**Washington Food Coalition Board Meeting**

**Minutes**

**January 26, 2022**

**Present:**

Andra Smith, **Chair;** Robert Coit, **Vice Chai**r; Jennifer Hardison, **Treasurer**; Tione Shoemaker, Bob Mark, Ahndrea Blue, Michelle Douglas, Alan Hamilton, Kris Van Gasken, Kellie McNelly, Jeff Mathias, Chris Benson, Chris Hatch.

**Absent**: Ken Trainor, **Past Chair**; Ariel Medeiros**, Secretary**; Dan Lancaster, VJ Meadows and Peny Archer.

Andra Smith, Chair, started the meeting at 10:40 am and shared an

**I. Executive Committee report.**

1. The Executive Committee reviewed the board meeting agenda.
2. Reviewed the financial review and learned what recommendations the CPA firm made.
3. Confirmed that we will host an in-person conference in April in Wenatchee
4. Reviewed WFC Advocacy Committee Legislative agenda
5. Nutrition Policy – Trish asked the Executive Committee to consider making the Nutrition Policy Committee an Ad Hoc committee of the board. Public Health - Seattle King County has offered an additional $13,000 and has recommended that we hire a contractor to continue the work of the committee. The Executive Committee is recommending that the board approve this ask.

***Cecilia Chavez moved to accept the Nutrition Policy Committee as an Ad Hoc Committee of the WFC Board. Chris Hatch seconded the motion. There was no opposition.***

1. Transition Committee **-** Andra proposed that the board accept a proposal from the Executive Committee to hire a contractor to continue the work of the Transition Committee. Trish is checking into different consulting firms to get quotes. Andrea asked if we had a budget? Trish and Andra felt that we could afford this endeavor.

***Ahndrea moved to give the Transition Committee authority to explore a contract to implement the transition of the Board. Chris Hatch seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.***

Alan asked what would the consultant do? Ahndrea responded that a consultant would work with us to make bylaw revisions, making them more effective to address behaviors. Look at the size of a board to encourage participation and clarify expectations. To make the board more diverse with backgrounds and people. Create an orientation process.

**II. District reports:**

**District 1 –** Tiane Shoemaker reported their clientele has decreased but is starting to see a surge. She believes the decrease was due to the decrease in SNAP and EBT benefits. Pantry is full.

***District 2 –*** Bob Mark reported they’re having capacity challenges for space and staff. They are working on a regional warehouse with the regional Community Action Councils, but he feels everyone is stretched. Farm to Food Bank efforts is moving along and processing frozen foods.

**District 3** -No one available to report.

**District 4** - no one available to report.

**District 5** - Cecilia Chavez reported they have a lot of food. Conducting drive thru food distribution method and remain busy. Planning to hold nutrition classes for mothers and children.

District 6 - No report

**District 12 -** Alan Hamilton needs to leave early so we moved him up in the order. Alan reported everything is going well but continues to be overwhelming and challenging. He continues to be amazed at how generous donors and volunteers are.

**District 7** - Jeff Mathias reported volunteers are dwindling. Providing Technical Assistance to their food pantries. Folks are glad to be back in person. Lots of food. Numbers are up and down but manageable.

**District 8-** Chris Hatch reported COVID exposures have increased amongst staff and volunteers. Programs are not in a rush to go back to indoor shopping model. They polled their clients and 80% of their clients prefer the drive-through method so they are continuing to distribute food that way. Lots of food. They received a staffing grant from Work Source that’ll give them 20 to 22 FTE workers to work in area food banks.

**District 9** - Trish reported for District 9, she reported that Dan Lancaster at the Federal Way food bank was serving Afghan refugees staying at a local hotel and putting together culturally appropriate bags for them. Client Intake Systems discussed - many using PantrySoft and Link2Feed. Two Enumclaw food banks are talking about merging. Needs for staffing, volunteer and equipment.

