



CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING TASK FORCE

JANUARY 9, 2023

Present: Alicia Hanning, Anne Granberg, Sunshine Nelson, Chelsea Johnson, Beverly Porter, Carol Frazey, Sarah Kidd, Jamie Desmul, Jed Holmes, Jennifer Wright, Keith Montoya, Netta Darling, Allison Bishop, Mary Sewright, Mike Ford, Monica Koller, Samya Lutz, Sativa Robertson, Sterling Chick, Yarrow Greer, Vesla Tonnesson

Not Present: Escarleth DeLeon, Gregory Hansen, Melissa Isenhardt, Ray Deck, Rosalva Santos-Guzman

Topic	Discussion/Outcome
<p>Welcome</p>	<p>Introductions, land acknowledgment, housekeeping, and review of agreements.</p> <p><u>Land Acknowledgement:</u> I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are here today on the ancestral homelands of Indigenous Peoples who have lived in the Salish Sea basin and the North Cascades watershed from time immemorial, in particular, the Lhaq'temish (LOCK-tuh-mish) people who we recognize today to be the Lummi Nation, the Nooksack Tribe, and Semiahmoo. May we be mindful of the inherent owners of this land, our children, who are our future. Our future stewards of the land and advocates for the generation to come. May that truth guide our work and efforts to improve the well-being of all families and children, native and non-native, living in this beautiful county. This land acknowledgment is not meant to be a substitute for authentic relationship-building and understanding. It is meant to introduce us to one way we can show respect and honor for the sacrifices of the first people of this land. Please join me in expressing the deepest respect for our indigenous neighbors, and gratitude for the enduring stewardship of our shared lands and waterways. https://www.lhaqtemish.org/ -Lhaq'temish Foundation</p> <p><u>Agreements:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and self-care come first. • Be kind and gentle with yourself and others and assume everyone is coming from a positive place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Everyone has the best intentions. ○ Listen with an open mind and heart. • Be mindful of this space. Step-in and step-out/Step-up and step-back. Offer your truth and insights and listen to others' truths and insights. • Treat each other with honor and grace. We are all working under difficult circumstances. • Embrace diversity. Remember that we all come from different backgrounds giving us different perspectives and only when we embrace that diversity can we develop creative solutions to address the child and family well-being needs in Whatcom County. • What is said here stays here. • Have fun. <p>Fist to Five Consensus Tool – Amended 4.25.22</p>
<p>Approve Meeting Minutes</p>	<p>No amendments to discuss. Minutes from December 12, 2022, were approved as presented.</p>



<p>Group Check-In – Share, Agenda overview, meeting input/evaluation</p>	<p>Jen asked if anyone is interested in being co-chairs, 4 are allowed, and to get in contact with current co-chairs if interested. There will be a survey coming in regard to stipend use in 2022.</p>
<p>Introduction to Bennett Knox, Parks Department Director</p>	<p>Jen briefly introduced Bennett as the Parks Department Director. Bennett introduced himself and the work that he is doing here in the county as well as background on his previous work in Kentucky.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background in doing youth programming in natural areas settings • Summer camps, programs engaging families in the outdoors • Focus on equitable access to natural areas <p>Bennett states he is in the process of reviewing and renewing the plan for Parks and Recreation open space. They are currently interviewing for a Parks Design Development Manager.</p>
<p>Healthy Children’s Fund Implementation Plan: draft and feedback process</p>	<p>Allison stated everyone should have received an email requesting input on the draft HCF Implementation Plan along with a form to submit input.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fund should raise close to \$100 million over the next 10 years. • The Health Department is the fund administrator. • The plan is due February 10, 2023 to be submitted to the Council agenda packet for their March 7 meeting. • The Implementation Plan team is currently receiving feedback from the advisory groups listed below. Some facilitated feedback sessions are scheduled. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Child and Family Well-being Task Force ○ Ordinance Drafting Team ○ Child Care Coalition ○ Healthy Whatcom ○ Public Health Advisory Board ○ Business representatives • Feedback is due by January 20, 2023. <p>Keith thanked the team drafting the Implementation Plan for their work. He would like the task force to discuss the draft Implementation Plan because the current draft doesn’t reflect what the task force recommended, specifically regarding the evaluation section of the Plan. He recommends some small group discussion opportunities for task force members in order to provide the best feedback by the January 20, 2023 deadline.</p> <p>Carol asked for an overview of the discrepancies in the Plan that Keith mentioned. Keith stated his understanding: the outside evaluation was originally given to the task force to oversee and has now been handed off to the Health Department. There are discrepancies as to whether the Health Department has the authority to provide the outside evaluation to another county department, such as the Finance Department. Also, the outside evaluation budget seems lower than what would be needed. Keith stated he also would like to know where is the task force is mentioned in the plan and where their role is called out. He understands the task force to have a role in overseeing the outside evaluation.</p> <p>Allison stated there are a number of evaluations that will be done, program performance evaluations and process evaluations. External evaluation the role will be to evaluate the process of how the funds are administered and evaluate county government processes. Keith commented we need to look back to see if that’s what the task force</p>



