

Aging Well Whatcom Initiative
Friday, February 1, 2019
9:00-11:00 AM
At the Whatcom Transportation Authority.

MINUTES

Attending:

Amy Hockenberry, Whatcom County Health Department
Becky Kirkland, PeaceHealth Center for Senior Health
Carol Nicolay, Health Ministries Network
Elaine Cress, Whatcom Council on Aging
Heather Flaherty, Chuckanut Health Foundation
Janet Malley, Whatcom Transportation Authority
Marie Eaton, Palliative Care Institute, WWU
Mary Anderson, Whatcom Transportation Authority
Mary Carlson, community member
Melinda Herrera, Rosewood Villa
Pauline Smith, Skagit Adult Day Program
Ryan Blackwell, Northwest Regional Council
Sarah Lane, YMCA
Tonja Myers, Christian Health Care Center
Wendy Lawrence, Opportunity Council

Regrets:

Kristin Granstrand, Mercy Housing Northwest
Jenny Weinstein, Opportunity Council
Dr. Chao-ying Wu, Chuckanut Health Foundation Board/Family Care Network
Dr. Dave Lynch, Chuckanut Health Foundation Board/Family Care Network (retired)
Heidi Bugbee, Generations Early Learning & Family Center
Colleen Harper, Bellingham At Home

Transitioning members:

Jeanne Brotherton, Chuckanut Health Fndn Board/Health Ministries Network – leave of absence
Trisha Bannerman, PeaceHealth Ctr for Senior Health – Becky Kirkland is the new the PeaceHealth CSH rep
Sue Sharpe, Chuckanut Health Foundation – retired
Tammy Bennett, Whatcom YMCA – Sarah Lane is the new the YMCA rep

Welcome and introductions

Lara welcomed the group and introduced several new members.

- Becky Kirkland is the new the representative for the PeaceHealth Center for Senior Health.
- Wendy Lawrence is an additional representative for the Opportunity Council, and will be heading up the Housing Blueprint Committee.
- Sarah Lane is the new the representative for the YMCA.
- Elaine Cress is the new representative for the Whatcom Council on Aging (Mary C. will be continuing as a community member).

Members introduced themselves and shared something related to aging (their own; that of a family member, friend, or pet; the media; or anything else) that they will strive for in 2019.

Review and approve minutes

Minutes from December 7, 2018 were not reviewed.

Updates

- Ryan reminded people about the proposed Long Term Care Trust Act, SB 1636, and its potential to address long term care issues in Washington. [*For more info, see the [bill digest](#) or [advocacy efforts.](#)*]
- Pauline reported that the Adult Day Program for Whatcom County is moving ahead, and a location has been secured at the [Rutledge House at the Firs](#). May 1st is the target opening date, though fundraising, building renovations, and staffing all need to be accomplished, so it's possible the date will shift. There are already 40 people on the waiting list; maximum capacity is about 50 people per day.
- Janet announced the annual [Meals on Wheels fundraiser](#), March 16 at the Ferry Terminal.

Blueprint Development

Lara gave a brief overview of the process leading to the current stage of Blueprint development:

March-October 2018 – community assessment, including demographics, housing, and listening to older adults and their families via surveys and listening sessions.

November 2018 – review of findings, synthesis and discussion.

December 2018 – identification of six priorities or Focus Areas based on assessment and other learnings from the year; decision regarding six Blueprint elements for each Focus Area.

January 2019 – Blueprint Subgroup created a proposal for the process of developing the Blueprint. [*Attachment 1 in today's meeting packet*].

Discussion:

- Elaine asked how the six Focus Areas were determined, and noted the absence of **purpose** and **life-long learning**. Others shared that this was discussed; since it's an aspect of emotional wellness, it falls within Health and Wellness. It may be valuable for the Health and Wellness committee to specifically call out **purpose** and **life-long learning** in their Blueprint section.
- Because there are so many aspects of Health and Wellness, this committee is going to start by defining "health and wellness". It may be helpful for other committees to define their topic/focus area too, especially ones that aren't as self-explanatory, such as "cultural shift."
- Marie called attention to the three perspectives of **equity, choice/person centered**, and **connectedness** to be considered by all committees as they work on their focus areas.
- Blueprint committees are being formed and starting to meet.
- Is this the right time to bring elected officials into Aging Well's planning work?
 - Aging Well needs their support, which will be gained by involving them along the way.
 - It's important they know that the Aging Well Blueprint is being created, and not be surprised further down the road.
 - Unless they have a specific interest or passion, such as Council member Dan Hammill and his interest in housing issues, working on the Blueprint is probably too "in the weeds" for them.
 - Governmental entities are connected to Aging Well in other ways, e.g. on the boards of the NW Regional Council and Whatcom Council on Aging. Aging Well members can inform their governmental stakeholders about the Blueprint.
 - Preparing a briefing for elected officials may be a better approach than involving them in committee work.

