



Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board

Monday, January 23, 2023 4:30-6:00 pm
Hybrid Meeting – via Zoom and In Person

Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present:

Jeffery Hart
Valerie Billmire
Raegen Miller

Lindsay Foreman-Murray
Kathy Kershner
Gina Bring

Board Members Excused:

Board Members Absent:

Alysa Oradat
Megen Porter

Guests Present:

Grant Zezula, DDA
Shannon Neely
Steve Bennett, PHAB
Krishna, DVR
Eric Kardas, Kulshan S.E.

Paul Simon, DDA
Stephanie Jones, DDA
Beverly Porter, The ARC
Nicole Mathey, Kulshan S.E.

Staff:

Jessica Lee, Program Specialist
Amy Freeto, DD Transition Coordinator
Amanda Burnett, Community Services Supervisor
Chelsea McGlothan, Coordinator

1. Call to Order & Introductions

The meeting was called to order and introductions were conducted. Jessica noted that both David Charleston and Caroline Applebee will not be continuing on the board. Quorum was present.

Steve Bennett introduced himself as the current chair of the Public Health Advisory Board and Professor of Public Health at Western Washington University. Steve provided an overview of the Public Health Advisory Board. (PHAB) He stated that PHAB is trying to increase partnership with other boards to broaden representation and invited interested parties to apply to PHAB.

Kathy asked which day the Public Health Advisory Board Meets. Steve stated usually the first Thursday at 7 a.m. More information can be found here.

<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/572/Public-Health-Advisory-Board>

2. Minutes Approval

There were no objections to the November minutes as presented. Valerie moved to approve. Kathy seconded the motion. The board voted and the minutes were approved.

ACTION November 28th, 2022 minutes approved. Aye 6, Nay 0, Abstain 0 

3. DDAB Nominations

- **Co-chair position #2**
Jessica stated Lindsay volunteer to be co-chair. Gina nominated Lindsay for co-chair.
- **Executive committee (co-chairs + 2 members)**
Jessica stated two additional members are needed for the executive committee which only meets between meetings if immediate recommendation is needed. Valerie and Gina volunteered for the executive committee.

Jessica proposed that the Co-chair and executive committed be voted on as a slate.

Kathy moved approval of the slate. Gina seconded the motion. The board voted and the slate was approved unanimously.

4. DDA Updates

Paul Simon from DDA introduced himself as one of three Field Services Administrators in Region II and provided an overview of his role. Jessica asked if DDA has any projects or improvement strategies in process to address unmet needs they've identified within our region or Whatcom County specifically. Jessica noted that DDA conducted community input sessions in 2022 to develop solutions with the community in identified priority areas. A summary of community developed solutions can be found at.

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ddaprojects>

Paul indicated there were no projects specific to Whatcom County that he was aware of but provided an overview of items detailed in the Governor's proposed biennial budget for 2023-2025 and provided a link . [Governor's Proposed Biennial 2023-25 Operating Budget Released](#).



Some projects of interest in the budget include:

- Specialty Adult Family Homes
- Additional funding for children and adults in hospital settings to transition back into the community.
- Expanding behavioral health and stabilization supports
- Funding young adults transitioning from high school into employment
- Adding additional financial eligibility staff to help with workload
- Rate increase for County employment and Community Inclusion.
- Study proposed to determine whether or not the current care assessment tool is effective.

Paul noted that funding requested to reduce DDA caseloads was not included.

Jessica asked what a typical case load looks like for a DDA adult or child case manager. Paul stated caseloads are defined as one to seventy-five with enhanced case management and intensive mental health program caseloads established at one to thirty. Jessica asked for more detail about the specialty AFH pilot. Paul stated there will be a 400-person pilot project while will pilot additional support for individuals with DD living in an adult family home. The pilot pays for additional staffing for existing clients. The pilot does not expand the number of AFH spots available.

Jessica shared the [Housing Fund Priority Study Report](#).

Paul explained that crisis stabilization services primarily involve diversion beds. He also shared that iPhones for DDA clients are still available and a request form may be submitted online. [DDA Region 2 External iPhone Request Form](#)

Shannon Neely, DDA supervisor, commented that as of January 1, 2023, clients receiving employment services for at least 9 months can now also access community inclusion at the same time.

Jessica stated that Whatcom currently has 3 providers who are currently accepting referrals for Community Inclusion, but only from their existing case load of employment clients. The County held a community information session in December, but has not yet received any applications yet for a new community inclusion provider.

Additional updates from Paul:

- DDA has contracted with an agency in Whatcom for crisis stabilization services.
- The region continues to hire staff to take clients off the No Paid Services caseload.



5. DD Millage Program Planning-Continued

Jessica reviewed the plan for Community Input on the DDAB priorities. The draft community survey will be reviewed for input by a small ad hoc group including the Arc and DDAB membership. The survey will go out to the Arc electronic listserv as well as e-mailed to target stakeholders. If any board members are interested in attending any of the key informant interviews please contact Jessica. The plan is to review survey results at the March meeting.

6. 2023 State Legislative Session

Bills on interest, Hearing schedule Jessica shared a link for the [Bill Tracker](#) from the 2023 Legislative session along with the [hearing schedule](#). Jessica reviewed highlights from the [2023 Bills of Interest](#).

Jessica shared the link to find your state [legislative district and representatives](#).

Paul asked Beverly with the Arc of Whatcom County if she has any feedback on the bills and legislative tracker. Beverly stated she's really excited about the bill to lift the cap on special education and to increase the special education "multiplier." (formula by which districts are funded.) These changes, if approved, would result in more special education funding for districts. Beverly also mentioned a bill that would provide coverage for hearing aids for both children and adults. [House Bill 1222](#).

7. Public Comment

- Jessica shared that the Transition Fair for youth with disabilities will be held at Bellingham Technical College on March 27th from 9am-12:30pm.
- Jessica thanked Jeffrey Hart for all of his work with this board.
- Beverly suggested that information about the DDAB be added to the community survey.
- Kathy stated that shortening this meeting to an hour might help with board participation.

8. Adjourn

Kathy requested a motion to adjourn, which was made and seconded by Valerie.

Next Meeting: Monday March 27th, 2023. 4:30-6:00pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jessica Lee, Program Specialist.

HD Staff

Jessica Lee

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