

**MASON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
HOUSING AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH BOARD**

415 N 6th STREET, SHELTON, WA 98584

Zoom Meeting held

**Regular Meeting Minutes
January 25th, 2023**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by Commissioner Shutty

2. ROLL CALL:

Board Members:

- Kevin Shutty, BOCC
- Beau Bakken, Citizen
- Peggy VanBuskirk, MC Board of Health
- Eric Onisko, Mayor City of Shelton
- Amanda Gonzales, Citizen
- Mark Freedman, BH Administrative Service Organization (ASO)

Staff Members:

- Todd Parker, MC Public Health
- Melissa Casey, MC Public Health
- Haley Foelsch, MC Public Health
- Christina Muller-Shinn, MC Public Health
- Jamie Ellertsen, MC Public Health

Guests/Public:

- **Tammy Bacigalupo**, Community Lifeline
- **Athena Ayres**, Community Lifeline

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Motion was made by Beau Bakken and seconded by Peggy Vanbuskirk to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

Motion was made by Mark Freedman and seconded by Peggy Vanbuskirk to approve the regular minutes from October 26th, 2022. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Meeting Topics:

a. Fiscal Report

Melissa spoke with Casey Bingham the day prior to this meeting and was informed that he is not ready to produce the fiscal report for this month of the quarter but will be ready in February. Report topic discussion is to be tabled until next meeting (02/22/2023).

b. Community Lifeline Bed Count

Melissa Casey shared a document showing the bed capacity for Community Lifeline, the daily percentages of beds occupied, and how many subjects are turned away from the facility and connected to other resources. The current bed capacity of Community Lifeline is 35 beds, with the highest occupancy count between December 22, 2022 and January 22, 2023 being 34/35 occupied.

At this stage, Community Lifeline is on track to underspend 2163 so a meeting is on the agenda for February to discuss strategies on how to fill the facility to maximum occupancy. Athena Ayres replied to the information stating that capacity has increased from what was known prior at Community Lifeline and is now 35 beds, and it is taking some transitional time to inform the houseless population of said increase.

For turnaway's, those turned away from the facility, she clarified that these cases happen due to a subject having needs for care higher than the facility could provide, for example, medical care. She emphasizes that subjects are more than welcome to come back to the facility after being medically treated when necessary. Another impact for turnaway's is people seeking shelter that do not want to relinquish weapons they may have, or drugs and alcohol, as none of these are allowed in the facility. She stated that last night, 1/24/2023, Community Lifeline did meet full capacity at 35/35 beds occupied. 3 people had to be turned away after the max occupancy following outreach from Tammy and others visiting homeless encampments where contact with at least 17 people in need of immediate shelter occurred. With this outreach session and community knowledge, it is thought that word will be getting out that more space is available, and the turn-out rate should increase, keeping beds filled in the facility.

When it comes to outreach, the outreach process can be very time consuming and requires a lot of safety planning. It was made clear that any person turned away never leaves empty handed, instead they are provided information to other resources, including transportation. If a person needs a higher level of care than the facility can provide, Community Lifeline tries to coordinate this care for the person before having to turn them away. If a person has a weapon or drugs and alcohol they are not ready to part with, the facility tries to safely plan around that knowledge as well as trying to build a relationship with the person in hopes that over time they may come back and feel safe enough to let go of those things to come in to the facility. Unfortunately, one individual assaulted one of the staff members so badly that they had to be hospitalized for months due to a brain bleed. In cases like this, the offending individual simply cannot enter the facility especially when the victim is still employed there.

Kevin asked, while reflecting that occupancy was over 30 beds filled since the middle of January, how this is being communicated to emergency personnel like Macecom, Fire, and other local entities on what bed availability exists. Athena mentioned that this information is provided to those entities and also updated daily on whether or not beds are available. She highlighted the direct relationships her and Tammy hold with emergency services and law enforcement for when emergency domestic violence situations occur, where these entities have access to their personal phone numbers and it is not uncommon to get calls in the middle of the night, which they welcome.

Tammy mentioned a weekly e-mail gets sent with occupancy information as well and she would gladly increase the frequency of the e-mails if necessary.

c. HBHAB 2022 Annual Report

Melissa shared her screen and mentioned the survey from the last meeting, discussing priorities for the board and what the group would like to include in the annual report that goes in front of the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).

d. Housing Needs Assessment - Affordable Housing

Melissa stated, there was a special meeting in November, I believe they finalized it, and the HNA will need to go to BOCC for final approval. It's on the agenda today to open conversation about the 1/10th of 1% tax.

Kevin stated that we touched on it a bit, but this is another tie on bill 1590. We have a conversation about affordable housing from the builder's perspective, concerning permit fees, etc. whereas our Housing Needs Assessment is focused in addition to that the *need* for shelter space, ALICE members, etc. We want to limit the amount of people who must rely on shelters. The county doesn't necessarily build projects, but we have an opportunity to partner with people who do. We will be asking commission to support multi-family support units, including units for the developmental disability community, we need to see that happening elsewhere in the county for other segments of the population. This 1/10th of 1% tax will help fund projects like that. So, I am asking the group, is there an interest in recommending this to the commission in a clear and concise manner?

Peggy replied that she always thought this was the right way to go, it may be a new tax but what is the cost of the people that are out on the streets, and the effects of them trying to meet their own needs, affecting the housed around them.

7. GOOD OF THE ORDER: Called by Commissioner Shetty

8. CLOSURE- Meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.

9. NEXT MEETING— February 22nd, 2023