



Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board

Monday, March 28, 2022 4:30-6:00 pm
Virtual Zoom Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present:

David Charleston
Gina Bring
Raegen Miller
Caroline Applebee

Lindsay Foreman-Murray
Jeffery Hart
Valerie Billmire

Board Members Excused:

Megan Porter

Board Members Absent:

Alysa Oradat
Kathy Kershner

Guests Present:

Grant Zezula, DDA
Hannah Voss, Work Opportunities
Krishna Herrera, DVR

Kristen Nguyen, Cascade Connections
Stephanie Jones, DDA

Staff:

Jessica Lee, DD Specialist; Amy Freeto, DD Transition Coordinator

1.  Call to Order & Introductions

The meeting was called to order and introductions were conducted. Quorum was present.

2.  Minutes Approval

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

ACTION January 24, 2022 minutes approved. Aye 7, Nay 0, Abstain 0



3. Diversity Equity and Inclusion: Efforts at the Local Level

To continue and build on the board's conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), Jessica invited Kristin Nguyen from Cascade Connections and Hannah Voss from Work Opportunities to speak about their agencies work around DEI. Both agencies have received funding from the County for DEI training.

Cascade Connections received training from the Washington Initiative for Supported Employment (WISE). Facilitators also met with key staff and the leadership team to identify areas for improvement and ways to incorporate DEI practices. They have identified training and hiring employees as a priority focus of their DEI work, in addition to ensuring that people with disabilities are well represented in decision making processes.

Work Opportunities formed an equity committee, and then partnered with a consulting organization to build a plan for their agency's DEI work. They identified that consciously focusing on anti-racism, impacts all areas of diversity.

The board provided feedback and asked questions about DEI efforts in the community. Jessica will plan on building DEI topics regularly into the board agenda.

4. 2022 Legislative Session

Jessica reviewed two house bills that passed in the legislative session that directly impact the county's developmental disabilities program. Both pieces of legislation were priorities of the state Developmental Disabilities Council [North Star Project](#). [HB 1980](#) removes the prohibition on a DDA client receiving employment services and community Inclusion Services at the same time; the legislation will take effect in January 2023. There is currently only one provider in the county accepting referrals for Community Inclusion (CI). Community providers have shared that the reimbursement rate is too low to be sustainable. More work will need to be done.

[SB 5790](#) requires that a School To Work Program be established in all counties in the state. Funding was approved in the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's (DVR) budget rather than DDA's, and fewer funds were approved than requested. More information is needed to understand the legislations impact on the Whatcom School to Work Program. unclear what impact this legislation will have on our local program.

Jessica reviewed other legislative updates as they relate to DD services, including a required rate study of Supported Employment and Community Inclusion services, [ESSB 5268](#), [HB 1724](#), and [SHB 2008](#).

5. Public Comment

At a future meeting, Valerie would like the board to talk about housing for young adults over the age of 21, specific to Whatcom County. Caroline expressed that increasing rental prices

in general are contributing to difficult of all people with disabilities finding housing. Grant shared that there are statewide adult family home meetings coming up where stakeholders can listen and advocate. Jessica agreed to add this topic to a future agenda.

6. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned by Reagan.

Next Meeting: Monday, May 23, 2022. This meeting will be virtual on Zoom.

Respectfully submitted by Ashley Geleynse, Coordinator

HD Staff

Jessica Lee

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