ACTION → Heather and Lara will work on an Aging Well briefing/communication strategy for elected officials.

- It would be helpful to have a way to communicate across committees, sharing questions and challenges and/or things that are working well.

ACTION → Lara will connect all the Committee Leads by email so they can communicate with each other and back to their committees.

- Lara thanked everyone, especially the committee leads, for jumping into this phase of work.

Committee membership as of 2/1/19:

Comm	Health & Wellness	Mobility, Access, Transp & Design	Housing	Intergenerational Community	Information/ Navigation Svcs	Cultural Shift
Lead	PAULINE	MARY A	WENDY	TONJA	RYAN	COLLEEN
Aging Well members	Amy Sarah Becky	TBD	Jenny Mary C Elaine	Heidi Janet	Carol Melinda	Marie Ying
Others, committed				Susan Given-Seymour Andrea Asebedo		
Others, pending			Teri Bryant OppCo	Whatcom Co Library System Whatcom Family & Community Network		

Aging Well Communications

Lara noted that so far Aging Well has been the work of a relatively small group. Bringing new people into Blueprint Committees increases the number of people, but the initiative is also approaching the time when it will need to communicate about Aging Well with the broader community. Social marketing is a framework that’s helpful in planning this kind of communication.

Heather defined social marketing as “marketing for good” -- influencing behavior or social changes rather than sell products.

There are four key steps in creating a communications plan. 1) Articulating the problem (sometimes a harder task than it would seem!); 2) Defining the communication goals (the desired result, what we want to change by communicating); 3) Identifying and researching audiences; and finally, 4) Deciding messages, strategies and channels.

Developing an Aging Well communication plan will take place over the next several months with the group’s input at the monthly meetings of the full group.

Members worked in pairs to articulate the problem Aging Well is seeking to address, and based on that, what the communication goals should be.

Problem Statement	Corresponding Communication Goal
<p>Whatcom County lacks a coordinated plan/vision to meet the needs of our older adult population.</p> <p>Lack of coordination has produced redundant and/or absent services available in various communities.</p> <p>We don't know how to live well. We have splintered, wait until later lives.</p> <p>Number of homeless seniors has increased. People who do not drive are unable to reach/access the services needed.</p> <p>Aging population with complex needs. Increasing aging population without the infrastructure to support. [We] may not know all the complex needs. + We have an increasing aging population with complex needs. We do not have the infrastructure to support [them].</p> <p>Seniors don't have the ability to age in place related to social isolation. Rate of growth in aging population is high without adequate resources. + Seniors are not supported to age in place, often accompanied by social isolation. Growth in aging population is high without adequate resources.</p> <p>How to provide avenues for information when they're ready for it. The structures now are segmented and siloed – but we need more options. How do we communicate this resource [the Blueprint] – identifying stakeholders, communicate/build awareness.</p> <p>Planning for aging needs improvement in our community.</p>	<p>To improve coordinated vision/plan/conversation about aging in Whatcom County.</p> <p>Develop projects to increase knowledge and choices for holistic living across the lifespan.</p> <p>Increase affordable housing stock for seniors. Increase transportation options for seniors.</p> <p>To create, communicate and make accessible a body of resources for Aging in Whatcom County. Provide opportunities to be a stay healthy, vital, independent. + Increase our communities' capacity to provide opportunity for our aging population to be and stay healthy.</p> <p>Increase the ability to age in place; increase connectedness and sense of purpose.</p> <p>Get buy-in (process for buy-in) and identify key people in stakeholder groups. Build alignment in community for planning, programming and funding (resources).</p> <p>Increase planning for the aging process in our community.</p>

ACTION → Lara will work on synthesizing these statements into a couple of drafts to bring to the group.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

- Next meeting: Friday, March 1, 2018 at the Christian Health Care Center in Lynden.
- Blueprint Committee meetings as scheduled by the committees.