

MASON COUNTY LEOFF DISABILITY BOARD

**MEETING MINUTES
MASON COUNTY COMMISSION CHAMBERS
February 10, 2015**

Members Present: Mike Longan – Firefighter Representative; Nick Patterson – Law Enforcement Representative - Chair; Sylvia Florez-Milsom – Member at Large; Randy Neatherlin – Mason County Commissioner; Mike Olsen – City of Shelton Commissioner; Diane Zoren, Secretary

Chairperson Nick Patterson called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Olsen/Longan moved and seconded to approve the January 6, 2015 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Old Business:

Continued Discussion of Long Term Care Policy

Nick Patterson opened the discussion of establishing a limit for long term care by referring to a court case *Backhouse vs. City of Seattle* which states mutual consent is needed to change LEOFF benefits.

Nick stated when he was hired he was given a set of rules that dictate his pension and medical benefits and he believes that constitutes a contract.

Sylvia stated they are trying to establish a limit for long term care, not deny benefits.

Mike Longan strongly emphasized that the entire LEOFF Board is not supportive of setting limits.

Randy asked where it says that LEOFF 1 members are guaranteed unlimited medical benefits.

Nick referred to the LEOFF 1 handbook.

Mike Longan provided history of his firefighter employment that included full benefits and RCW 41.26 talks about the LEOFF 1 minimum health benefits.

Randy read from the LEOFF 1 handbook that the LEOFF Board can designate the service provider.

Mike Longan stated he was never told the LEOFF Board can tell a member where they can receive service. He stated he doesn't believe the members will abuse the benefits.

Randy stated it is not his intent to restrict where long term care services can be provided, but to set a limit and any cost above the limit is the member's cost.

Nick stated he believes if a medical doctor recommends a certain level of nursing home care, the LEOFF Board cannot restrict the benefit.

Mike Olsen stated the LEOFF Board would not restrict coverage if it is medically prescribed.

Diane circulated a sample policy that was adopted from Pierce County and suggested the Board may want to consider adopting an application process with no dollar limit.

There was discussion of the City of Shelton's long term care plans, which vary depending on the member's health.

Mike Longan stands behind his belief that LEOFF 1 benefits would never be limited.

There was a discussion of the expectations of benefits and how to set an allowed amount based on an average of area skilled nursing care facilities. The goal is to allow the member use the facility of their choice.

Nick opened the meeting for comments from the audience.

Ed Haefliger stated it is not limited where LEOFF 1 members can go for care. They have had a member go into assisted living and the bill was paid. He questioned the jurisdiction to determine an average. The Board has never set a location limit. He understands the Board member's concern with how much to pay but he believes the Board is on a slippery slope if they establish a limit.

Neatherlin/Olsen moved and seconded to circulate the proposed policy to all members and schedule the March meeting to allow time for comment. Motion carried.

New Business:

Executive Session - Review of Bills

The Board met in Executive Session from 8:50 a.m. to 8:53 a.m. to consider bills submitted for payment.

Neatherlin/Olsen moved and seconded to pay the bills as submitted. Motion carried.

Calendar: Next LEOFF meeting is tentatively scheduled on March 4, 2015.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 8:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Zoren
LEOFF Board Secretary

Approved:

Nick Patterson
Chair