

Northwest Senior Services Board Meeting Minutes

September 10, 2024

Members Present In-person, via Zoom or Telephonically: Carl Bender, Shirley Bennett, George Edward, Marshall Gartenlaub, Mary Kanter, Jennifer Lautenbach, Stephen Shubert, Holly Robinson, Lucretia Devine, Jana Finkbonner, Jodi Sipes

Members Absent: Georgiann Dustin, Mike Shaw

Staff Present: Amanda McDade, Bethany Chamberlin, Jeri Johansen.

Guest: Morgan Hendricks and Gail Leschine-Seitz

Call to Order at 1:02 PM

Review of the July 23, 2024, Minutes:

Motion put forward by Carl Bender to accept the minutes from the July 23, 2024, meeting. Motion was granted by George Edward, seconded by Jennifer Lautenbach. **Motion Passed.**

Announcements: Amanda and Bethany would like to offer up themselves to meet at your local senior center with its members if you would like them to come. Holly Robinson invited them to "The Point" (Point Roberts) with details to be worked out in the near future.

The Dementia Support Northwest Fall Conference 2024 will be at the Holiday Inn and Suites on October 4th.

Public Comment: None.

NWSSB Meeting Schedule

Committee Discussion: Information

For Committees – Each lead should set up meeting dates and notify members. If the meeting cannot be held in person, NWRC staff will help in setting up Zoom meetings for you.

- **Social Isolation**

Committee Members: Marshall Gartenlaub, Jen Lautenbach, Mike Shaw, Mary Kanter

Presentation of focus for group. How to reach out and locate seniors who are suffering from Social Isolation.

The amount of publication and focus on Social Isolation in the past year has grown significantly with rapid growth of isolation among the senior population. More than 30% of health risks to seniors can be linked to Social Isolation. While seniors want to stay in their homes, staying in the home is can be a barrier to socialization.

- Meals on Wheels, EMS and Police, and agencies such as NWRC might gather information regarding seniors in their areas living in isolation. Discussion regarding referral avenues and ideas for these agencies to utilize. NWRC has a referral form for emergency services to utilize.
- RSVP Retired Senior Volunteer Program, designed to help seniors get connected with volunteer opportunities which fit their interests. Jodi would like to apply for a grant to start a program for volunteers but needs a sponsor/non-profit.
- Possible opportunities for intergenerational interactions with high school or college students.

Discussion ensued, ranging from processes to gather information regarding seniors living in isolation to possible solutions in volunteer opportunities.

- **Save our 'selves'**

Survey for San Juan Island-Domestic Services

Committee Members: Stephen Shubert, Carl Bender, Lucretia Devine, Mary Kanter

The focus of this group is to obtain funding for caregivers for Island seniors who cannot afford to pay privately on San Juan, and possibly other islands.

The goal is to keep seniors from having to "off-island" when they age due to the inability to get caregivers or assistance in domestic and maintenance needs. Canvassing to determine the number of seniors per island with a target age of 70+ who need assistance and the type of assistance that is needed.

- Mullis Senior Center is possibly willing to help with a survey.
- Possibility of a 501C3, willing to be involved in fundraising to help supplement caregiving wages.
- Suggestion of a hotel/motel tax or something of that nature.
- Possibility of a subscription non-profit or volunteers for domestic and maintenance help for seniors in need.

George Edward provided information on Bellingham at Home a subscription service that helps seniors.

- **Advocacy** – No update at this time. Bethany will forward "Save the Date" information to Committee Members.

Break: 2:35-2:40

Strategic National Plan Feedback

Members held a lively discussion voicing likes and dislikes regarding the Strategic National Plan. Some felt that it leans toward community collaborative housing, which would not work well in rural areas. Liking that it addresses the sharp increase in senior homelessness. It is fact heavy, a positive. Would like to have more information of possible solutions to issues for seniors. It is a complex problem with legislators focused on where the needs are greatest. This is where advocacy is valuable. Making your voices loud to be heard.

Bethany will be sending members a link to the ACL (administration for Community Living survey relating to the Strategic National Plan.

Executive Director Updates: Information

- Agency Updates – Elizabeth Anderson is leaving as Clinical Director and NWRC is looking for a replacement along with a Nursing Supervisor. Amanda apologized for not being able to be at this meeting of the NWSSB in person due to the need for coverage of these positions.
- Legislative Priorities continue to be nutrition and the need to bring down the client to case manager ratio.

State Council on Aging Update (SCOA)

- Senior Lobby Fall Conference – Information should be circulated soon. No other updates at this time.

Updates from our Communities:

Whatcom County: There will be a vaccine clinic in October at the Lynden Senior Center.

Lynden:

Mount Vernon:

Orcas:

Snohomish/Island Counties: Amanda, Bethany and Georgiann met with seniors at the senior center for a non-agenda, conversation and lunch. The kitchen staff was even brought out and introduced, joining in with the entire group. Discussion was lively and centered around access and health as well as many other topics.

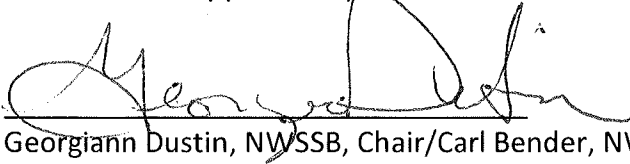
Adjourn: Motion

A motion was made to adjourn by Carl Bender, seconded by Jodi Sipes. **Motion passed.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:05 PM

Jeri Johansen, Administrative Assistant

Reviewed and approved by the Northwest Senior Services Board at the November 12, 2024, meeting.



Georgiann Dustin, NWSSB, Chair/Carl Bender, NWSSB, Vice-Chair

