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WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
Health Committee

November 27, 2007

Committee Member Laurie Caskey-Schreiber called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. in the Council Chambers, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, Washington.

Present:

L. Ward Nelson
Barbara Brenner

Absent:

None

Also Present:

Sam Crawford

Caskey-Schreiber nominated Ward Nelson as Committee Chair.

Nomination carried 2-0 with Brenner out of the room.

1. **APPROVAL OF COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH PLAN (CHP) OVERVIEW DOCUMENT and**
2. **FINALIZE KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWEES AND INTERVIEW GUIDE**

Susan Sloan, Health Department, stated they've prepared a one-page overview of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Health Plan (CHP) to make available to the public. She would like the committee's opinion on and approval of the document.

Caskey-Schreiber stated the topics are broad and general so they can fit many issues under them. She asked if they are not going to deal with mental health and substance. Sloan stated they will, under the topic of health care delivery systems. They can spell those out more.

Caskey-Schreiber stated at least acknowledge that those are important. They spend major tax dollars on those issues if the needs aren't met. It's important to call out behavioral health.

Nelson asked if they would change Behavioral Health to Mental Health. Sloan stated they could change it to Substance Abuse and Mental Health rather than Behavioral Health

Caskey-Schreiber stated it's important to put substance abuse in there. Sloan stated they can do that.

Nelson stated these are the four items to look at with the community to incorporate into the CHP. Sloan stated they are. It's a way to structure the issues that come up.

Nelson stated a concern raised is that there is a large stakeholder group. Remove from the interview process the Executive's Office, Whatcom County Health Department, and the mental health supervisor. Interview the Health Officer. The Health Department Director and mental health supervisor will be involved in the daily process anyway. Sloan stated they can do a more informal interview process.

1
2 Nelson stated remove the Mayor's Office and small cities from the interview process
3 also. Make sure they are kept in the loop with information. They can be involved in
4 whatever manner they like. Sloan stated there are 300 organizations on the stakeholder
5 list, not the interviewee list, to be kept informed as these steps unfold.
6

7 Nelson asked if the interview process is the full process. Sloan stated it contains the
8 questions they will ask, but is not the full dialog.
9

10 Caskey-Schreiber stated the list is diverse. Include the Opportunity Council as a
11 general organization. They see many community health needs and can steer clients to
12 different agencies. She's fine with the stakeholder list. Sloan stated they can include other
13 groups not on the list in the focus group stage.
14

15 Nelson asked how they would incorporate more of the rural counties. Sloan stated
16 they will also do public forums in nine different areas of the county.
17

18 Caskey-Schreiber stated add Whatcom Counseling and Psychiatric Clinic. They'd be
19 interested in this.
20

21 Nelson stated they have staff for mental health involvement. In addition to the
22 Whatcom Counseling and Psychiatric Clinic, they also have Catholic Community Services,
23 SeaMar, and Lake Whatcom Treatment Center. They can't include every agency that deals
24 with mental health. Sloan stated have a focus group with people from all those agencies.
25

26 Caskey-Schreiber asked if they will go out and market this to specific service
27 providers. Sloan stated they will. She will go to meetings, do presentations, and ask
28 people to participate.
29

30 Brenner stated she would like to add, if possible, all school districts, mayors, parks
31 and recreation departments, and all planning departments. Also reach out to Cost Cutter, in
32 addition to Hagen. Include fire districts and rural community organizations.
33

34 Caskey-Schreiber stated that if they go to the superintendents' meeting for the
35 school districts, they will get all the school districts. Sloan stated they will make sure the
36 different issue areas are covered with the focus groups. Also, they will do nine public
37 forums. One is in the Deming, Glacier, Kendall, Maple Falls area and one in Everson,
38 Nooksack, Sumas. There will also be a public forum in Sudden Valley. They will make sure
39 to cover the rural areas and get good communication going. They will develop a
40 communication plan to make sure it's marketed well.
41

42 Nelson stated he likes the idea of fire districts. Do it through the emergency medical
43 service (EMS) process and incorporate first responders.
44

45 Regina Delahunt, Health Department Director, stated the results of the one-on-one
46 interviews with the group of stakeholders will inform the community forums. They are
47 trying to get a representative amount of information from key stakeholders, and transform
48 that information to take it to the community.
49

50 Brenner stated sometimes people are offended if only Bellingham is involved. That is
51 why she suggested the small cities. Delahunt stated that's one of the reasons why they
52 picked the larger ones. It will give them enough information to inform the rest of the
53 process. She understands that they don't want to overlook the smaller communities. Also,

1 the smaller communities often don't have the resources to meet. She didn't want to put a
2 burden on them.

3
4 Brenner asked why Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) is involved. If
5 something happens, there may not be a lot of public transportation.

6
7 Nelson stated the healthy environment topic is where they address things like
8 transportation issues.

9
10 Caskey-Schreiber suggested adding language under topic 2, "... behavioral health
11 services, mental health, substance abuse, and oral health care..."

12
13 Nelson the Public Health Advisory Board requested that the Health Committee review
14 this document and suggest any changes. The idea of the purpose of the Health Committee
15 is to not have to convene the Board of Health for every question. The committee will make
16 suggestions and recommendations, and the Board of Health will make final decisions.

17
18 Brenner stated topics three and four don't say anything about maximizing health.
19 Add language under topic three, "...designs that maximize safety and encourage health and
20 healthy lifestyles." The goal to encourage healthy lifestyles also belongs in topic four.
21 Healthy buildings are different from healthy lifestyles.

22
23 Nelson stated this is not required by the State, like the Comprehensive Plan and
24 other planning documents. Don't make this so convoluted to be a planning document. This
25 is supposed to encourage this type of thing. Encouraging healthy lifestyles encourages all
26 those suggestions.

