

**MINUTES OF THE
NORTHWEST REGIONAL COUNCIL
July 18, 2024**

BOARD MEMBERS:

Island County Commissioner Melanie Bacon, San Juan County Council Member Jane Fuller, Skagit County Commissioners Peter Browning and Ron Wesen, Whatcom County Executive Satpal Sidhu, Whatcom County Council Member Mark Stremmer

STAFF: Amanda McDade, Sarah Silvas, Darla Smith, Holly Fletcher-Love, Shu-Ling Sun, Elizabeth Anderson

PUBLIC: none present

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 am by San Juan County Council Member Jane Fuller.

There was no public comment.

Consent Agenda

Motion was made by Whatcom County Executive Satpal Sidhu and seconded by Skagit County Commissioner Ron Wesen to approve the Consent Agenda items a – f; Approval of the Minutes, April 18, 2024; Approval of March, April, and May Expenditure Listings; 2024 Budget to Actual Report; Routine Contracts and Amendments; Resolution #20-02; County Contribution. Motion passed unanimously.

Executive Directors Report

NWRC Executive Director Amanda McDade reviewed the legislative advocacy efforts including:

- \$12 million in funding was approved to support nutrition programs in 2024 to meet the rising costs and rising need. This was one-time funding. The state AAA association (W4A) is asking for \$13 million to continue supporting the nutrition programs for both congregate and home meals.
- The request to fund \$2.58 million for In-Home Case Managers for Long-term care clients without caregivers was not successful. We know that this need will continue to grow as more people are growing older, there are more clients with dual diagnoses, and more younger people need care and are not connected to services. This is compounded by the fact that there are fewer people available to be caregivers. This ask is being refined for the coming legislative session.
- Amanda McDade attended the Governors Aging and Longevity Summit last month. WA state is working to become a more aging friendly state. There was discussion about the aging graphics provided in the packet, the continued shortage of caregivers, and some of the barriers to becoming a caregiver.
- The agency has been looking at joining an insurance pool. While the agency was approved, we discovered the pool didn't provide some of the coverage that we currently have and want to keep. It was determined that the agency should stay with our current insurance provider.
- Amanda McDade informed the Board that we have been working with legal counsel to update client forms to include more specific language to inform clients that we are not a caregiving agency, and that we can not work with POA's that we are unaware of nor have the forms for. The form is being finalized and will then be implemented.

- TSOA is a smaller state program that has been out about 6 years. Amanda McDade informed the group that we will be providing those services for both San Juan and Island Senior Resources as they don't have many clients and have found it difficult to support.
- NWRC has been providing nursing services at the jail for the last 10 years. We are working with the County to determine the best path forward for medical services. While nursing services is not a primary focus of the agency, we have placed a Care Coordinator at the jail. This aligns well with the Agency's mission and is a necessary service.

Regular Agenda

a) WA Cares – Initiative 2124

Amanda McDade reviewed Initiative 2124. The initiative would make participation optional. It is believed if this passed the program wouldn't be funded at a level to make it a viable program. There was discussion about how the model works if WA Cares continues. Amanda McDade explained that WA Cares fits well into everything NWRC does to support our communities with Long Term Care options and care. ADR staff provide benefit counseling and WA Cares would be another benefit option.

b) Proposed Staffing Adjustments (moved to front of meeting)

Amanda McDade reviewed the requested staffing change memo including:

- 2 Care Coordinators due to shifting influences on Medicare plans increasing Care Coordinator Case Loads.
- 1 Care Case Management position due to increasing caseloads. The additional position will assist in keeping caseloads at a ratio of 1:75.
- Reclassify 1 existing FTE Case Manager to a Lead Case Manager in Community Programs
- 1 Agency Administrator role to provide management level support

There was discussion around tracking rates. Peter requested a report at the next meeting on how the costs of an FTE are covered with cases. There was discussion about the cost and availability of funding next year.

Motion was made by Whatcom County Executive Satpal Sidhu and seconded by Skagit County Commissioner Ron Wesen to authorize the proposed staffing adjustments resulting in the addition of 2 FTE in the Care Coordination unit, 1 FTE in the Case Management unit, 1 reclassification to a Lead Case Manager and the addition of 1 FTE Agency Administrator effective August 1, 2024. Motion passed unanimously.

c) Supplemental Budget Resolution #24-01

Executive Director Amanda McDade reviewed the supplemental budget memo.

Motion was made by Skagit County Commissioner Ron Wesen and seconded by Skagit County Commissioner Peter Browning to approve Resolution 24-01 for the 2024 Supplemental Budget #1. Motion passed unanimously.

d) Emergency Response Planning

NWRC is reviewing our Emergency Response Plan. We are looking at our plan and are interested in how it interacts with the counties. There was discussion about emergency planning and how to work with the counties.

County Information Sharing:

Board Members shared current issues in their areas including jail planning, emergency shelter, budgeting, changes in the legal system, and Medical Officers in the 4 areas.

Announcements

None made

Executive Session

An Executive Session was called at 11:45 am to discuss potential upcoming litigation. The Chair estimated the session would last up to 15 minutes.

The regular board meeting reconvened at 11:55 am

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:55 am.

Prepared and submitted by:

Darla Smith

Darla Smith, Administrative Manager