



## Whatcom County Housing Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Date/Time/Location:** February 15, 2019 8:30AM to 10:00AM - Whatcom County Health Department, 509 Girard Street, Bellingham

**WCHAC Members Present:** Samya Lutz, Jennifer Moon, Paul Schissler, Emily O'Connor; Regina Delahunt, Brien Thane

**WCHAC Members Absent:** Karen Burke, Kyle Christensen, Debbie Paton, Ed Moran

**Whatcom Co. Health Dept . Staff/Guests:** Barbara Johnson-Vinna, Human Services Housing Specialist; Chris D'Onofrio, Human Services Housing Specialist; Samantha Murdoch, Coordinator; Ann Beck, Human Services Supervisor; Mike Parker, Homeless Service Center Director; Rachel Lucy, PHAB; David Fitzgerald, Board Applicant

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/Who
<b>1. Call to order, introductions</b>	Introductions commenced and quorum present.	<b>Emily O'Connor</b>
<b>2. Agenda Review</b>	No changes requested	<b>Emily</b>
<b>3. Public Comment</b>	David Fitzgerald expressed that it has not been the normal response of this group to tackle emergency preparedness, but what is then the function of housing providers to align and work well with systems. Suggestion to inform and provide resources in such situations like what is happening now by this group. Communities that are successful with emergency shelters do not take from affordable housing and such, but find other ways to come up with emergency funds.  What do we do about emergency preparedness in our community for the homeless with volcano eruptions and major power outages?	<b>Emily</b>
<b>4. New Business</b> A. December 2018 Minutes Approval	Samya moved that the minutes from the December meeting be approved as presented. Paul seconded the motion. The committee voted and the motion passed.  The significant changes to the Bylaws are in red on the handout, the most important being on page two where we revisit how the membership is structured. Somehow there had been an	<b>Ayes: 8</b> <b>Abstain: 0</b> <b>Motion Passed</b>  <b>Chris</b>





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	<p>following: Rapid Re-Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, Interim Housing, Coordinated Entry, Affordable Housing, and Prevention Diversion and Economic Stability. To address Collaboration and Quality Assurance we are doing online surveys to generate input from community members.</p> <p>Skagit County has taken the lead to apply for a Community Development Block Grant. The grant has been received for \$750,000. Whatcom is estimated to receive between \$150,000-250,000 for down payments for 8 homeowners with up to 80% AMI. Skagit County is administering the grant; other counties are paying \$2,000 each to help fund the administrative costs. Homes within the City of Bellingham will be ineligible. The funding must be through a non-profit. Whatcom/Skagit Housing, Habitat and Kulshan Community Trust may be eligible.</p> <p>The Health Board in Whatcom County is the County Council, but when they meet as the Health Board they have jurisdiction over both the incorporated areas and the unincorporated areas of Whatcom County. To assist in offering expertise, the PHAB was established; this is a special relationship. Each year the PHAB discusses what policies they would like to present to the Health Board. The three policy recommendations this year included Early Childhood Development, Housing and Homelessness, and Supporting Foundational Public Health Services. The PHAB recommended to the Health Board that the WCHAC committee bring forward policy recommendations on Housing and Homelessness.</p> <p>This process is recognizing the strengths that that this team has, and provides a platform to say that they are ready and waiting for recommendations around policy related to housing. We would really like to see a special focus on families with small children; it would align with our top priority around Early Childhood Development. An example: Best Starts for Kids Levy in King County is a good model for seeing big investments for ties to funding.</p> <p>The Health Board approved the following policy agenda: Insure focus on increasing housing stability for families of young children and expanding the overall availability of quality affordable housing options for throughout the County. A couple of the Health Board members said that they support this, but they would support other policy options not specifically related to Children/Families and Housing as well. When looking at policy options, there needs to be a window of opportunity, and we need to recommend those we feel have political will. If we want to bring this board to together with the PHAB and talk about where we think the</p>	<p><b>Regina</b></p> <p><b>Rachel</b></p> <p><b>Regina</b></p> <p><b>Barbara</b></p>



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B. COB Update	<p>windows of opportunity are, we can do that once we have a list of different options and which ones to move forward and prioritize.</p> <p>I'm thinking about funding for new policy changes and the Home Consortium has Home HUD dollars available. They sent out RFPs for those funds and there were no applicants from Whatcom County. Both Skagit and Island Counties have set up pipelines for affordable housing projects in the county and we have not done that. How can we take advantage of these funds and merge that with an ongoing need in the community.</p> <p>We could form a subcommittee to work on a proposal and options before the PHAB meeting in April. We will redistribute the letter Paul sent out in October. Has there been any discussion about funding? Whether we are going to set some policies and then send additional dollars in that direction? If we set our policies and priorities how does it translate to us as a community closer to implementing those policies and priorities?</p> <p>The Health Board wants to know what policies we need to implement to move us forward. It could have to do with money, land, underutilized properties, etc. This is what we need to bring forward.</p> <p>Do we want a special meeting for the whole group?</p> <p>I would like to suggest having a subcommittee meeting and meet with the PHAB.</p> <p>A brainstorm and work session with facilitation and directed questions with both of these groups would be very beneficial.</p> <p>I have the idea of having a larger group that could break apart and work on the two areas and then come back together. Put together the special work group meeting at the end of March. We will take the lead on getting it coordinated.</p> <p>Commerce offers a free training opportunity for affordable housing in communities referred to as short courses on affordable housing. With our housing staff capacity expanding, we are able to commit some of our staff time to affordable housing activities. One idea Chris and I have is to ask Commerce to offer The Short Course on Affordable Housing locally. This</p>	<p><b>Emily</b></p> <p><b>Regina</b></p> <p><b>Emily</b></p> <p><b>Paul</b></p> <p><b>Samya</b></p> <p><b>Rachel</b></p> <p><b>Ann</b></p> <p><b>Barbara</b></p> <p><b>Jennifer</b></p> <p><b>Samya</b></p>



