

Accessible Communities Advisory Committee Meeting

September 11, 2024 – Meeting Minutes

Attendees: **In Person:**

Corie Dow-Kramer – Youth and Family Link, Presenter

Doreen Daggett – River Cities Transit

James Newkirk – Longview Library

Louise Brown – Cowlitz Community Network

Sue Saxton – Cowlitz County Health and Human Services

Andrea Scott - Cowlitz County Auditor's Office, Elections

Brandi Kuljjs – Cowlitz County Assessor’s Office

Chloe Hegstad – Cowlitz County Assessor’s Office

Hayley Johnson – Cowlitz County Auditor’s Office, Elections

Makenna Kuljjs – Cowlitz County Auditor’s Office, Elections

Rachel Facer-Stone - Cowlitz County Auditor's Office, Elections

Kay Gunter – Community Member

Linda Curry – Community Member

Sharon Weinhold – Community Member

Heidi Crabtree - Community Member

Via Zoom:

Mary Alice Wallis – Longview City Council

Erica Rader – WA Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth

Mary DeGraaf-Gramelt – ASL Teacher, Longview Public Schools

Becky Fabian – Cowlitz County Auditor’s Office, Elections

Kat V – Community Member

Jenny Blake – ASL Interpreter

Rachel Facer-Stone – Introductions

Corie Dow-Kramer – Presenter for Youth and Family Link (YFL)

-Backstory of Youth and Family Link, their vision of affordable and accessible services for young people and families believing that services should be accessible to all. YFL is for everyone in the community regardless of economic status. Mission is to promote positive change in families lives by linking them with resources to improve their lives.

-Staff of YFL are community members, several have utilized services YFL offers. Staff represent multiple parts of the community including Mexican, Native American, Chuukese, and LGBTQ.

-YFL services and programs are FREE. YFL does not charge for any services because they do not want to be a barrier to people getting the support they need.

-YFL will connect people with services outside of their organization if they don't offer those services.

-Work with community partners to help local families with services such as: No cost, After School Programs for elementary/middle school aged children (Currently serving only Kelso School Dist.), Social Norms/Prevention Programs, Outreach and Engagement, Access to Baby and Child Dentistry, Beyond the Alphabet, Community Events, and Community Gymnasium.

- After School Programs help children who need help with things like communication skills, behavioral issues, students needing tutoring help, and more.

-YFL offers Teen Mentoring where teens are identified by their school administration to be good mentors for elementary aged students. Teens are matched to students who need some extra support. This program helps kids who may be lonely or lost in the system of their peers who need a positive relationship in their lives. Teens give a 1-year commitment to being a mentor.

-Social Norms/Prevention Programs help kids learn more about statistics of real substance abusers, that not 'everyone' uses substances like drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vapes, etc. Teens get involved with community clean-up projects, making fun Tic-Tok videos, and learning positive life skills. Teens meet on Tuesday evenings to have dinner and get peer support.

-YTL wants to meet community members wherever they are in their life. They want to break down barriers to help our local families. An example is coordinating with St. John's Hospital

when a person needs help with their health care needs that the hospital doesn't provide such as transportation to doctor's appointments, helping get meds, etc.

-Beyond the Alphabet – Fridays 5p-7p families can utilize the gym to get some exercise, play ball, and spend free time with family and friends of the community. No pressure hang out time. Gymnasium time is to help promote physical fitness, healthy living, and positive activities for families.

-One paid program YFL offers is an Adult Exercise program.

-They also organize the annual Backpack Giveaway program for kids going back to school. These backpacks are filled with school supplies so the kids can get back to school with everything they need to succeed.

-The YFL Annual Report shows that 20,000 people, adults and youth, came through the YFL door in 2023. YFL gets financial support through grants, community members and the Toutle Ranch Store. Community members give amazing support; the Ranch Store gives all their profits to YFL.

Rachel Facer-Stone – Elections Information

-Teach with TVW – What is the Voters' Guide? Secretary of State program on YouTube to teach voters and future voters what our state does to make sure they're informed and prepared for their ballot.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6NnuWaDZGM>

-Audio Voters' Guide is available upon request. It is available on CD or USB. You can get it in person, or we can mail it to you.

-Assisted Voting Unit (AVU) is available in the Election's Office Lobby. AVUs are available 18 days before Election Day, until 8 p.m. on Election Day. The AVU presents your ballot on a monitor. You select choices by touching the screen, using a select wheel, or by using a tool. You can use headphones to listen to the text and prompts on your ballot. Our machine is equipped with sip-and-puff tools. Our AVU will print your ballot and then you can drop your ballot directly into the Ballot Drop Box in the Elections Lobby.

Chloe Hegstad – Property Tax Exemption Program

-Property owner's, at least 61 years old on Dec. 31st of the year in which you apply (No age requirement for disabled persons). Income threshold was raised to income of \$54,000 or less may qualify. See the Assessor's office for more information or to apply.

Doreen Daggett – River Cities Transit

-Bus passes are now available at the Longview Public Library. This allows access to purchasing passes after 5pm and on Saturdays when the Rivers City Transit office is closed.

-Cowlitz Transit Authority Board Meeting is open to the public. 9/11/2024 4:00 PM. City Hall or via Zoom. **The meeting is to determine if service to Route 411 to Beacon Hill/ Lexington area will be removed on September 28, 2024.**

-Braille Signs for a few of the Bus Stops have been ordered. If the community likes the signs, then braille signs will be ordered for all 42 bus shelters.

-Cowlitz County Veterans Stand Down is October 4, 2024, at the Cowlitz County Event Center.

-River Cities Transit will be offering Free Fare all day on October 4, 2024.

Kay Gunter, Sharon Weinhold -Expressed appreciation of YFL for providing a lifeline for foster children and an opportunity to teach children useful life skills in the after-school programs.

Louise Brown – Cowlitz Community Network (CCN)

-YFL appreciation

-CCN working with families in Kelso offering parenting resources, basic life teaching to new community members from different cultural backgrounds, and more.

-Book Club offered every quarter.

James Newkirk – Longview Library

-Excited about selling Bus Passes for River Cities Transit including nights and Saturdays.

-Mobile Library Vehicle has been purchased and will be arriving soon. Looking at a January 2025 launch date for the Mobile Library.

Rachel Facer-Stone – Closing Statement

-Kudos to Sharon Weinhold for ACAC work.

-Let us know if there are other organizations that you think would be good to include in our ACAC meetings.