	<p>originally wanted and what the intent was or what the Health Department wanted. Keith states we can come back to this topic and create an action plan.</p> <p>Samya asked for clarification on this agenda item. Allison stated it was intended as a check-in to ensure people received the email and the instructions about providing feedback through the Google form for the advisory groups until January 20. Samya stated she is impressed with the depth of thought that has gone into the draft implementation plan and she appreciates the professionalism and thought that has laid out the framework for evaluation, including the spirit of collaboration and transparency from County staff. Hopes the spirit of collaboration continues as our community moves forward with this work.</p>
<p>Workgroups and Phase 111 Report Update</p>	<p>Jen noted this will be discussed at the end of the meeting if there is time, otherwise, this will be done via email.</p>
<p>Updates on Child & Family Issues: Health Department, Council, & Executive's Office</p>	<p>Carol provided an update on what is happening at tomorrow's council meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tomorrow at 9:50am – Climate Action and Natural Resources Committee Discussion and approval of letter regarding Whatcom County's response to the Washington State Department of Natural Resources regarding Phase II of the Carbon Project. https://whatcom.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5984169&GUID=D85B9D60-AE08-422F-ABB8-179600C1FF58 • Tomorrow at 1:10pm – Public Works and Health Committee, presentation from the Health Department regarding the Opioid Settlement. (Slide #20 Adverse Childhood Experiences) https://whatcom.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5984186&GUID=4A4D38CE-C705-4B93-BA0F-FCDF2062AABE • Tomorrow at 2:15pm – Committee of the Whole - Presentation from Gina Stark, Economic Development and Broadband Manager from the Port of Bellingham regarding the status of the county broadband project. https://whatcom.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5984201&GUID=40AF9F73-1079-48D6-BBE5-F18D028761EA <p>Erika first discussed the expectation setting around the Opioid Settlement dollars. Stating it represents about \$178,000 per year - 18 years, about \$3.2 million dollars. Erika states the county is currently negotiating with Lynden and Ferndale to receive funding on their behalf. The county is hoping there will be some good, targeted programs and services that can help with prevention efforts.</p> <p>Erika shared the Health Department's big picture priorities for the year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Health Department developed a 5-year strategic plan last year. There are 4 primary strategic priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community Partnership and Engagement ○ Organizational Infrastructure ○ Workforce Development ○ Quality Management • Each year, plan to develop a yearly strategic priorities list to achieve the 5-year goal. • The Health Department will be renamed to Health and Community Services. • Finalizing the Healthy Children's Fund Implementation Plan. • Working to align and coordinate the Boards and Commissions that the Health Department support. Looking to support coordination and communication between these boards on equity, workforce development, and other big-picture projects. Want to ensure that volunteer members are getting value from their participation.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavioral Health Fund has a significant balance and examining how best to use this balance. • Providing support and technical assistance for the jail and behavioral health ballot measure • Conducting a vulnerability assessment of populations most impacted by climate change – Public Works is focusing on floods and the Health Department is concerned with populations impacted by hot days, cold days/evenings, wild fire smoke, and other climate driven severe weather events. • Organizational infrastructure includes developing new equity plan. • Implementing InterGov which is permitting software system. • Training and adopting EPIC – electronic medical record platform for behavioral health services, communicable disease, and LEAD and GRACE team. • As part of the funding for foundational public health services, hiring a policy position, equity position, evaluation position, and workforce development position. • Last Thursday launched an Alternate Response Team – 911 services with a behavioral health provider and a public health nurse. • Workforce development includes programs and services that are launching/relaunching post-COVID: reestablishing mentoring program for succession planning and leadership development and creating a paid internship program. • Quality management includes launching a new performance management system, publishing the first annual report to the community, reaccreditation process through National Accreditation Board that needs to be completed this year, and drafting an updated community health assessment. <p>Keith asked if Erika could send a mini-report for people to keep for reference. Erika stated she will send it to everyone. Vesla asked for details on the children and family programs management position that is being hired and also the capital projects ARPA application. Erika stated she will defer to Chelsea on the ARPA capital funding applications. Erika provided more information regarding the positions and funding – Early Learning and Care Program Specialist and Children & Family Program Manager position (a supervisor role). Erika stated if people are interested in the interview process for the supervisor position, to let her know.</p> <p>Jed provided an update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFP out for capital facilities, opened in December through March 7, 2023, up to \$4 million dollars available for expanding childcare slots. • Smaller RFP for about half a million dollars for small providers coming up this spring. • 1/10/23 Council meeting – new appointments for the Child and Family Well-being Task Force. • 1/10/23 County Council Meeting – Department of Revenue will discuss the working families tax credit. Tax credit for up to \$1200 for low-income families. • 1/10/23 County Council will be reorganizing and reappointing different positions for boards and committees.
<p>Reinvigorating our Communication with County Government</p>	<p>Keith discussed our purpose as a task force related to the Implementation Plan. How do we communicate with our partners, including county staff and the community? See the purpose and function on this webpage. https://www.whatcomcounty.us/3537/Child-and-Family-Well-Being-Task-Force</p> <p>How does the Task Force want to be a part of the evaluation of the HCF?</p> <p>Vesla offered more information regarding the Implementation Plan and the evaluation process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation: The Health Department is named as the current administrator of the funds. A key component of the ordinance is to evaluate or analyze the impact of the Healthy Children’s Fund, and contributing factors to its success or weaknesses of it. This allows the county, including but not limited to the Health Department, to improve fund administration and to support programs to improve service delivery. The Health Department is bound to policies and procedures designed by the finance department, and



