

**Aging Well Whatcom**  
**August 2, 2019**  
**Bellingham Food Co-op Community Connections Building**

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## MINUTES

### Attending:

Becky Kirkland, PeaceHealth Center for Senior Health  
Carol Nicolay, Health Ministries Network  
Chris Orr, Whatcom Council on Aging  
Dr. Chao-ying Wu, Chuckanut Health Foundation Board/Family Care Network  
Dr. Dave Lynch, Chuckanut Health Foundation Board/Family Care Network (retired)  
Heather Flaherty, Chuckanut Health Foundation  
Marie Eaton, Palliative Care Institute, WWU  
Mary Anderson, Whatcom Transportation Authority  
Rachel Lucy, PeaceHealth  
Ryan Blackwell, Northwest Regional Council  
Sarah Lane, YMCA

### Regrets:

Amy Hockenberry, Whatcom County Health Department  
Elaine Cress, Whatcom Council on Aging  
Heidi Bugbee, Generations Early Learning & Family Center  
Mary Carlson, Community Member  
Melinda Herrera, Rosewood Villa  
Tonja Myers, Christian Health Care Center  
Wendy Lawrence, Opportunity Council

## Welcome, Introductions and Reflection

Lara welcomed the group; members introduced themselves and shared their experiences and learnings from “road testing” the Blueprint. Some highlights:

- People are excited to hear about Aging Well (mentioned more than once).
- Transportation/accessibility and housing are issues people are concerned about (mentioned more than once).
- Desire for services at home vs. “fitting into the system;” desire to stay where they are.
- Talking with people is a reminder that the older adult population is diverse in many ways. This diversity can be called out in the framing of the entire Blueprint (right now it’s within a couple of the individual focus areas).
- It’s important to have a short introduction to begin the conversation and get people interested. The talking points were too detailed and took the conversation into the weeds.
- Talking about “growing older” vs. “aging” seems to help people relate to the topic, especially younger people.
- Church health ministry: “It’s about time!” There were questions about the most important priorities in the Blueprint. Personal stories soon emerged...helping folks get to medical care, helping with transition from hospital to home, end-of-life support for families.

- PeaceHealth Patient Advisory committee members had questions about how the information was gathered – and appeared satisfied when the process was explained.
- Whatcom Council on Aging Board members raised city planning issues and strongly endorsed the area of navigating information and services.
- Seniors Centers expressed feelings of being left out of the planning process.
- Colleagues not connected to aging issues responded with “mild interest” – seemed to relate to aging in the context of what they may be seeing in national headline news.
- Center for Philanthropy partners [Whatcom Community Foundation and United Way] expressed keen interest, acknowledging that older adults haven’t been a priority.
- Colleagues at NW Regional Council had questions regarding new services, where funding would come from, if efforts will be sustainable. Confusion and questions about the layers of community projects (how does Aging Well fit in with the North Sound Accountable Communities of Health, A-Team, etc?). There was a general response of, “Tell me when it’s time to get involved.”
- Some people had questions about how the Blueprint will be used, what the actual impact will be (some version of this mentioned more than once).
- People living alone and concerned about their needs as they continue to age seemed especially interested in the Blueprint.
- Some shared their experience of being dismissed as an older adult (older adult + female), not being listened to.
- There is a disparity in serving men and women. Men are less likely to seek services – another aspect of diversity within older adults.
- Concern about the time it takes for services to recognize and respond to older adults’ needs – circumstances can change quickly, and programs and services may not be able to meet new needs as quickly as would be ideal.

## Review and Approve Minutes

Minutes from June 7, 2019 were approved as written.

## Outreach and Communications – Updates and Discussion

The Outreach and Communications Committee (Dave, Marie, Heather, Ying, Ryan, Mary A, Chris and Elaine) has met twice since the June meeting. Decisions and progress:

**Official name** is Aging Well Whatcom (AWW) – we’ll strive for using this consistently.

**Blueprint:** Lara combined the six focus areas and did a first round of editing, and now Chris will review. The goal is to send out the draft the middle of next week, and have copy to go the graphic designer by the end of the week [Aug 9<sup>th</sup>]. Lara expressed concern with over-editing the committees’ work; Ryan stated it’s valuable to have a fresh eye to edit.

