

Northwest Senior Services Board
May 9, 2023
1:00 pm – 3:30 pm
Hybrid Meeting

In-Person

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Mount Vernon NWRC Office
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Meeting ID: 814 4973 0953
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AGENDA

Agenda Topic	Action Required	Time
1. Call to Order Barbara Pesola, Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction of guests• Roll call• Review of March minutes• Announcements• Public Comment	Motion	1:00 pm – 1:05 pm
2. Executive Director Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agency Updates – Review	Information	1:05 pm – 1:25 pm
3. WA CARES – Long Term Trust ACT	Discussion	1:25 pm – 1:45 pm
4. Break		1:45 pm – 1:55 pm
5. Strategic Planning 2024-2027	Discussion	1:55 pm – 2:40 pm
6. Bylaws - Sub-committee Review	Discussion	2:40 pm – 2:50 pm
4. State Council on Aging Update (SCOA)	Information	2:50 pm – 3:00 pm
5. Updates from our Communities	Information	3:00 pm – 3:30 pm
6. Adjourn	Motion	

Anyone needing special accommodations to participate in a meeting should contact NWRC at least 48 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting.

For more information, please contact the NWRC office at (360) 676-6749
600 Lakeway Drive, Bellingham, WA 98225.

Northwest Senior Services Board Meeting Minutes

March 14, 2023

Members Present and via Zoom or Telephonically: Shirley Bennett, Doug Cornelsen, George Edward, Jana Finkbonner, Marshall Gartenlaub, Wendy Gilbert, Denise Irey, Mary Kanter, Bob Monize, Barb Pesola, Mike Shaw, Carl Bender, Georgiann Dustin, Jennifer Lautenbach, Stephen Shubert

Members Absent: Shirley Forslof, Jodi Sipes, Alberta Horn,

Staff Present: Amanda McDade, Bethany Chamberlin, Darla Smith,

Guest: None.

Call to Order (Barb Pesola) at 1:00 PM

Review of January 10th Minutes:

Motion put forward by the Board President, Barb Pesola to accept the minutes from the January 10, 2023, meeting. Motion was made to approve the January 10, 2023, meeting minutes by Bob Monzie, and seconded by Georgian Dustin. **Motion Passed.**

Announcements:

Georgiann Dustin thanked the group for going to lunch prior to today's meeting and voiced appreciation for everyone that was able to attend today's meeting in-person.

Steven Shubert shared that he was impressed with the group's advocacy efforts in Olympia. He would like to prioritize efforts around the lack of physical caregivers and trying to address the needs of seniors who are not currently eligible for case management services because they do not qualify for Medicaid. He believes there is a growing need for services in this group that will just continue to expand.

Jennifer Lautenbach reported that the Ferndale Senior Center Director resigned, if you are interested or know anyone that would be interested in filling this role, please reach out to them.

Executive Director Updates

Executive Director Updates were tabled until the next meeting.

W4A Advocacy Days

Bethany Chamberlain provided a brief overview of the NWSSB trip to Olympia on January 31st and February 1st. Bethany emailed the legislative staff that the Board members met with, thanked them for their time, and provided them with the Dementia Guide. Board Members agreed that the advocacy efforts were received favorably and overall seem supportive of our efforts to support both Health Homes and Case Management funding.

Bylaws

Some Board members voiced concern about the proposed updates to the bylaws. Some of which included not being aware that there were bylaws, concern about being in compliance with current bylaws, and why the proposed changes to the bylaws are being requested. Amanda McDade expressed the Agency has heard that some of the Board Members have concerns about the Boards role. While the mission and primary focus of the agency has not changed, many of the programs and funding sources have. The current bylaws have not been updated since 1998 and should be updated to reflect the changes at the Agency, State, and Federal level. The goal is to review and update the bylaws which will help provide better guidance for both staff and Board Members. There was discussion about Board Members taking an active role in updating the bylaws and it was proposed a sub-committee be formed to review the bylaws and report back at the next meeting with suggested changes. Jana Finkbonner made a motion to create a sub-committee to review the bylaws and come back to the group with suggestions which was seconded by Bob Monzie. Stephen Shubert and Marshal Gartenlaub opposed. **Motion carried.** Discussion followed. Committee members include Denise Irely, Bob Monzie, Barbara Pesola, Wendy Gilbert, Mary Kanter, Marshal Gartenlaub, and Jana Finkbonner. Bethany Chamberlain will schedule the first meeting. Darla Smith will email the Board Members Chapter 4 – Area Agency on Aging Advisory Councils, NWRC Mission, Values and Anthem.

NWSSB Committees

The Board reviewed the current roster and sub-committees. An updated sub-committee list will be emailed out to Board members. There was discussion around the best time to hold the sub-committee meetings. It was suggested to conduct the sub-committee meetings 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after the regular Board meetings.

There was discussion around looking at the challenges of the Older Americans Act and how older adults and people with disabilities qualify for services. It was felt that there is some political momentum that we should try to capitalize on.