therefore, those impact the effectiveness of the Healthy Children's Fund as well Fund administration and program implementation. The process of administering the funds and the transparency available (i.e. who is applying for the funds, why were they approved/denied, what are the barriers to accessing the program dollars, etc.) should have oversight. Right now, it crosses multiple departments (Health Department, Finance and Executives office) and it is not something the Health Department can do on its own. That is why an external evaluator was named in the ordinance. The results of that analysis/evaluation will determine quality improvement for the implementation of the Healthy Children's Fund overall. This is an equity and transparency issue.

- There will be an additional evaluation plan (completed in the Winter of '23). The task force should also consider if there are things we want to have named in this implementation plan that will be required in the evaluation plan.
- Strategy objectives: All the early learning and care strategies have been modified to specific target populations to adhere to the county finance department's interpretation of the allowable use of public funds (see the language of the "objectives" for each strategy). There is more information developing. However, as currently written, it does not follow the language of the ordinance making early learning and care opportunities available for "all children" in Whatcom County. The county's finance department's immediate interpretation of this is not assumed to be the only interpretation. There are cases to be made about this being a "fundamental purpose" of the government and therefore the "poor and infirm" language may not apply. We want to ensure the interpretation is based on the law, and in line with state childcare efforts. This is, again, a good reason to have a process evaluator with government policy expertise help the Task Force with its role outlined in the ordinance of evaluators.

