

Northwest Senior Services Board Meeting Minutes

May 12, 2026

Members Present In-person, via teams, or Telephonically: Mary Kanter, Carl Bender, George Edward, Georgiann Dustin, Jana Finkbonner, Mike Shaw, Morgan Hendricks, Shirley Bennett, Lucretia Devine, Stephen Schubert, Grethe Cammermeyer, Michael Johnson, Laura Castro-Benzing

Members Absent: Jodi Sipes, Jennifer Lautenbach, Gail Leschine-Seitz

Staff Present:

Amanda McDade, Katie Durbec, Bethany Chamberlin, Chelsie Brann

Guest: Marianne Bender

Quorum at 1:01 PM

Review of the March 10, 2026, Minutes: Motion made by Morgan Hendricks to accept the minutes from the March 10, 2026 meeting and seconded by Carl Bender. **Motion Passed.**

Announcements: None.

Public Comment: None.

Committee Updates:

Save Ourselves: The committee has shrunk recently due to some health issues among the members. Because of this, the timeline for action items has been stretched out. The focus right now is on services and membership dues. Dues, grants and donations are the most common ways for committees like this to receive funding.

San Juan County is looking to reduce funding to public health and senior services due to their budget. They are seeking donations currently. Although this is not good news, sometimes budget cuts can greatly increase motivation and awareness for fundraising.

Grethe Cammermeyer mentioned that the Village to Village model is working well in South Whidbey for the people who pay into it.

There was discussion around the affordability of the monthly membership costs and how that can sometimes be a barrier for people.

Social Isolation: This committee met recently and the focus is still on establishing the call line. They have started doing some research, and have reached out to Orcas Island about their call line. Mike Shaw has seen a great need in Skagit County and the idea is to try something in Skagit, start small, and get volunteers. They will start with a small number of callers, maybe 5, from both our board and NWRC to start making these calls. There is an idea to turn some of the socially isolated people receiving the calls into the callers later on. There was some discussion around the art of conversation and how a training around this could be beneficial.

Mary K shared that the Camano Center has a project called “morning calls” where their volunteers call every day. NWRC has referred folks to this program.

Grethe C pointed out there are two separate issues: the morning calls intention may be just to check in on a person’s welfare, where the social calls are to build a relationship over time.

Laura Castro-Benzing would like to be on the committee and be a caller.

Next steps are to establish the 5 callers and start the pilot in Skagit.

Legislative Advocacy: The state is meeting with us tomorrow. Kate White Tudor and the legislative committee met last week. We are trying to finalize Health Homes becoming a part of the state’s maintenance budget so we don’t need to advocating for it every year. This will be our focus for the next year.

Outreach – NWRC will be coming out to the Mullis Center this summer. Amanda M encourage board members to continue to invite NWRC out to community centers and events.

NWSSB Term Renewals:

Katie D checked in on the 3 board members with expiring terms. Stephen Schubert would not like to renew, Jana Finkbonner would like to renew. Katie will reach out directly to Jodi Sipes, who was not in attendance.

Executive Director Updates

Amanda McDade provided agency updates including:

NWRC recently hired a new Tribal Program Specialist who started last week.

We have found a new provider for the Skagit nutrition program. SCOA (Skagit Council on Aging) will be carrying the program forward and NWRC is working alongside them to get them up and running.

Skagit Recovery Care Coordination and Skagit Hospital Care Coordination contracts have ended due to Skagit County budget issues.

A lot of new work and programs are coming our way including Rural Health Transformation funding.

Washington received a pot of this money and some of this has been allocated to the AAA network. We will be able to use some of this funding for our dementia program. There is also mobile assistance van funding coming. We are in conversation with both Island and San Juan Counties who are both majority rural areas.

HRSN (Health Related Social Needs) is another pot of money coming our way, through Medicaid waiver dollars. We have launched this program and are currently serving clients with this money including home-delivered medically-tailored meals.

The last big program to mention is WA Cares which NWRC has been working on for a long time. We are ready to launch this program this year.

There was some discussion around a registry of vulnerable people who rely on electricity to power oxygen devices, etc. There isn’t a specific list and every community handles this a bit differently.

FCS Supported Employment Program

Chelsie Brann presented an overview our NWRC's new supported employment program including eligibility, services, and the service area.

There were some questions from the board about expanding to other counties and working with other providers.

Information to be sent out to the board via email.

Updates from our Communities:

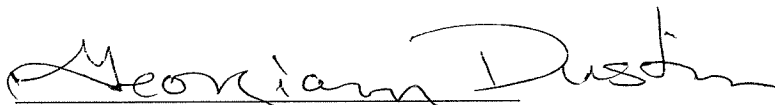
None

Adjourn:

The meeting adjourned at 3:30pm

Katie Durbec, Agency Administrator

Reviewed and approved by the Northwest Senior Services Board at the July 14, 2026 meeting.



Georgiann Dustin, NWSSB, Chair