Carol reported she was asked if the focus areas are ranked in terms of priority; she thought not, but asked for verification. The focus areas are NOT in rank order; however, numbered items are easily interpreted as ranking, so it’s important to use bullets instead and clearly state that the focus areas are not in order of priority. Even without numbers, sequencing can influence perceptions of importance – what is the “right” way to sequence the focus areas within the Blueprint? Members commented that Information and Navigation is very tangible; Housing has high felt importance; Cultural Shift is the context for all the other

areas. It was agreed that Cultural Shift should come first, followed by Information and Navigation; there was a suggestion that Housing and Intergenerational Community be back-to-back.

**Summit:** The group reviewed the draft desired outcomes and agenda. Heather, Ryan and Lara will be detailing this out more. Carol suggested “talking tables” for each of the focus areas where committee members would be available to talk in more detail with anyone who is interested.

Heather presented drafts of the Summit invitation postcard and attendees noted their comments and suggestions. The postcards can also be given with personal notes on them; email invitations will also be sent.

→ **ACTION:** Heather will work with the graphic designer to finalize and print postcards.

Heather also reported she purchased the domain name **AgingWellWhatcom.org**, and has created the email address [AgingWell@ChuckanutHealthFoundation.org](mailto:AgingWell@ChuckanutHealthFoundation.org). [We’re official!]

**Conversation and Presentation Guide:** the revised version has a 30-second elevator speech, “starter questions” if there’s time to engage in a conversation, condensed talking points, and THE ASK: to participate in the Aging Well Summit on September 27. Ying suggested adding the list of Aging Well Coalition partners on the other side.

→ **ACTION:** Lara will make this addition.

**Outreach, conversations and invitations:** The current Summit invitation list was posted on the walls. Lara requested attendees to make any corrections or additions, and to indicate who they could personally reach out to prior to the Summit. Email invitations will also be sent.

### Aging Well Whatcom Next Phase (post-Summit)

Heather recapped the conversation that has happened to date: there is consensus that the Summit is a launch (not an end point), that it’s important to keep the Blueprint alive, and that the CHF’s continued support would be valuable.

She invited thoughts on the benefits of continuing the Aging Well Coalition, and how Chuckanut Health Foundation could support Aging Well Whatcom. Attendees shared:

- The Aging Well Coalition provides a “container to hold the work.”
- Staffing and facilitation “glue” for the Coalition is helpful.
- Aging Well will need to have a website built and maintained.
- It will be important to bring people back together after the Summit – perhaps have a series of community conversations, one for each focus area.
- It’s good to have CHF be the face of Aging Well Whatcom -- its name recognition is an asset (compared to Aging Well Whatcom, which people have never heard of).
- For government entities, grant applications/funding requests often require a non-profit partner, so the association with CHF is valuable.
- It would be great to funds for AWW members to go to conferences, or bring speakers or trainings to Whatcom County.

As part of the Summit, announcing the CHF’s commitment to support the work going forward would help build energy and momentum for implementing the Blueprint.

- ➔ **ACTION:** Heather will prepare a proposal for the CHF Board regarding financial support for an ongoing Coalition. The Board meets on August 29; Ying and Dave will be there as Board members, and Marie is already slated to attend to talk about Aging Well.

The group discussed the possibility of CHF also granting funds for projects that advance Blueprint strategies. A larger fund could be developed with other organizations contributing to it.

- PeaceHealth's Community Collaboration Committee would entertain a proposal.  
➔ **ACTION:** Rachel and Heather will work on this.
- The Whatcom Community Foundation and United Way might be willing to be funding partners.  
➔ **ACTION:** Heather will follow up with Mauri Ingram and Peter Theisen about
- Family Care Network could be asked to contribute.  
➔ **ACTION:** Heather will prepare a proposal for the CHF Board which meets on August 29. Ying and Dave will be there as Board members, and Marie is already slated to attend to talk about Aging Well.

### Wrap up and next steps

Attendees corrected and added to the Summit invitation list, and noted who they could personally reach out to prior to the Summit.

- ➔ **ACTION:** Lara will send each person a list of the people they signed up to contact.

Next Coalition meeting: Friday, September 6, 9-11 AM.