Erika stated there are different parts to evaluation, including program performance evaluations and population performance. With regard to an evaluation of county processes, the Health Department doesn't oversee the Finance division and she can't authorize an evaluation of that department.

Jed commented that the Council is open to reviewing processes. Process improvement is important but hasn't yet figured out how that fits into the Healthy Children's Fund.

Keith stated it would be helpful to brainstorm ideas for how the Task Force can be updated on those conversations. Jen asked if the Task Force could be looped in when conversations are happening at the table. Keith asked if Jed would be open to sending out an email update, Loom videos, etc. when conversations happen, status updates, or something to keep the Task Force engaged. Jed stated it would be helpful for the Task Force to be more explicit on what exactly they want to hear. Vesla stated some of that is happening right now, as far as what is and isn't in the plan and what they would like to see. Vesla asked if there was anything that needs to be seen in the evaluation plan but is not fully fleshed out. She agreed that it is important for the Task Force to stay in close communication with the Health Department and the Executive's Office about the evaluation of the HCF.

Keith asked how everyone prefers to go through this document: on their own, in small groups, or have a special meeting. Samya suggested providing a few dates for small groups. Jen stated that it sounds like small groups would be easiest and asked how we could go about scheduling those groups. Allison stated that those interested in an opportunity for discussion have indicated in the chat. She can follow up with suggested times/dates and whether a special meeting is needed. Reconfirmed that all feedback should be submitted through the Google form.

Vesla suggested considering scheduling a special meeting after the February 13 meeting and before the final Council vote if people have questions about the final draft and the feedback incorporated. Everyone agreed.



	<p>Keith asked how best to stay in contact with county government and keep Task Force members up-to-date on issues related to children and families. Samya commented that she would find it helpful to get a heads-up between meetings about relevant topics at Council meetings, especially when directly related to child and family well-being, with a link to the presentation/agenda. Allison asked whether it would suffice to put together a one page of bullet points that could include the Health Department director's report that goes to PHAB, a summary from Council, and from Exec. Recognition that this takes people resources to put together but the information would be very helpful.</p> <p>Carol stated the Council is reorganizing tomorrow and she's unsure who will be on the Task Force. Vesla asked what the process looks like for the reorganization. Carol provided a link to see what boards council members have selected: https://whatcom.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5984168&GUID=BC1A33E5-D3E1-4796-AC6D-A14284665890</p> <p>Keith asked Task Force members if they could hear from some of the Task Force members who represent organizations more often. Vesla recognized that it could be burdensome with limited time and people resources. Suggested using a Jamboard and adding to minutes.</p> <p>Vesla shared more information on the process evaluation and how to embed that and learn as we go. The childcare strategies were written in the ordinance to benefit all children and families in mixed delivery systems for both low-income and those not considered low-income. She stated that in the Implementation Plan, the early learning and care strategies are only focused on low-income but it's not the way the ordinance was written initially. Vesla states there are questions that have come up with some of these changes. Jed commented on where the language comes from and states there needs to be more discussion on it. Erika reiterated that this is a draft, there's still one month until the final plan has to be submitted, and they understand this is a concern arising from the legal and finance divisions of the county. We are currently working to determine how to apply this to all families by finding examples in other jurisdictions. Jamie asked how low income is defined as not all the ALICE families qualify as low-income. Erika stated it is 200% of the Federal poverty level as it's defined by the state.</p>
Public Comment	No public comment.
Closing	Adjourned at 5:30PM
Next Meeting	Next regular meeting: February 13, 2023 <u>Location: Hybrid</u>