There was discussion about how to address socialization issues since the pandemic, especially in rural areas like the ones our Board Members are advocating for. Bethany Chamberlain let the group know she is actively participating in a new state program that is focusing on this issue and can bring information back to the Board at a later date.

State Council on Aging Update (SCOA)

Georgiann Dustin recommended that Board members go to the Washington State Senior Citizens' Lobby website <https://waseniorlobby.org/> and listen to the monthly updates and sign up for the monthly newsletter. She advocated the need for more dementia education and support at all levels. She informed the group that people on Medicare have Kaiser insurance and have to receive all their medications through the mail. This is not meeting the needs of this demographic. SCOA has written a letter informing Kaiser that this service is not adequate and advocating for change.

Updates from Our Communities

- **Lynden Senior Center** – Is seeing significant growth and continues to grow their programs focusing on providing reliable information, a place to gather, and be involved in activities.
- **Sumas Senior Center** – Is looking for someone to help with the meal programs. They are open on Monday and Wednesday. The center has lost many members who have relocated after the flooding.

- **Everson Senior Center** – Is working with Lynden Senior Center for a way to grow their program, they have a small group and the meal program is not attracting new members.
- **Orcas Senior Center** – Is having meals again on Monday and Wednesday in person.
- **San Juan County Senior Center** – Is having the meal programs on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays but is drive up only.

Adjourn:

A motion was made to adjourn by Bob Monzie and seconded by Jana Finkbonner. **Motion passed.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:02 PM

Darla Smith, Administrative Manager

Reviewed and approved by the Northwest Senior Services Board at the May 9, 2023, meeting.

Barbara Pesola, NWSSB Chair



Memorandum

TO: Northwest Senior Services Board

FROM: Amanda McDade, Executive Director

DATE: May 9, 2023

SUBJECT: WA Cares Fund – Long-Term Care Benefits

In 2019 Governor Inslee signed the Long-Term Services and Supports Trust Program Act. This legislation provided a tool to collect funds to help pay for long-term care for eligible individuals living in Washington State. Contributions will begin July 1, 2023, with benefits becoming available July 1, 2026.

Please review:

1. WA Cares Fund - Long-Term Care Benefits website
www.wacaresfund.wa.gov
2. Please watch some of the videos and specifically review the “Planning for your Care” section
<https://wacaresfund.wa.gov/planning-for-your-care/>

We will be running through some scenarios to garner your feedback on the how the future of this benefit will look from a potential beneficiary’s point of view. This will help NWRC plan ahead for our role in this monumental change to the long-term care world in Washington and in our region in particular.



Memorandum

TO: Northwest Senior Services Board

FROM: Amanda McDade, Executive Director

DATE: May 9, 2023

SUBJECT: Strategic Plan Outline

Background

We have begun working on our strategic plan process, which is on a four-year cycle. Our next plan will be for the period 2024 - 2027. The planning schedule is as follows:

- **March – June:** Data gathering, regional key informant discussions, Northwest Senior Services Board engagement
- **July:** Draft prepared and circulated
- **August – September:** Public comment
- **October:** Final draft prepared, reviewed by NWSSB
- **November:** Final Draft submitted
- **December:** Final draft presented to NWRC Governing Board for approval

We have tentatively identified six issue areas that will be the focus of our planning. The first five of these issue areas are carried over from our previous strategic plan.

1. **Building Long-Term Services and Supports to meet Complex Needs**
2. **Providing Information and Access**
3. **Supporting Family Caregivers and People Impacted by Dementia**
4. **Transportation**



5. Coordination with Tribes

6. Behavioral Health & Social Isolation

Other areas of focus may emerge as our process unfolds, but I request your approval to use these as a starting point.

PROPOSED MOTION:

The Northwest Regional Council authorizes staff to proceed with development of the 2024 - 2027 Strategic Plan, with focus on the following areas:

- 1. Building Long-Term Services and Supports to meet Complex Needs**
- 2. Providing Information and Access**
- 3. Supporting Family Caregivers and People Impacted by Dementia**
- 4. Transportation**
- 5. Coordination with Tribes**
- 6. Behavioral Health and Isolation**



NWSSB Strategic Plan Focus Group

Strategic Planning Session
May 9, 2023

Name: _____

Issue #1

Building a Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) System to meet Complex Needs

Long-term services and supports (LTSS) are the services and supports used by individuals of all ages with functional limitations and chronic illnesses who need assistance to perform routine daily activities such as bathing, dressing, preparing meals, and administering medications. NWRC manages a large caseload of individuals with Medicaid who receive case management to maintain the services that allow them to stay in their homes.

As you think about this general area over the next four years:

1. Do you have any concerns/worries?

No Yes

Comments:



Data indicates that people in this region use community based LTSS less than in other areas.