27
28 Brenner stated encouraging health and encouraging healthy lifestyles aren't the
29 same thing. A lifestyle is how one lives, not what one lives in.

30
31 Nelson stated the committee will recommend approval with those changes.

32
33 **Brenner moved** to amend topic three, "...designs that maximize safety and
34 encourage health and healthy lifestyles."

35
36 **Motion carried unanimously.**

37
38 **Caskey-Schreiber moved** to amend topic two, "...behavioral health services,
39 substance abuse, mental health, and oral health care."

40
41 **Motion carried unanimously.**

42
43 **Nelson moved** to amend the list of suggested key stakeholder organizations:

- 44 • include the Opportunity Council and EMS services,
- 45 • remove the county representatives and mayor, and
- 46 • change the school districts to the superintendents and ask the
47 superintendents to choose one of their group to do the interview.

48
49 Brenner stated make sure that her suggestions are incorporated into the list as well.
50 Sloan stated she will. There are a number of businesses on the list, so they may try to do a
51 business focus group.

52
53 **Motion carried unanimously.**

1
2 **Brenner moved** to approve the interview process.

3
4 **Motion carried unanimously.**

5
6 **3. REVIEW INITIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN**

7
8 Susan Sloan, Health Department, stated they want to start announcing this process
9 to get media attention. Talk about the timing of this. They want to do an internal email to
10 staff.

11
12 Caskey-Schreiber stated the timeline is well done. She is concerned about going
13 public during the holiday season. Wait until January when people are doing their New Year
14 resolutions. Get ready internally so they can present a united front and everyone knows
15 what they're talking about if there are questions from the community.

16
17 **Nelson moved** to approve the initial media campaign, with one change to the time
18 frame to January.

19
20 Crawford asked why one private company is listed on the stakeholder list.

21
22 Nelson stated the stakeholders will go through the questionnaires to define on what
23 they should focus. The focus groups will be far more inclusive. The major stakeholders will
24 lay out the topics to talk about. The focus groups will include everyone.

25
26 Sloan asked if there were any comments about the website.

27
28 Nelson stated they don't have comments on the website.

29
30 Nelson stated next steps include keeping the Health Committee up-to-date on Public
31 Health Advisory Board work and bringing forward the full draft plan at the next committee
32 meeting.

33
34 Regina Delahunt, Health Department Director, stated the plan for how the County is
35 going to develop the Comprehensive Health Plan is coming forward, not the Comprehensive
36 Health Plan itself.

37
38 Caskey-Schreiber stated this is a comparison to how the Parks Plan was developed.
39 There was a plan for outreach, then information came forward, which was included in the
40 Parks Plan.

41
42 **Motion carried unanimously.**

43
44 Sloan stated she will work with the Council Office on scheduling future committee
45 meetings. She introduced professional facilitator Faith Hagerty-Stewart and described her
46 background.

47
48 Faith Hagerty-Stewart, consultant, stated this process makes good sense. It is very
49 inclusive. They talked about bringing a large group of people together to share their
50 individual information and make decisions. It is a different approach. The folks who
51 implement the goals and actions should meet with each other and come up with action
52 plans they can commit to. They meet regularly to follow up on their actions. The

1 stakeholders, focus groups, and public forms will help define key issues. Then, convene
2 people to participate and begin to formulate strategies and actions plans.

3
4 Sloan stated they hope to fund a conference with a small grant in a year. It would
5 launch the action planning around the issues.

6
7 Delahunt stated this plan will be a community plan, not the County government's
8 plan. Make sure the groups in the community take ownership of the plan.

9
10 **4. OTHER**

11
12 Nelson stated the Whatcom Healthcare Alliance has issues that this committee may
13 want to consider. He submitted information (*on file*).

14
15 (*Clerk's Note: End of tape one, side A.*)

16
17 Nelson stated two issues important to the community are continued expansion of
18 health insurance options for small businesses, ESSHB 1569 and the Support of School
19 Outreach Bill, SB5100. The County should support ESSHB 1569 to help small businesses
20 get access to insurance programs. Also, encourage a funding process or State program for
21 school outreach. Some school superintendents are resisting this bill because of concerns of
22 an unfunded mandates. Provide funding and gain the support of the school
23 superintendents. He would like Council support of both items.

24
25 Caskey-Schreiber asked if the goal is for the Council to draft and send a letter.

26
27 Nelson stated write letters, include the issues in the Health Committee efforts, and
28 make sure the Council is familiar with the issues in the community.

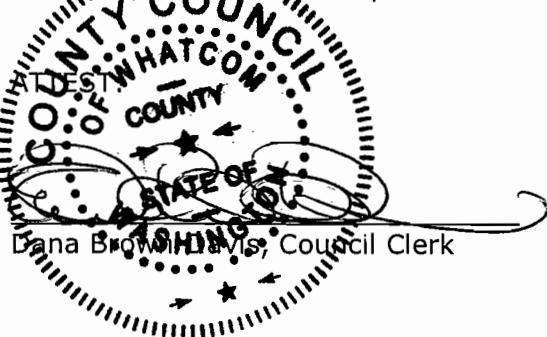
29
30 Caskey-Schreiber stated compose a letter to send supporting each of the issues in
31 the handout, including a third issue of Medicare reimbursements, which is also in the
32 handout.

33
34 Nelson stated federal Medicare reimbursement rates is the third issue to support. He
35 described the problems. The Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access (WAHA) is working on
36 other issues as well. He can present more reports to this committee if it wants.

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38
39 **ADJOURN**

40
41 The meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

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45 Jill Nixon, Minutes transcription



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53 Dana Brown, Council Clerk

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON


L. Ward Nelson, Committee Chair