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C. WHSC Update	<p>course offers training on a variety of topics such as understanding affordability, legal aspects of affordability, tools to promote affordability, and local government actions to promote affordability. Samya and I talked about asking Commerce to offer this type of course next fall and send out invites to the Planning Department. We are looking for feedback on this idea.</p> <p>This could be a potential addition to Housing week at the end of October. Rose with Sustainable Connections is the point of contact; she coordinates housing week.</p> <p>The City is expecting a decision today from the Hearing Examiner on a legal case between neighbors and the Lighthouse Mission. The decision will have a huge impact for siting low barrier shelters. A neighboring business challenged the City’s permit allowing the Drop-In Center to operate under the new code for temporary shelters. The interim shelter code that is being developed will be impacted by the decision that is made.</p> <p>Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) applications: There were 6 applications for new housing developments: 2 for new construction, and 4 for utilizing existing single family homes being repurposed for supportive housing. The draft Action Plan will be published in early March. It is an unbalanced action plan, meaning we show more funding going out than we have available to spend. This is not a final draft; this is just to get it out to the community. After a public comment period and appearing before the Community Development Advisory Board the Mayor will provide recommendations for funding and then Council will approve the action plan.</p> <p>We are working in small groups on potential tax credit policy reform in Washington State. There is a subcommittee that has been meeting for a few years that Mike has chaired. It has been called the Supportive Housing Committee. It is a group of non-profit housing developers, City, County, and the Coordinated Entry Lead. They meet to talk about housing projects in the pipeline, who is doing what, and funding collaboration. There is potential interest in formalizing the links between the SHC and this one, much like the PHAB, to allow more collaboration. Currently it is premature to bring anything forward. The City will be formally suggesting to the Housing Finance Commission that they change the 9% tax credit policy to allow a County by County recommendation of projects within the 5 county metro pool area that currently competes within itself. If there is a way for Whatcom County as a geographic area to say “this is our priority project” or “this is our order of priority projects,” we</p>	Mike



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<p>D. Agenda Suggestions</p>	<p>need a way to say that to the community.</p> <p>As an overview in 2018, here is what happened: There was a rise in homelessness; PIT was the highest since 2008. 22 North opened 40 units of permanent supportive housing. There were some positive developments in 2018, such as potential drug court housing and the Housing Authority developing Samish Way. Some of the highlights of 2018 (data from HMIS): Households that received housing intervention totaled 1,304 (including short term support, permanent support, and 155 of the 1304 received eviction prevention assistance) with an 80 to 90% success rate. 2,281 people were members of those households. Emergency Shelter funded through the WCHD and COB served 319 households (Sun House, motel vouchers, DVSAS, The Pad, and NWYS).</p> <p>There are 541 households currently in the waitlist pool; In November there were 621 households. As of February 11, 46 of the households waiting for housing are families with children. Youth households are 45 of the households. Seniors 60+ includes 69 of the households. There are 11 from DVSAS. Veterans are 37 of the households. Again, 541 households that we know of are awaiting assistance. We will not remove people until after 60 days; however, we are behind on those removal calls. The staff will make phone calls and send out letters before removal.</p> <p>A group of us were discussing families with children Terri Bryant, WHSC Manager. We noted that when we add housing interventions, we see clear changes. The Housing Authority just finished the Preference Voucher process. 40 to 60 households were assisted. This now is tailored to specific agencies and there are case managers to help lease up and offer support. This should be a huge help in 2019.</p> <p>I would suggest that we be stronger about what our interventions are doing in the community. The information you gave on what coordinated entry is doing would be great on an infographic. Also, with the Seniors increasing, there are organizations like AL TSA through DSHS which is looking for ways to support that.</p> <p>I think we could add another focus group for Seniors to the housing plan.</p> <p>We have talked about data and to Ann's point messaging and I think we continue to fail as a</p>	<p><b>Ann</b></p> <p><b>Barbara</b></p> <p><b>Emily</b></p>



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	community when it comes to messaging around homelessness. If we are going to start to look to this group to step up around policies and other types of engagement it would be very helpful for me to have data available with graphs and trends on a regular basis. If we can figure out how to disseminate data to this group from our Coordinated Entry System I think it would be really beneficial.	
<b>6. ADJOURN</b>	10:04 A.M.	<b>Emily</b>
<b>NEXT MEETING</b>	<b>Next regular meeting April 11, 2019, 8:30 - 10:00 a.m.</b> <b>Whatcom County Health Department - Admin. Conference Room</b>	