

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL
Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

COUNTY COURTHOUSE
311 Grand Avenue, Suite #105
Bellingham, WA 98225-4038
(360) 778-5010



COUNCILMEMBERS
Rud Browne
Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan
Ben Elenbaas
Carol Frazey
Kathy Kershner

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL

Homeless Strategies Workgroup

Friday, January 17, 2020 Meeting #19 Agenda

Time: 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.

Location: Whatcom County Civic Center Annex
322 N. Commercial, Garden Room

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1. **Welcome and Introductions**, HSW Chair, Whatcom County Councilmember Barry Buchanan
 - The purpose of the Homeless Strategies Workgroup, is to identify
 - Additional temporary winter shelters,
 - Added capacity for year round shelters.
 - Additional opportunities to address the needs of the county's homeless population, and
 - An additional purpose of the Homeless Strategies Workgroup (as per 8/9/19 meeting) is to create a communication network for organizations to work together better.
 - Strategies to prevent people from having no other option than to sleep outside.
 - Approve Meeting Summary, Meeting #18, January 3, 2020
 2. **Bellingham & Whatcom County Housing Authority**, Brien Thane & Tony Casale
 3. **Updates on GRACE Program**, Mike Hilley
 4. **Status Updates on Shelters**
 - Winter Shelters (3-month shelters)
 - Severe Weather (Emergency) Shelters
 5. **Communications Subcommittee**
 - Communications strategy to the broader public, in addition to communications effort to homeless populations, and customized messaging for small cities (Communications Subcommittee)

- Near term needs
- Long term services (toward permanency)
- Broader community (education, engagement, coordinated messaging)

6. Action Items

- Develop an HSW call to action in 2020 – identify recommendations of the HSW and identify agencies or policy makers to ask. (Mike Parker, Councilmember Buchanan)
 - Discussed at 1/3/2020 meeting
- Centralized information
 - Councilmember Buchanan will look into the feasibility of setting up the infrastructure for information screen at several locations.
- Rest Stop
 - Unity Care (Chris Kobdich) – funding, location, and implementation (in partnership with Opportunity Council – Presentation at HSW on 1/31/2020
 - Identify additional rest stop locations and operators (varied types)
- BasicsPNW (Carmen Gilmore, Brittany Jones)
 - Sign contract with Bellingham and County for permanent locker operations.
 - Identify long-term management of lockers
- Safe Parking (Tara Sundin, Rick Sepler) – identify locations in Bellingham
 - Rick Sepler to present to City Council on effort to identify partners for safe parking site, and potential request for funding (ref 1/3/2020 HSW mtg)
- Shelters
 - Ann Beck to discuss with Anne Deacon the options for revisiting temperature thresholds
 - Ann Beck to seek update on special population small shelters from Rachel at Peace Health
 - Lengthen the 30-minute shelter check in window
 - Identify city and county owned properties as potential shelter locations (requested by Commissioner Shepard)
 - HomesNow (Markis Stidham) - Identify sites for future tiny home villages in Bellingham and in the County. ¼ acre with electricity.
 - Secular shelters – identify more spaces at secular shelters
 - Partner with Lummi Nation on shelters and housing opportunities (Nick Lewis)
 - Shelter operators - Shelter space is available through the Port (as per Commissioner Shepard) – need to identify operations
 - East Whatcom Regional Resource Center- (Karen Burke) potential shelter facility location for east Whatcom County residents in need of warmth during severe weather. Need to identify operations.
 - Online applications for shelter (Markis Stidham) – potential app
 - WTA Transit Station – identify staff and volunteers for an emergency shelter
- Create an asset map. Summarize information on number of beds and locations (requested by Commissioner Shepard)
 - Councilmember Buchanan volunteered to work with the City, Chris and Ann on identifying gaps in assets.

- Small Cities Partnership – keep them updated about the work of the Homeless Strategies Workgroup and how they can help.
 - Riley Sweeney to reach out to small cities to identify potential additions to HSW membership
- Coordinate with St. Peters Church in Deming to offer more services to the 150 people fed there each week (Bridget Reeves, Lighthouse Mission)
- Need for more access to treatment for mental health and substance use disorders
- Funding
 - 1406 Funding – WCHAC to develop a plan for funding allocations
 - Coordinate city and county funding allocations (Council Member Lilliquist) – create a countywide comprehensive approach
- Reunification – (Karen Burke)
- Case Management – identify funding for case managers (better pay, retention, more case managers)
- Communications– *see Communications Subcommittee above*
 - Draft talking points handout to be presented to the HSW at their February 14th meeting

7. Discussion of Next Steps

- Next meeting: January 31, 2020, 8:30-10:00 a.m., Garden Room
- Additional meetings
 - February 14, 2020
- What is the preferred schedule for future HSW meetings?

8. Public Comment

Time will be divided equally among speakers with 3 minutes maximum per person. Written input can also be submitted.

Whatcom County Councilmembers have been invited to attend the meeting. It is likely a quorum of the Council will attend.

Thank you for helping to end homelessness in Whatcom County