

## Aging Well Whatcom Initiative

Friday, November 2, 2018

9:00-11:00 AM

At the Whatcom Transportation Authority in Bellingham

### MINUTES

#### Attending:

Dr. Chao-ying Wu, Chuckanut Health Foundation Board/Family Care Network  
Dr. Dave Lynch, Chuckanut Health Foundation Board President/Family Care Network (retired)  
Ryan Blackwell, Northwest Regional Council  
Carol Nicolay, Health Ministries Network  
Sue Sharpe, Chuckanut Health Foundation  
Mary Carlson, Whatcom Council on Aging  
Mary Anderson, Whatcom Transportation Authority  
Pauline Smith, Executive Director, Skagit Adult Day Program  
Melinda Herrera, Rosewood Villa  
Jenny Weinstein, Opportunity Council  
Tammy Bennett, Whatcom YMCA  
Trisha Bannerman, PeaceHealth  
Heidi Bugbee, Generations Early Learning & Family Center  
Janet Malley, Whatcom Transportation Authority  
Heather Flaherty, RiverStyx Foundation  
Rebecca Kirkland, Peace Center for Senior Health and her email

#### Regrets:

Amy Hockenberry, Whatcom County Health Department  
Jeanne Brotherton, Chuckanut Health Foundation Board/Health Ministries Network (retired)  
Kristin Granstrand, Mercy Housing Northwest  
Marie Eaton, Palliative Care Institute, WWU  
Colleen Harper, Bellingham At Home  
Tonja Myers, Christian Health Care Center

#### Welcome and introductions

Dave welcomed the group and members introduced themselves.

#### Review and approve minutes

Minutes from October 5, 2018 were approved with the following corrections: the correct acronym for Skagit Adult Day Program is SADP, and Heidi Bugbee's name appeared twice in the attending/regrets list.

#### Information and Inspiration: Grantmakers in Aging

Ryan, Mary A., Mary C., and Lara attended the Grantmakers in Aging conference in Memphis in October. They thanked the Chuckanut Health Foundation and shared some of their key "takeaways" (*also summarized in Attachment 2 of the meeting packet*).

#### Aging Well Blueprint

##### AARP Age-Friendly Communities/8 Domains Framework

Lara updated the group regarding what she's learned about the AARP Age-Friendly Cities Network from talking with WA State and national AARP offices, and participants at the GIA conference. (*This is also summarized in Attachment 3 of the meeting packet*). There appears to be a lot of flexibility in terms of how

communities use the 8 Domains framework, and variability in the level and kinds of support communities receive from their state AARP offices.

The group agreed to consider an in-person meeting with the staff from Washington's AARP office who works with age-friendly community efforts (she's on maternity leave until early 2019). With more direct information about joining the network and what support we could expect from the state AARP, the group can make a decision about pursuing membership in the Network.

### **Sample Blueprints**

Lara reported that from the feedback she received on the sample blueprints, shared at the October meeting and sent out by email. There was a strong preference for [Communities for a Lifetime](#) (Dakota County, Minnesota) because it's clear, accessible and action oriented. Some people also liked elements of the Age-Friendly plans (Seattle, Boston and Columbus). The overall theme to the comments is a preference for keeping it simple and understandable.

## **Updates**

### **Adult Day Program**

Pauline and Sue shared that there's discussion underway regarding shared use of the Public Market space on Cornwall Avenue downtown. In addition to an adult day program, the YMCA is interested in opening another childcare site and the Max Higbee Center is looking for an expanded space. Co-locating these three programs and integrating them to some degree could create a multi-generational community resource center. This could utilize the entire 24,000 square feet, with some shared areas such as a kitchen; extensive renovation would be needed and could take about a year to complete.

The Adult Day Program would still need a short-term location. Dave stated he inquired with Christ the Servant Lutheran Church on Lakeway, and there is interest in exploring this possibility. A pre-school is located there, and the building also has a kitchen and gym.

### **City of Bellingham Housing Equity Committee**

Sue shared that the Bellingham City Council planning committee has invited several partners to a meeting to discuss housing needs of older adults. Sue and Lara will attend and share the Aging Well housing assessment; Ryan and Mary will also be attending, as well as the Opportunity Council, Bellingham-Whatcom Housing Authority, Bellingham Planning and Community Development and possibly others.

## **Assessment findings**

Group members reviewed displays of the data gathered and compiled to date: demographic information, housing data, housing distribution map, themes from surveys and listening sessions, and sample health neighborhood maps.

Each person noted 2-3 key findings, which were shared and discussed, with the goal of synthesizing the data on various issues and from various sources into collective key findings. *[Lara's note – I took the liberty of making a pass at clustering the findings]:*

### **Geography, distribution**

- Numbers in the county – thinking about the whole county.
- Looking at the map, there are no homes [supported living such as adult family homes, assisted living or skilled nursing facilities] or services in many areas of the county.
- The town with the bigger percentage of older adults seems to have the fewest available services.

- The location of housing/senior facilities is concentrated in Bellingham.

### **Isolation vs. socialization, connection**

- Isolation vs. socialization.
- A consistent concern or challenge is being alone/loneliness. Yet the desire to remain at home along with societal norms create a system where that is the most common outcome.
- Isolation – importance of reducing; loss of independence; need for all generations to respect older adults so they don't feel vulnerable.
- Number of households with seniors living alone.
- Survey and listening sessions identify social isolation as a top concern.
- Theme of wanting to be a part of the community, to be respected, to be a contributing member

### **Anxiety/fear/[in]security**

- Anxiety about the future – isolation, resources, finances.
- How important security is: health, home, loneliness, financial.
- Sense of fear – health declines, \$\$, being alone. How can we reduce those fears? Could a navigator program work?
- Older adults' fears - #1 is physical decline and this then leads to isolation (#2), and loss of independence.
- There is a need to meet older adults where they are; help address their fears and concerns and make them feel safe and heard.

### **Housing**

- Economic balance – housing concerns for homeless, low-income; types/levels of care options.
- Number of homeless people age 65+ is 23. That feels like a solvable number.

### **Different perspectives**

- Older adults and caregivers mentioned similar issues, but in different orders of priority.
- Older adults and people who care for them rank things differently.

### **Other**

- Surprised that purpose was lower as a concern. One size won't fit all – can't just give every individual a bird or a cat. Individual needs vs. structure/system.
- Health care connection – doctors who care, getting to treatment, expense.
- Family care givers #1 need is adult day health.
- Surprise! Mental health issues/care/treatment mentioned rarely.

## **Wrap up and next steps**

Next meeting: Friday, December 7, 2018, 9-11 AM – location to be announced.

Lara noted that the next meeting will focus on identifying priorities for action.