**District 10-** Ahndrea Blue reported that they’re seeing a decrease in food but increased clients and increased diversity in clients in Pierce County. They have capacity needs at our need of PPE supplies.

**District 11**- Kellie McNelly reported that there had been flooding in South Thurston County and in the town of Rochester, where her food bank is located. About 100 households reported flooding with $1.4 million in damage. Costco gave them water and the Lewis County Food Banks also experienced flooding. They worked with the County, United Way to help families with the disaster.

***District 12 –*** Allen reported earlier.

***District 13 -*** Chris Benson and Andra Smith. Andra reported that for Clallam and Jefferson counties they are seeing an increase in services and adding staff. Several programs in Clallam are increasing their footprint and purchasing new buildings, larger spaces and have received funding for paid staff.

Chris Benson reported that they just finished up a busy holiday season and received many generous donations from their community. They have developed creative partnerships and are sharing resources. Sharing perishable food with local churches meal programs. Looking forward to the conference.

**Kris Van Gasken – At-Large** Kris reported that they have seen an increase and haven’t heard about the status of this summer’s meals. When Child Tax Credit went away the number of families increased. Programs received State and United Way funding to purchase culturally appropriate food. Food from local grocery stores is low.

**III. Minute approval- All**

***Chris Benson moved, and Cecilia Chavez seconded that the minutes be approved.***

**IV. Treasurer's Report *- Jennifer Hardison***

Jennifer shared that the Financial Review is complete and was sent out to all the board members for review. The Financial Review has been reviewed by our bookkeepers, Trish and the Executive Committee. The 990 should be done shortly.

Jennifer also shared the recommendations from the financial review. Jones and Company recommended that we have a Conflict-of-Interest statement, which I believe we do have but we need each board member to sign off on a conflict-of-interest statement annually. We also need to have in place a Whistle Blower Policy and a Record Retention Policy.

$179,662 current balance in our checking account. Trish and Jennifer would like to recommend that we move $30,000 from the general checking account to the Money Market account.

Jennifer reviewed the October, November and December Profit and Loss and Balance Sheets. There were no issues reported. There was a question about including the budget on the Profit and Loss statements. Trish responded that it was her fault. The bookkeeper was extremely busy in December and just got the financials to her just yesterday and she did not catch that. She will ask the bookkeeper to add that and will send those out. A question was asked about the missing AP line, as well as a management letter for the financial review. Trish also will follow up and see if there is one to send out.

***It was moved by Robert Coit to approve the Treasurer's report as presented. Chris Hatch seconded. No opposition.***

Andrea had a question regarding expenses for the virtual conference. Trish shared that the expenses were fairly minimal for the virtual conference and that the expenses were included in the evaluation report that she sent out but will get those expenses out with the updated financials.

**V. Director’s Report:**

Trish did not share a membership number - new EFAP leads and membership is coming in slowly. She reviewed her report. Lots of folks taking the FBCC. Quarterly newsletter was sent out in December. Training was held on developing an Accident Prevention Plan. Website was updated. WSDA completed the program monitor for the coalition.

**VI. Committee Reports:**

1. **WSDA and Food Assistance Advisory Committee:**

Kim shared several handouts included with these minutes).

She shared PowerPoint slides on:

* Information on canceled TEFAP truckloads about 15% of total.
* Broader input on fruits and vegetables from TFAP Committee members. James does a 12-month order. Join committee - contact James.
* Flexible funding grants – awarded first round of flexible funding grants in the amount of $4 million but asks totaled over $16 million. There was a regional perspective and funds were awarded to programs in and out of the food assistance program network. HAH oversaw the smaller grants, under $5,000. Kim shared the award amounts and programs that received the Flexible Funding Grants but asked that we keep them confidential for now. Next round of grants will be for April, May, and June. She shared the flexible funding grants wins and opportunities.
* She also shared a summary of different grants that are currently available to hunger relief programs across the State.
* Kim provided a look at TEFAP funding forecast-support to increase TEFAP is needed. Trend lines are going down.
* Budget update (handout)- a couple things they are working on is to be able to advance funding for contractors and create a rollover function for FY 2023.
* Kim also shared more detail on the $70 million and reported that there will be a meeting this Friday at 10a.m. so individuals can give input for this ask. Most funding will go to Capacity grants.

