are programs through the state that can assist with the cost of rent.

DDA clarified that other programs are available to fund caregivers to support an individual's personal care needs in their own home. (referred to as an "individual Provider.") Caregivers can be a family member who is paid, an individual can hire their own care provider, or use a homecare agency. Supports and hours are typically less comprehensive than supported living. <https://www.carina.org/> is a resource for finding caregivers.

• **Ann Beck, WCHD County Affordable Housing Updates**

Ann reported that the county, with one-time Federal funding, worked with the Kulshan Land Trust to purchase 8 acres in Ferndale with the intent to build 80 affordable homes. Affordable=80% Area Median Income (AMI.) Another county project is collaborating with Mercy Housing to secure 143 apartments currently available to those with income 60% of AMI, to prevent rent hikes at the end of the lease. Ann explained the goal at this time is to purchase more, build more and to keep what affordable housing we have.

4. Discussion: Future Meetings

Jessica polled the group re: in person or virtual future meetings. Both the board and community polls showed most prefer to stay virtual. ****NOTE* Whatcom County Council later voted that all board meetings will require an in person option for board***

meetings, but that concurrent virtual meetings will also be allowed for those who wish to remain virtual.

5. Public Comment

At a future meeting, it was suggested by several attendees to discuss ABLE accounts and include a financial advisor knowledgeable with benefits planning. Kathy requests an update on millage funds and how those funds are being spent.

6. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned by Reagan.

Next Meeting: Monday July 25th, 2022. 4:30-6pm.
Respectfully submitted by Amy Freeto, DD Specialist.

HD Staff

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Amy Freeto

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