



COG Meeting Minutes  
March 25, 2022

**Members present:** Commissioner Mahar, Commissioner Mortensen, Councilor Lentz

**Members present by phone/Zoom:** Commissioner Cothren joined at 1:20 p.m., Commissioner Sauter joined at 2:00 p.m.

**Members absent:** none

**Alternates present:** none

**Staff present:** Mike Reardon, Monty Hansen, Karen Wolfe

**Advisory Council member present:** Pearl Blackburn

**Visitors present:** none

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m. by Commissioner Mahar.

**The Pledge of Allegiance** was recited

**1. Agenda Review:** no changes

**2. Review of Minutes:** Councilor Lentz moved to approve the January 28, 2022 minutes. Commissioner Mortensen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**3. Public Comment (3-minute limit):** none

**4. Executive Director's report:** Mike reported on the contracts activity. We have a new contract for hospital surge care transitions. We also terminated the contracted with Link to Life at their request. They did not respond to our requests for monitoring documentation. We have several other providers so this is not a crisis for our clients. Monty said this contractor was not serving many clients recently.

Mike reported on the State legislative session. W4a and AAADSW advocated for SB5745 to increase the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA) for in-home Medicaid clients from approximately \$1,100 per month to over \$2,200 per month for expenses like rent, utilities, groceries, etc. Will affect roughly 7,000 clients statewide, about 560 in our service area. Monty noted that care providers will benefit as well as the clients will be able to pay them. Commissioner Mortensen asked why the increase was so large. Mike explained that this was more a parity issue – Developmentally Disabled clients were already receiving more PNA and this was to make the other Medicaid clients' PNA in line with them. Commissioner Mortensen asked if the rate is indexed for inflation. Mike responded yes, it's indexed to the federal poverty level. W4a and AAADSW also advocated for the increase to Medicaid case management, in order to lower caseloads from 1:80 to 1:75. Councilor Lentz asked if that will happen by increasing staffing. Mike responded yes, we are planning for that as well. Mike also explained that our contract with the State has penalties for going over the caseload ratios. W4a and the AAAs are negotiating to eliminate those penalties. W4a has met in February and March; besides advocacy another big issue is the Individual Providers (IPs) book of work moving to CDWA,

which is a 3<sup>rd</sup> party administrator. There are about 50,000 IPs statewide. For about 3 years the state has been working on this transition. It's not going very well. Many do not speak English well, are very rural, or do not have good internet access in order to transition to CDWA. The deadline to move to CDWA has now been extended to the end of May.

AAADSW was contacted by AL TSA and the Health Care Authority (HCA) about the Center For Health Care Strategies to raise awareness among the managed care organizations to better understand the family caregiver system and get them to support that better.

April 1<sup>st</sup> our offices will reopen to the public. April 11<sup>th</sup> we will resume in person client visits. Some staff are very anxious about it and have asked why the Board and Management Team are allowing this and why they aren't requiring all staff to be vaccinated. Mike just wanted the COG members to be aware in case they hear from any staff members. Mike detailed the safety measures we have taken in the office and for home visits with clients. Some AAAs have already returned, some are waiting until the end of April. We're also following what Home & Community Services (HCS) is doing. Commissioner Mahar asked if we are emphasizing health and wellness improvements for staff. Monty noted we do have a Wellness committee that works on those issues. Mike reported recently meeting with newer staff and the majority of them are excited to get back to the office and see their clients in person.

Mike also highlighted the article in the Columbian about Senior resources for navigating technology.

**5. Advisory Council:** Pearl mentioned the Salmon Derby in Cathlamet today. She reported on the February 16<sup>th</sup> and March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Advisory Council meetings. She also reported on the Senior Lobby Day advocacy visits with the legislators in February. The Council is also looking into assisting with High School training for home care aides in our counties. In February the council elected Jennifer Wright to join the Advisory Council, representing Skamania County, effective March 1, 2022. In March the council elected JoAnne Baker to join the Advisory Council representing Cowlitz County, effective April 1, 2022. We are still in need of members in Wahkiakum and Skamania Counties. The membership is made up of professionals from all types of employment sectors. The Council meets once a month and provides advice to the Council on programs and needs in their communities. Mike explained the criteria for membership and that they must live in the county they represent. Mike explained the vetting and interview process conducted by the membership committee. Applicants must attend one meeting before the vote. The committee recommends for or against the applicant. Commissioner Mortensen asked if we've ever turned someone down for membership. Mike said yes, on occasion, though it's very rare.