David Bobanick with Harvest Against Hunger developed a report analyzing the capacity survey data. The report is now available on the HAH website.

Michelle reviewed the Food Assistance Advisory Committee agenda and raised a question Intake Group will meet to further discuss the 400% level for TEFAP and reduce client barriers.

Michelle raised the question that she has heard: *How are we going to bring all these different hunger relief groups (in and out of the Food Assistance programs) together?* Katie Rains shared that many programs that were not a part of WSDA’s Food Assistance Program, applied for the Flexible Funding Grants. What can WSDA do to identify these programs, who are they? How can they incentivize bringing those local programs in?

Katie also shared that they have received increased inquiries about PPE and the correct approach, at this time, is to contact your local Emergency Operation Center. If they are not able to give supplies, please let Katie know. They will continue to try to resource resources for us.

1. **Conference Committee:**

Kris reported that we are moving ahead with an in-person conference April 21 and 22nd in Wenatchee. There will be a board meeting the morning of the 21st and then training in the afternoon and the next day. If you have training ideas, please let Trish know. Alan asked if we have a break-even number. Trish responded that this past year has been quite challenging to determine what our break-even number will be. We believe we have enough sponsorship money, registration fees and reimbursement from the state that we will definitely be covering our expenses. We try to offer this conference and make it affordable for all to attend and it isn’t considered a fundraiser for the coalition.

As mentioned at the last board meeting, we are hoping to make this conference a time for networking and seeing people in person and want to make it fun and relaxing for our members. We will be offering head and shoulder massages as well as head shots. The registration fee will be $100 plus we will offer a Thursday night dinner which will be an additional $20, if folks choose to attend.

1. **Advocacy Committee:**

Andra welcomed and thanked Steven Curry and introduced him to the board as our new Advocacy Committee Chair. Robert Coit started and shared that Claire Lane and Aaron Czyzewski are part of today’s report. Robert shared the Washington Food Coalition legislative agenda that he put together which includes two asks,1. Holding up the WSDA asks and 2. Electronic and translated Universal School Meals application.

Steven shared that the intent of this committee to inform decision makers on key issues and to promote greater awareness of the need of the food distribution system. We are all advocates. Take action on legislation on items that affect our clients. Specific items of our agenda:

The WSDA request is a very large request made up of two items. 1). ***We Feed Washington*** budget ask is $15 million for current year, plus an additional $22 million ask for FY 23 and

2). **Capacity Building Grants budget** request of $17.625 M and 3). A statewide multilingual online tool (school meals application) HB 1833 and expansion of the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program and free school meals HB 1878.

**Claire Lane, Director of the Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition (AHNC)** joined us to share and review AHNC’s legislative agenda and talk about Hunger Action Day. Claire reviewed the legislative agenda:

**HB 1878/SB 5798:** expand free school meals for Washington kids. The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) allows certain high need high poverty schools to serve free meals to all kids, without having to fill out a meal application. These bills require every school that is eligible to use this provision to participate. A combination of state and federal funds would ensure schools receive the highest possible USDA reimbursement for all meals served. This would cover an additional ~650 schools and 92,000 more students. It's a step towards free meals for all.

**SB 5785:** Extend Transitional Food Assistance (5 months of food stamp benefits) to more families with children who are transitioning off TANF, so families don’t face a hunger cliff.

**HB 1755:** Creates a multilingual, family-friendly online portal for school meal applications, or - in the case of schools using Community Eligibility - to collect household income information for students. This creates a simplified and easy-to-find way for families (and organizations that help low-income families) to provide the info schools need for school meal eligibility.

