



Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board

Monday, January 22, 2024 4:30-6:00 pm
Hybrid Meeting – via Zoom and In Person

Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present:

Raegen Miller
Zosia Sherwood
Jennifer Thistle

Valerie Billmire
Gina Bring
Bruce Tabb
Todd Donovan

Board Members Absent:

Board Members Excused:

Lyndsey Forman-Murray

Guests Present:

Beverly Porter, The Arc
Kristen Nguyen, Cascade Connections
Grant Zezula, DDA
Paul Simon, DDA

Shannon Neely, DDA
Amanda Gates-Portillo, DVR
Myla Musselwhite
Stephanie Jones, DDA

Staff:

Jessica Lee, Program Specialist
Beth Decker, Coordinator
Naomi Seigel, Program Specialist

Amanda Burnett, Supervisor

 **1. Call to Order & Introductions**

The meeting was called to order and introductions were conducted. Quorum was present.

 **2. Minutes Approval**

Minutes for 11/27/23 approved.

3. DDAB Nominations-Discussion

- **New DDAB applicant – Welcome Myla Musselwhite.**
 - Myla introduced herself as a para educator in the Ferndale School District and is the parent of an adult son with DD.
- **Co-Chair Nomination – passed**
 - Lyndsey was nominated as Co-chair. A motion was made by Bruce and seconded by Jennifer. Motion passed unanimously.



4. County Updates

- Unseen Documentary
 - Paul shared there were two screenings at the Pickford. An estimated 140 participated.
 - Panel included three parents of adults with DD, Paul from DDA and George Beanblossom from Cascade Connection.
- DD Request for proposals
 - Jessica that 2 proposals were received through the RFP put out in December and the County is in the midst of review with applicants.
 - Evaluation committee included Bruce, Raegan, Jessica and Amanda.
 - Bruce shared that he felt that the process was a good one. Appreciated everyone's perspective.
- County plan – Timelines and Process. Current plan can be found [here](#).
 - County plan is on a five-year cycle. Current plan ends in June, and hopes to pull together a small ad hoc committee to help with design and review. If you are interested in participating contact Jessica.
 - The board will have an opportunity to review and provide input. The goal is to have a draft available in May with a plan finalized in July.
 - The County is in the midst of gathering and updating data for the plan and updating system descriptions which have changed since the last plan
 - First step for the group is to update the County Guiding Principles.
 - Valerie, Bruce and Gina expressed interest in the committee.
- Inclusive Services Discussion
 - Jessica facilitated a brief discussion on inclusion, what do we mean when we say "inclusion" and what does it look like?
 - Inclusion is central to the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) Guiding Values. " Jessica shared a link to the Massachusetts Institute for Community Inclusion – [What We Mean When We Talk About Inclusion](#)
 - Jessica reflected back on a report sponsored by the Governor's Development Disabilities Council entitled "Effectively Addressing the intersections" and shared the following quote.
 - "The degree to which [people with disabilities] participate in society-school, work and community life-...is significantly influenced by the cultural roles and expectations placed upon them" -.
 - Everybody comes at how they participate in community life with their own lens.



- The group discussed what inclusion means to them. Reflections included:
 - Inclusion has improved, in particular with elementary aged children.
 - Once adults with DD age out of the school system, friendships become more challenging and caregivers increasingly become primary social contacts.
 - Reciprocity is key. The Community shares responsibility for inclusion.
 - Part of our job as a system is to educate employers and the community about the gifts and contributions of people with DD. Community is better when everyone is welcomed and included.
 - Conversations about equity, diversity, inclusion, have also benefited people with disabilities. We should take the opportunity to educate.

- The group discussed the relationship of choice to inclusion. Discussion included the following:
 - The importance of “nothing about us without us”
 - . How do we measure that inclusion is occurring?
 - Distinguishing accommodation vs inclusion.
 - Creating separate events for people with DD vs. adapting and making existing events accessible.
 - How do we education people who don't work with the DD Community? Sometimes people are scared to include because they think they are going to make a mistake. Education is key.
 - Examples from the Institute for Community Inclusion were shared.
 - the importance of self-empowerment and self-direction. We need to beware of learned dependency on caregivers. How do we empower the individual to become more independent and make those friends and be confident in a community setting?
 - Sometime helping people to understand what they like is the first step. (and supporting folks to have a wide range of experiences to know what they like and what they don't.)
 - Kristen shared an example of a gentleman joining a bowling league through his church which lasted for years. He didn't know how to bridge that gap in asking how to join the bowling league, and his provider helped connect him and then stepped back.
 - What works for one person doesn't necessarily work for another. Individualized supports are critical.



5. Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) Updates

- Paul shared that new DDA No Paid Services case managers have been hired and caseloads assigned. Now everyone will have a case manager who they can call who will check in on an annual basis.
- Jessica provided context. During the recession, around 2009, case management was cut for those not receiving paid services as a cost saving measure. It's taken over a decade to get case management back for all DDA eligible clients.

6. 2024 Legislative Overview

- **[Find your legislator](#)**
 - Jessica shared resources on how to find your legislator and reminded the board that they are welcome to communicate with your legislator as an individual but not as a representative of the board.
- **[Arc Bill Tracker](#), **[Hearings of Interest](#), **[Legislative Notebook](#)**
 - Jessica shared and reviewed the bill tracker and other resources developed by the ARC of Washington State
 - Jessica encourages everyone to watch a public hearing if they have never done so. Links to video testimony can often be found at the bottom of the [bill's page](#)****
- **[House Bill 2080](#) – **Establishing Day Habilitation for persons with DD**
 - This bill seeks to add “day habilitation” to DDA services.
 - Paul explained that previously it was referred to as adult day care, and is a distinct service from respite and Day habilitation as it does not provide therapeutic services (like speech and occupational therapy.)
 - Adding this service would require approval from the Federal Government.
 - We’ll have more information on the status of this bill in March, since it is a short legislative session,
 - Jessica shared that part of the challenge for DDA is how to balance the needs of individuals (maximizing independence) and the needs of families for respite, as the primary supports in the person’s life.
 - Bruce advised you can sign up for legislative alerts on specific bills.
 - Raegan shared that the legislative notebook on the Arc’s site includes a survey with nearly 400 respondents. It has nice quotes and is a good resource.**

7. Public Comment

No public comment

WHATCOM COUNTY
Health and Community Services



Erika Lautenbach, MPH, Director
Amy Harley, MD, MPH, Co-Health Officer
Greg Thompson, MD, MPH, Co-Health Officer

Next Meeting: Monday March 25, 2023. 4:30-6:00pm.
Respectfully submitted by Jessica Lee, Program Specialist.

HD Staff
Jessica Lee

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