**Councilor Lentz moved to approve Jennifer Wright to join the Advisory Council representing Skamania County, effective March 1, 2022. Commissioner Cothren seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

**Commissioner Mortensen moved to approve JoAnne Baker to join the Advisory Council representing Cowlitz County, effective April 1, 2022. Councilor Lentz and Commissioner Cothren seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

**6. Review of Financials.** Monty Hansen reviewed the January and February 2022 expenditures of \$1,489,767.66 and \$2,477,975.60 respectively. January was unusually low, even by usual standards. No out of the ordinary expenses. February had some one-time expenses that carried

over from January. Fund Balance Expenditures increased as well. There were also some outreach expenses. Average monthly expenditures are about \$1.9 Million. Commissioner Mortensen asked about the digital advertising expenses. Monty said it has been a successful ad campaign. Commissioner Mortensen asked for more information about that.

**Commissioner Cothren moved to approve the January, 2022 and February, 2022 expenditures of \$1,489,767.66 and \$2,477,975.60 respectively. Councilor Lentz seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

Monty reviewed the preliminary December 2021 financial statement. We had a small surplus but it had dropped off significantly which means we got more money out into the community. Surplus of \$1,952,007.23. We stayed under the Fund Balance limit according to Monty's preliminary reporting. More to come in May. Monty reviewed the January 2022 financial statement. Surplus was \$138,888.63. Wishes it had been higher but we didn't spend as much for January. Commissioner Mortensen asked if the Fund Balance limit remains the same year over year. Monty said it fluctuates based on the annual budget. It's a bit higher for 2022.

Monty reviewed the December 2021 Fiscal dashboard and the January 2022 Fiscal dashboard.

**7. SOPPADA # 2022-2, to Increase the Payroll Account Holding Balance.** Monty explained that ADP penalizes us if we exceed our payroll balance. As staff return to the office and start visiting clients in their homes, the travel expenses will start increasing again. Pre-COVID it was around \$20,000 per month. Commissioner Mahar asked if there is any downside to increasing the payroll holding balance. Monty said we lose a bit of interest by having it be a bit higher vs. having higher penalties from ADP. Commissioner Mortensen asked if Monty would mind increasing it to \$500,000. Monty said that would be okay too, has no problems with that. There's no motive to keep it artificially high. Monty explained how the mechanics of the payroll holding balance works. It's kept in the US Bank imprest account until the payroll specialist has it moved to ADP based on the actual payroll amount. The account it's held in earns no interest. Monty keeps as much of the money as possible in the interest bearing account so we earn as much interest as possible. For half of the month most of the money is in the account.

**Commissioner Mortensen moved to approve SOPPADA # 2022-2 To increase the Payroll Account Holding Balance from \$425,000 to \$475,000. Commissioner Cothren seconded. Motion carried.**

**8. Resolution 2022-2 – Bank Account Updates.** Monty explained that the bank asked for some changes since we approved the resolution in January. The bank has already approved this new language. We are adding Whitney Oswald and restating all the other signers. Also adds Monty and Matt as bank validators so they can speak to the bankers. Also adds our DBA name. Commissioner Mortensen asked how many signers are on the checks. Monty responded there is one signer on a check. Commissioner Mortensen then asked why so many people need to be authorized to sign. Monty explained it's just to make sure we have coverage of signers in the office on any given day. One staff has access to the software to cut a check but is not allowed to sign. Managers are allowed to sign but cannot cut checks. Monty explained the Purchase Order approval limits. We have a very clean record with the SAO for these types of transactions.

**Commissioner Cothren moved to approve Resolution #2022-2 adding Whitney Oswald as a signer and restating the other signers. Councilor Lentz seconded. Motion carried.**

**9. Discussion of future COG meeting preferences.** Mike asked if there is any preference for going to in-person only, or keep with the hybrid method. Consensus was to keep the hybrid method.

**10. Good of the order.** none

**11. Adjourn.** There being no further business, Councilor Lentz moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Cothren seconded. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.