

## Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE)

### Community Outreach Subcommittee

May 9, 2023, | 4:00-5:00 pm

## Minutes

**1: Welcome to the Community Outreach meeting** – Folks joined a couple minutes late coming from another meeting. Meeting called to order by Marsha at 4:03pm in the interest of time. Welcomed all.

**2: Roll Call** – Nathan and Lilly excused. Unexcused: Andy. Present: Emily (staff to GCDE), Ryan (Staff to subcommittee), Carley (local partner), William (local partner), Marsha (Chair of subcommittee), Eric (local partner), ASL interpreters (not introduced while working), Damiana (Chair of committee), Matt (subcommittee member on GCDE), Dave (local partner and new GCDE member), Elizabeth (GCDE Executive Director), and Warren (subcommittee member on GCDE, Vice-Chair of GCDE, Chair of AC subcommittee). Intros for the benefit of new members. Zach (community partner) joined as well.

**3: Housekeeping rules** – speak slowly for interpretation, say your time prior to speaking please.

**4: Community Partner Briefings on Ridgefield** – Marsha apologized for not briefing partners in advance on this request, but asked for their thoughts on Ridgefield as a location for our next event. Historically, events are done where there is lack of services in an area. We know Ridgefield is growing, but a lot of services are in Vancouver.

Carley confirmed that that the population is growing, but wondered how many folks with disabilities live locally, since the hub is truly Vancouver. That has been their experience. They understand what we are trying to do, but does wonder about the number of folks with disabilities locally, since we want folks to show up. There may not be a way to get exact numbers.

William added that the number and size of dwellings in Ridgefield is quite large. The same is true in Vancouver. Sometimes this is a barrier to the disability population due to finances (affordable housing).

Marsha asked for any other thoughts, and Dave shared that they believed that it would be good to visit (Ridgefield) since it is a smaller town in Clark County and may oftentimes get overlooked. Another concern would be if there is transportation available to the area. **Sometimes arrangements can be made specifically for the meeting, which we can check on.** We do have an OWL device to use as well, which is a hybrid meeting technology, to allow folks to attend virtually if possible.

Hearing no other thoughts, Marsha posed a question based upon her recollection of the map. Ryan interjected with a point of clarification – does Marsha want input from anyone? (Yes). He wondered if there are any local human or social service agencies there in Ridgefield (aside from the small local govt). Carley believes that they really do not have many. It is based on the population of people with disabilities in their view. The numbers may be small in Ridgefield, compared to elsewhere in Clark County. May of the outlying cities to Vancouver are that way. Personally, their suggestion would be to have the Town Hall in Vancouver to allow for greater participation. There will not be a large group

otherwise, they feel. If we included the GCDE and elected officials, then maybe there would be more, but if it is only folks with disabilities then it may be more limited.

Matt looked online and saw that most services are provided in Vancouver. In his view, a Vancouver central event could still represent the outlying areas. Carley concurs.

Ryan agreed as well and wondered if Carley knew the timings of transport. Carley said the bus does not come to their house in the outskirts. You might as well go into Vancouver. There is the half an hour window to contend with as well. There is definitely a gap in services.

Marsha asked for Zach's thoughts and wondered if we would get so many people in Vancouver that it would be unmanageable. Dave wondered if there was a cutoff. Marsha called on Warren to speak to the in-person events. Warren asked for clarification. He deferred to Damiana and said 50-100 people, and that there are ways to limit it depending on the venue capacity. Damiana shared that we typically look for venues that will hold 80-100 people and are happy to fill them. She noted that we do typically look specifically at smaller areas where the services are not necessarily available. Outside of the population centers, in other words. We always hope for at least 40.

Marsha wondered if the needs differ between Vancouver and the outlying areas. If there are not many people with disabilities in the outlying areas, in particular. William shared that since so many folks are low-income, it can be hard to find a place in smaller communities. In Marsha's community, it is expensive, but there are a lot of folks with disabilities there who she knows regardless. It's hard to say.

Back to the map, one of the other places suggested was Battle Ground. Marsha wondered if things are different there. Eric lives there and shared their perception that it similar, growing fast, expensive neighborhoods, but a fair number of apartments as well. Without living there, would say a similar size and growth rate for the most part, if perhaps Ridgefield slightly faster. It is not far, so folks may attend from outside the community. Some local groups have struggled with getting participation. He doesn't believe we will be inundated in Vancouver. Marsha thought we may just because of the local schools there, but those communities may be self-contained.