**Emergency Food Programs at WSDA:** Budget request for food banks and community-based emergency food organizations: $58 million for We Feed Washington program, and $17.125 million for resiliency/capacity grants.

**Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program:** Budget request: $400,000 to serve 7,100 more seniors with about $40 per household per year. These funds also will help transition the program from paper checks to EBT cards, as required by both WIC and Senior FMNP. (This was also included in Governor supplemental budget proposal)

As usual the Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition agenda has anti-poverty priorities and the WFC are asked to help carry those along:

**Budget request: $560,000 to expand access to Basic Food Education and Training** (BFET) for immigrants who are enrolled in state-funded food stamp program. Washington’s BFET program is a partnership between DSHS, all community and technical colleges, and many nonprofit organizations partnering to provide job training to people enrolled in food stamps. BFET is nationally recognized, yet the Legislature has added no money to the program for a long time. This investment would create parity for qualified immigrants to participate.

**HB 2048:** TANF provides monthly cash assistance and support services for families with children with incomes around 30% FPL, but families have a lifetime limit of assistance of only 60 months in their lifetime. This bill would reinstate state policies that would allow exemptions to the 60-month limit if a family is facing hardship (e.g. homelessness, mental illness, etc.).

**SB 5838:**Add to monthly grant to subsidize diapers for TANF families with a child aged 3 and under.

**HB 2075:** Creates a standard of service for DSHS, including providing multiple access points for their services - phone, online *and* in person assistance. Currently there are long waits on the phone and Community Service Offices have been closed since March 2020.

**HB 2009:** Creates a guaranteed basic income pilot; cash assistance provides dignity, flexibility and autonomy for people in poverty. The bill died in committee, but advocates are asking for funding a pilot in the budget.

The Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition is committed to supporting a fair and balanced state tax system that creates a prosperous, healthy, hunger-free Washington and opposing cuts to the safety net for low-income Washingtonians.

**HB 1878/SB 5798** -expand free school meals for Washington kids. If a school were eligible to do community eligibility, then they have to provide free meals. State and Federal funds would pay the difference. This would cover 750 schools and 95,000 students. It's a step towards free meals for all.

**Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program**

400,000 in government governor supplemental budget to serve 7,100 more seniors. Claire also shared that WIC and Senior farmers market are moving away from checks to EBT cards about $40 per household per year.

Aaron from Food Lifeline thanked Claire for all her work.

Robert Coit closed the loop and asked that the board approve the Washington Food Coalition legislative agenda.

***Robert moved; Cecilia Chavez seconded that the board approved the recommendation.***

Robert reminded the Board that permission was given to Trish and the Advocacy Chair to support or sign on to notices and alerts without board approval so they could respond in a timely fashion.

**VII. Guest Presentation: Feeding Military Families - Aaron Czyzewski, Food Lifeline**

The idea to work on Military Family Hunger started with support of the National Guard helping during the Pandemic. In 2021, Congress considered the Military Families Support Act, basic needs allowance, supported by Congresswoman Marilyn Strickland, passed Congress and is now a part of the military budget.

Aaron thanked Andrea Blue and Robert Coit for their creative ways of feeding active-duty military families in their communities. All of this interest in military hunger has led to state and local officials stepping up and making changes. Food drives have happened at JBLM. Currently there are 4 to 5 bills in the State legislative session seeking assistance to military families.

Board member, Chris Benson, District 14 will represent the WFC on Food Lifeline’s committee.

***Steven Curry, Chair Advocacy Committee, motioned to accept the Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition 2022 Legislative agenda. Cecilia Chavez seconded.*** There was no discussion, however it was asked that the minutes reflect that several board members have left the call/meeting or weren’t present today and may not have approved this measure.

*As a follow-up to this point, Steven Curry will reach out to all board members sharing the Anti-Hunger Nutrition Coalition agenda and the board vote*.

Meeting adjourned.

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Trish Twomey, on behalf of the Secretary

Please see attachments from WSDA.