



Whatcom County Housing Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date/Time/Location: January 14, 2020 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM – Virtual Meeting

WCHAC Members Present: Anne Deacon, Michael Jones, Samya Lutz, Emily O’Connor, Diana Phair, Paul Schissler, Brien Thane, Kyle Christensen, Karen Burke, Tara Sundin, Marc Walker, Satpal Sidhu

WCHAC Members Absent: Debbie Paton, Hadrian Starr, Michael Parker

Whatcom Co. Health Dept. Staff/Guests: Ann Beck, Chris D’Onofrio, Barbara Johnson-Vinna, Ashley Geyleynse, Teri Bryant, Helen Campbell, Susan Wright, Ashley Thomasson, Behnoosh Armani, Michael Lilliquist

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/Who
A. Call to order, introductions	Introductions commenced and quorum present.	Brien
B. Agenda Review	Chris proposed to form an ad hoc nominating committee to review applications and nominate new members to the committee. This was added to the agenda before adjournment.	Brien
C. Public Comment	Michael Lilliquist reminded the group that the Homeless Strategies Work Group has a subcommittee that will be looking at funding strategies to be spent on housing and homelessness. There is overlapping and parallel efforts going on in another committee in the county. Behnoosh Armani and Ashley Thomasson were introduced as prospective committee applicants.	Brien
D. New Business <i>a. December 2020 Minutes Approval</i>	Paul moved that the minutes from the December meeting be approved with one correction (August, on first page) Michael J seconded the motion. The committee voted and the motion passed.	Ayes: 11 Abstain: 0 Motion Passed
E. Reports/Discussion <i>1. Eviction Prevention Strategies</i>	The eviction moratorium has been extended until March 31 st . The committee has received info about evictions resolution program that Washington state courts have initiated with dispute resolution centers, but only operating in six counties so far. Paul spoke with Whatcom County Dispute Resolution Center who already provides landlord tenant dispute resolution services. There’s hope that the program could be extended to Whatcom County to relieve the court systems if there is funding, and if it is state mandated. Many agencies are working to prevent	Paul



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	<p>evictions and there is concern about what will happen when it ends. There is an estimated 180k households that are behind in rent in the state. Paul will report back new information at the February meeting.</p> <p>Last week the county received \$6.8m with new stimulus package in the form of a grant from the US Treasury Department. There was discussion about what the funds can be used for, and coordination about dispersing the funds to members of the community who need rent and utility assistance. Ann Beck clarified that the county hopes to contract the money out with a partner who can administer the funds. One difference from the last round of eviction prevention funding is that landlords can apply on behalf of their tenants. There is no action required by this committee to determine how the funds will be spent and administered. The Lummi Nation has also applied for federal funds for rental and utility assistance, estimated to be about \$4m.</p>	<p>Everyone</p>
<p>2. Affordable Housing Update from the Executive</p>	<p>Executive Sidhu talked about his two priorities this year: affordable housing and economic development. There is a healthy EDI fund that can be used for affordable housing on top of commercial development. The Executive suggested allocating some monies received for rental assistance for tiny homes and affordable housing for the workforce, and urged this committee to consider projects in small cities in our county, and to get away from Bellingham centric. The Executive answered questions from other committee members. It was clarified that this purview of this committee is the broad range of affordable housing, and not just focused on homelessness. The focus is providing permanent housing solutions for low- and moderate-income community members.</p>	<p>Satpal</p>
<p>3. 1406 Discussion a. Short term needs and goals b. Medium range goals c. Allocation proposals</p>	<p>We will receive 1406 revenue for 20 years, and it's not a large sum of money. Can be used for rental assistance, construction of capital, and operation of new permanent supportive housing facilities. We know we need funding to support outside of the City of Bellingham. Bellingham levy helps with capital. The committee discussed allocation of 1406 funds, including planning in five-year increments, bonding against the funds, and leveraging funds at the state level. Samya provided an update from the Affordable Housing Planning Group where flexibility and leveraging funds at the state level were discussed.</p> <p>The committee then discussed non-capital use options before discussing a proposed split between capital and non-capital uses of the fund over a period of time. Samya clarified that the permanent supportive housing option is for new permanent supportive housing only, and cannot be used for existing permanent supportive housing. There is one permanent supportive housing project known to go under construction in the next couple of months.</p>	<p>Everyone</p>



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	<p>Tara reported there is not enough money from the state to support permanent supportive housing, so Bellingham’s levy has had to support the costs, but the programs are still not able to operate at the level that they should. Developers are less likely to build permanent supportive housing facilities when there is not enough money to support the existing facilities.</p> <p>The distinction was made between the \$6.8m for rental assistance being used for COVID specific reasons and what that looks like. The language from the US Treasury Office is generic, so may need to make some eligibility decisions as a community. Emily reported it was not as difficult as you might think to find eligibility with the last round of COVID rental assistance funds. There are also funds available for rental assistance that the county had before COVID, but it is unknown what the gap will be between COVID and non-COVID needs for rental assistance at this time, and 1406 could fill in the gaps.</p> <p>Once this committee passes allocation amounts, a notification will be sent to the general public about how many dollars are available and for what purpose. An informal process talking with agencies that are willing to put together a project would come next. Any large amount of funds to be used we will still need to put out a request for proposal, with County Council approving the recommended award.</p> <p>Tara motioned to set aside 40% of 1406 revenues from 2020 and 2021 revenue for a capital project outside of Bellingham, and that the committee continues the discussion for the remainder of the funds at the February meeting. Paul suggested a friendly amendment to add 2022 revenue, and seconded the motion. The committee continued to discuss the motion, and the work that can be done to prepare to complete the allocation recommendation at the next meeting. Michael J and Tara proposed a friendly amendment to include five years of 1406 revenue (2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024). Paul seconded the motion. The committee voted and the motion passed.</p> <p>Paul motioned to form an ad hoc group to report back in February on how to approach the issues around legislating new local revenue, including HB 1590, RCW 82.14.530, and other local options that the county and others could consider. Emily seconded the motion. The committee discussed the motion. The motion failed due to a lack of quorum. Discussions about local revenues can continue outside of this meeting, and interested</p>	<p>Ayes: 11 Abstain: 0 Motion Passed</p> <p>Motion Failed due to lack of quorum</p>

WHATCOM COUNTY
Health Department



Erika Lautenbach, Director
Greg Stern, M.D., Health Officer

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4. Nominating Committee	members can contact Chris who can form the group to discuss and report back at the February or March meeting. Tara, Emily, and Brien volunteered to serve as the nominating committee.	Chris
F. ADJOURN	10:00am	Brien
<i>NEXT MEETING</i>	Next regular meeting February 11, 2021, 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. <u>VIRTUAL</u>	