

**MINUTES OF THE
NORTHWEST REGIONAL COUNCIL
December 15, 2022**

BOARD MEMBERS: Island County Commissioners Melanie Bacon and Jill Johnson, San Juan County Council Members Cindy Wolf and Jamie Stephens, Skagit County Commissioners Peter Browning and Ron Wesen, Whatcom County Executive Satpal Sidhu, Whatcom County Council Member Kathy Kershner

STAFF: Amanda McDade, Shu-Ling Sun, Elizabeth Anderson, Sarah Silvas, Katie Durbec, Melody Woodrich-Fernando, Darla Smith

PUBLIC: Barb Pesola, San Juan County, NWSSB Chair

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 am by Island County Commissioner Jill Johnson.

There was no public comment.

There were no announcements.

Consent Agenda

Motion was made by Whatcom County Executive Sidhu and Seconded by Skagit County Commissioner Stephens to approve the Consent Agenda items a – g: Approval of the Minutes, Regular Meeting July 28, 2022: Approval of June, July, August, September and October 2022 Expenditure Listings: 2022 Budget to Actual Report: Amended Cancellation of Warrants, Resolution #22-05: Annual Internal Fiscal System Review: Resolution #22-06: Appointing an Investment/Cash Management/Finance Officer for NWRC: Routine Contracts and Amendments. The Motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

NWRC Executive Director Amanda McDade reviewed legislative priorities for the upcoming year which include requesting a significant increase for Health Homes statewide. In addition, the language that regulates rate increases for long term care needs to be adjusted. The legislation is currently written so the DSHS rate rises with inflation, but the AAA rate does not. We need this language to be updated so the AAA rate matches DSHS to appropriately cover program costs and maintain a lower caseload. A request was made from the Board to have the bills forwarded to them as soon as they become available.

Overall, the Agency is doing well. The last year has been tumultuous worldwide. The agency has seen a high level of stress and burnout. At the end of the year, we are coming out in a strong position and are one position away from being fully staffed. The HR Department has been able to reduce our hiring time from 12 weeks to 6 weeks, maintaining the same quality of candidates. We continue working in a hybrid work environment (2 days in office, 3 days at home) which has been very successful.

NWRC Executive Director Amanda McDade shared the preliminary Annual Report with the Board. There was a request to include levels of service by County.

Regular Agenda

a) Proposed Benefit Changes

NWRC Executive Director Amanda McDade reviewed the proposed benefit changes which include adding 3 wellness days and reducing accrued vacation cash out to one time a year. The Board discussed and agreed that encouraging staff to take vacation time is important. There was discussion around how to best incentivize taking vacation time, liability, compassionate leave, and the current cash out policy.

Motion was made by Whatcom County Executive Sidhu to table the proposed benefit changes until the next meeting. San Juan County Council Member Stephens seconded the motion.

Discussion followed: Delaying the proposal will allow the Board members to further review. Any action taken at the next meeting should be retroactive to January 1, 2023. **Motion passed. San Juan County Council Member Wolf opposed.**

b) Reclassification

NWRC Executive Director Amanda McDade provided an overview of the need to reclassify the Family Caregiver Support (FCSP) and Tailored Services for Older Adults (TSOA) Program Specialists. Reclassifying these positions would more accurately reflect the work the staff are doing and would align with other agency staff.

Motion was made by Whatcom County Executive Sidhu to authorize the proposed reclassification for FCSP and TSOA Program Specialists to the classification of Case Managers. San Juan County Council Member Stephens seconded the motion. The Motion passed unanimously.

c) NWRC 2023 Budget, Resolution #21-07

NWRC Executive Director Amanda McDade presented the 2023 Budget. The budget represents an 8% increase from the current year. Discussion followed.

Motion was made by Skagit County Commissioner Ron Wesen to approve the 2023 Budget as presented, including a cost-of-living adjustment of 5% for NWRC employees. San Juan County Council Member Stephens seconded the motion. The Motion passed unanimously.

d) 2023 Proposed Meeting Schedule

The Board reviewed the 2023 proposed meeting schedule.

Motion was made by Whatcom County Council Member Kershner to approve the schedule as presented. Skagit County Commissioner Browning seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Issues

County Information Sharing

It was noted that this is San Juan County Stephens last meeting as his term is ending. The Board Members thanked him for serving his community and on the Board.

Executive Session

- a) An Executive Session was called at 11:21 am to discuss legal updates and Executive Director Performance. The Chair estimated the session would last up to 30 minutes.

The regular board meeting reconvened at 11:45 am.

Motion was made by San Juan County Council Member Wolf to accept the 2-year contract extension with NWRC Executive Director Amanda McDade as presented. San Juan County Council Member Stephens seconded the motion. The Motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:50 am.

Prepared and submitted by:

Darla Smith

Darla Smith, Administrative Manager