Carley seconds Eric's comments. Combining Ridgefield and Battleground may provide numbers, it's hard to know. Ryan wanted to respond to Carley and Eric. He appreciated the feedback. If we want to have our meetings there in the smaller communities, maybe folks from Vancouver could join as well, perhaps some folks would be willing to come from each of the surrounding communities that could benefit as well. He likes Carley's idea of combining the smaller communities in an attempt to get more numbers.

Zach followed by Damiana with hands up. Zach spoke to the bus routes. Some Deaf/Hard of Hearing clients are frustrated about communicating about the bus routes. It is an issue. He also wondered "why Battleground"? Do they have available buses? There are many more services available in Vancouver. He worries we may not get turn out in the smaller communities.

Marsha believes that we were thinking about the smaller communities since we understood that they were growing but services are not available. Damiana knows we are considering how the leadership meeting can be changed up, she feels it is important to keep in mind when thinking about combining areas, that when we bring in community leaders it can get complicated if you have two different communities. She doesn't know how close Ridgefield and Battleground are, what services or govt. they

share aside from County, so the city govts. working together on solutions could get complicated if separate. Vancouver has a large govt. we know.

Carley worries that we won't get enough people to attend if we only focus on 1 location. Marsha says it is a balance between the two events (Town Hall and Leadership). Dave is on the transit committees. He thinks this is a good thing to address. Folks may not be able to get to the meetings in the small towns. They do have bus services, but it is very limited, compared to the larger areas. It's something to address. Camas is farther away. It is a suburb of Vancouver. Marsha takes the point about numbers for the Town Hall if the event was in Vancouver. Marsha wonders if we could do that and focus on the county instead of the city, asked Damiana for thoughts.

Damiana did not have any coherent thoughts at the moment, she has to think on it. It isn't impossible, just may look different. Marsha thought we may be talking about County issues more than city issues, and wondered if that was accurate. Nothing heard. Dave mentioned that all of these places are in the same county. Carley said it is a mixed pot. One cannot exist without the other. Can we look at the population as a whole.

Ryan followed by Damiana. Ryan proposed setting up a Town Hall in the county overall. Then the Leadership meeting could be people with disabilities who can lead planning discussions and implementing an ACAC for the county. Marsha explained the acronym. Ryan feels this may be a potential solution.

Damiana said one thing we know is that often, not universally, the major topics that come up are transportation (discussed – could be county wide), housing (potentially county wide), employment (potentially county wide), and one that is not county-wide that comes up quite a lot is education. In looking at the county, without living there, assumes Vancouver has many more available school districts which could get complicated. The Educational Service District would service all districts, but are not involved in the day-to-day ability to make changes.

In Port Orchard (Kitsap Co. where she lives), Marsha wished we could do it as a county wide event, since transportation, employment, and housing are all county-wide. Not through cities. She wonders if we could try it, since it was suggested. Ryan wanted to add another county wide issue of access to services. It is a broad topic.

Zachary comes from CA and is still learning the ways of WA, but in CA, you can contact the transportation department leadership. It may be arranged for transportation provided to involve and invite the outlying communities with more support and coordination with the transportation due to exposure they can get. Karen McKenzie is with the Transportation Dept. and may be a possible contact.

7-8 minutes remaining. If we are going to move forward with an early November event, we need to decide about location today, or we won't pull it together in time. Marsha thinks she is hearing Vancouver, and is okay with that. Wondered about any objections. Zach says it is up to us. None heard.

Where in Vancouver, capacity 80-100 people, ideally free. Damiana said she could reach out to the School for the Blind campus to see if they would be willing to host. Zach encouraged starting with transportation to get there. William, then Ryan. Library recommended by William since transportation goes there. They have large rooms. WSSB is only on 1 transit line. Ryan wanted to ask for the library

name (the one on Evergreen and C street downtown by I5). Marsha asked William if he can reach out. Dave will check. He knows it.

**5: Background Information on Ridgefield – Ryan – tabled.**

**6: Selection of Date and Location for Ridgefield Event –** Date tabled aside from below comments, see location above.

**7: Event Logistics – tabled.**

**9: Next Action Steps –** Progress has been made. Anything else needing to get done today. Off to a good start. Look at community calendars to find conflicting dates of any large events or those that would pull away important people (county commissioners, city council, school board, etc.) Not for now, just next steps to start working on for selecting a date. Check within your communities and find out looking at early November, what dates to avoid. Marsha is excited by this group, it is a great one, it will be a good event. Thanks everyone. Ryan mentioned that the Veteran’s Day holiday is in early November and state govt. is closed on the second Friday, something to keep in mind. Zach mentioned that Sept. is Deaf Awareness month, we will be farther out than that, but good to know. Nothing else heard before departure. See you at the next meeting.

*10: Next Meeting will be on Tuesday, June 13, 2023, from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.*