2. Do you think that we can do something different in our region to address this?

No Yes

Comments:

Care Coordination

Health Homes services are designed to support you with your ongoing chronic conditions and help you meet the health goals you select. Health Home services improve coordination of medical and social services needs such as long-term care, mental health, medical specialists, and housing.

3. Are there populations that would benefit from care coordination that are not receiving services right now?

No Yes

Comments:

4. NWRC also has staff stationed in both St. Joseph Hospital and Skagit Regional Health Center who assist community members who are in the hospital. Do you have any experience of knowledge of how well this service has been received?

No Yes



Comments:

Behavioral Health

Substance Use - NWRC started its Recovery Care Coordination (RCC) program to support navigation of the available recovery services for people in Skagit County. Data suggests that substance use by older adults and people with disabilities is often underreported and may contribute to challenges that these individuals face in remaining independent.

5. Do you agree with that substance use is an underreported issue for older adults and people with disabilities?

No Yes

Comments:

6. Are there underlying causes for why it is underreported?

No Yes

Comments:



7. Are there steps that we can take in response to this issue?

No Yes

Comments:

Four horizontal lines for text input.

Mental Health

NWRC started its Mental Health (MH) program to make counseling services more available to older adults and people with disabilities who may not otherwise be able to access traditional (in-office) therapy services.

8. Do you think that the MH program has been working?

No Yes

Comments:

Four horizontal lines for text input.

9. Are there unmet needs in the community?

No Yes

Comments:

Four horizontal lines for text input.



Issue Area #2 Providing Information and Access

Aging and Disability Resources (ADR) provides guidance in finding and accessing information and programs that provide services and options to meet the needs of an individual or family. NWRC has ADR specialists in the Bellingham and Skagit office, and we contract with partners to provide this service in Island and San Juan County.

As you think about this general area over the next four years:

10. Do you have any concerns/worries?

No Yes

Comments:

11. What are the best/strongest things about the current system that we should build upon?

Comments:

12. Are there populations that would benefit from services that are not receiving them right now?

No Yes

Comments:

13. Is there something else our region/local communities can do to improve access?

No Yes

Comments:

14. Is homelessness/unstable housing an issue for older adults and people with disabilities?

No Yes

Comments:

15. Are there underlying causes?

No Yes



Comments:

16. Are there steps that we can take in response to this issue?

No Yes

Comments:

Issue # 3

Supporting Family Caregivers and People Impacted by Dementia

Dementia Related Services

NWRC has been 1 of 2 AAA's in the state to receive a dementia catalyst grant. It started nearly 2 years ago, and we have good reason to believe it will be extended for the next two years.

As you think about this general area over the next four years:

17. Do you have any concerns/worries about the availability or awareness around Dementia issues in our 4-county region?

No Yes

Comments:



18. If NWRC wanted to position itself as a regional “go-to” agency for the support of people affected by dementia, what would that look like to you?

Comments:

Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP)

FCSP helps family caregivers provide as much care as possible, for as long as possible, for family members who need help accomplishing daily activities. NWRC’s FCSP is estimated to be reaching only about 1% of the projected number of family caregivers in our region.

19. Do you agree that FCSP is not utilized by the majority of families that might be eligible for the program?

No Yes

Comments:

20. Are there underlying causes for why it is underutilized?

No Yes

Comments:

21. Are there steps that we can take in response to this issue?

No Yes

Comments:

The WA Cares Program

The WA Cares benefits will be available on July 1st, 2026.

22. Do you have an understanding of the WA Cares program and how it may provide new options for LTC services? If so, how do you think this program will be received by the community?

No Yes

Comments:

23. Do you think WA cares will provide new opportunities for NWRC?

No Yes

Comments:

Issue Area #4 Transportation

In our context, transportation could involve any rides or services provided through our brokerage and contracted network. This includes Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation or NEMT, but also looks to other possibilities.

As you think about this general area over the next four years:

24. If you have experience or knowledge of this program, what are the best/strongest things about the current system that we should build upon?

No Yes

Comments:

25. Are there gaps in the current transportation network?

No Yes



What types of services may need to be added?

Comments:

Four horizontal lines for text input.

Issue Area #5 Coordination with Tribes

NWRC has a Tribal Liaison who works with the 6 local tribes to enhance service delivery of NWRC services, in addition to identifying areas where our agency can be doing more.

As you think about this general area over the next four years:

26. What are the best/strongest things about the current system that we should build upon?

No Yes

Comments:

Four horizontal lines for text input.

27. Do you think that we can do something different in our region to address this?

No Yes



Comments:

Issue Area #6 Behavioral Health & Social Isolation

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the already troubling numbers of those suffering from behavioral health issues and/or social isolation or lack of connection. Nationally, this has been identified as a major area of concern, yet it is not an easy problem to address on a local level.

As you think about this general area over the next four years:

28. Do you think that we can do something different in our region to address this?

No Yes

Comments:

29. Is there anything else that you want to add that has not been asked in the questions above?

No Yes

