

Northwest Senior Services Board Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2025

Members Present In-person, via Zoom, or Telephonically:

Mary Kanter, Shirley Bennett, Carl Bender, Lucretia Devine, Stephen Shubert, Gail Leschine-Seitz, Mike Shaw, Morgan Hendricks, Jodi Sipes, Georgiann Dustin, George Edward

Members Absent:

Holly Robinson, Marshall Gartenlaub, Jana Finkbonner, Jennifer Lautenbach

Staff Present:

Bethany Chamberlin, Darla Smith, Melody Woodrich

Guest:

None

Call to Order at 1:10 PM

Review of the November 12, 2024, Minutes: Motion put forward by Georgiann Dustin to accept the minutes from the November 12, 2024, meeting. Motion was made by Shirley Bennett and seconded by George Edward. **Motion Passed.**

Nomination of Chair/Vice Chair

A motion was made to nominate Georgiann Dustin as Chair and Carl Bender as Vice-Chair. Motion was made by George Edward and seconded by Shirley Bennett. **Motion Passed.**

Announcements: None

Public Comment: None.

Updates from Community:

Shirely Bennett – Island County added some activities for Seniors including aerobics, tai chai, and yoga.

George Edward – shared there is a new senior center planned to go in across the street from the mall in Bellingham.

Bethany Chamberlin – shared that Dementia Support Northwest has keys in hand and construction has started for free short-term respite, dementia support, and education at the mall in Bellingham. The Board voiced a desire to go on a field trip to the center. Requested the field trip be scheduled on a day that the board is meeting.

Caregiver Outreach

Melody Woodrich provided an overview on the growing need for caregivers. She discussed the shift in population, with more aging seniors that need caregivers and less available people to provide the care. This

shift is causing an increased demand for non-traditional caregivers. Melody asked the Board to help advocate for caregivers. A request was made for the Board members to receive the statistics from the presentation to help illustrate the scope of the problem. There was discussion about bringing this issue to the community previously and the feeling of no action coming from it. Melody Woodrich confirmed that this can be a challenge with outreach activities. We are hopeful that WA Cares will renew interest in it as money becomes available for caregivers. Melody Woodrich will send the caregiver outreach information out to Board members.

Legislative Advocacy Planning

Bethany Chamberlin informed the Board that Senior Advocacy Days are February 5th & 6th. NWRC continues advocacy efforts with W4A promoting services and funding for all AAA's in WA State. Board members that want to participate will leave on February 5th, first thing in the morning. When we arrive in Olympia we will go to lunch, debrief, and determine which Board members visit which legislature. After lunch we will meet with legislative staff and then have dinner together as a group. The morning of the 6th the Board will get coffee and have the second set of meetings. There will be time for Board members to explore the campus, visit individual offices and build relationships. Board members who voiced interest include: Lucretia Devine, Mary Kanter, Shirley Bennett, Gail Leschine-Seitz, and Georgiann Dustin. Bethany Chamberlin will email everyone to determine interest. Please respond to the email. On January 21st there is an informational session hosted by Kathy Knight of W4A to review priorities. The Board requested to receive the priorities in a bulleted list.

Stephen has been working with the Mullis Center and their staff to gather statements from seniors about why the nutrition program is important to them. He asked where the information should go. Bethany Chamberlin will reach out to Ryan to see where it should be sent.

Updates from our Committees: Information

- 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.
Stephen Shubert emailed a report done by the Mullis Committee that spoke about starting a program for aging in place statewide. Through this process it was determined that robust services are not happening. The Mullis Center is looking at obtaining more information about the Village-to-Village program as a possible solution to help seniors age in place in rural areas. Once the Mullis Center adopts their budget they can move forward to get the Village-to-Village manual. This should happen sometime in March.
- Social Isolation
Committee Members: Marshall Gartenlaub, Jen Lautenbach, Mike Shaw, Mary Kanter, Jodi Sipes
Presentation of focus for group. How to reach out and locate seniors who are suffering from Social Isolation.

No update
- Advocacy – Discussed above.

State Council on Aging Update (SCOA)

Georgiann reported they have been on break and will be meeting again in 2 weeks. Have developed their legislative priorities.

Updates from our Communities:

Whatcom County:

Lynden:

Mount Vernon:

Orcas:

Snohomish/Island Counties:

Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn was made by Shirley Bennett, seconded by Mike Shaw. **Motion passed.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:04 PM

Darla Smith, Administrative Manager.

Reviewed and approved by the Northwest Senior Services Board at the March 11, 2025, meeting.

Georgiann Dustin, NWSSB, Chair