

**Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
September 17, 2025**

Location: Cathlamet Hope Center, Great Hall (320 S 3rd Street, Cathlamet WA, 98612) and Zoom

*The meeting was called to order by Chair, Apryl Schneider at **12:00 PM.***

Roll Call: Joe Bosch, Marianne Burkholder, Diane Craft, Roberta Doster, Susan Petrie, Mary Repar, Dave Rorden, Apryl Schneider, Rick Seekins

Excused: Kevin Callahan

Absent: Shelley Baxter

Staff present: Mike Reardon, Christina Marneris, Maggie Ridenour

Guests: Cass Freedland, Eileen Stearns-Raff, Terrie Howell and Julie Johnston, Wahkiakum County Health & Human Services

September 17, 2025, Meeting Agenda: Susan Petrie moved to approve the agenda. Joe Bosch seconded. Motion passed.

August 20, 2025, Meeting Minutes: Dave Rorden moved to approve the agenda. Diane Craft seconded. Motion passed.

Announcements/Community Outlook:

- Joe Bosch (Clark):
 - Will meet with the LaCenter Director of Community Development soon about a location for a senior group to be held.
- Marianne Burkholder (Wahkiakum):
 - Wahkiakum County senior social will be Saturday, September 20, 2025 from 6:00pm – 9:00pm. Food and live music will be provided.
- Diane Craft (Cowlitz):
 - Working with the City of Longview advocating for seniors in reference to their utility bills.
 - Some seniors are receiving their first bills since a rate increase, and they are seeing substantial increases.
 - Some households in Longview receive a monthly bill while some households receive a semi-monthly bill depending on the area they live in.
 - Diane is advocating for monthly bills as opposed to semi-monthly bills. She has had several seniors in low-income housing voice concerns that they do not know how they will be paying for the bills every other month.
- Roberta Doster (Skamania):
 - Shared her experiences from her volunteering at the Treasure House Food Bank. Roberta shares the same concerns and fears Mary discussed for our seniors.
- Susan Petrie (Klickitat):
 - Susan expressed an interest in making resources (scanned information sheets, links, etc.) available on her community Facebook page.

- Mary Repar (Skamania):
 - Nothing new to report, however she did voice concerns and fears with the lack of sustainable resources and finances for seniors in America.
- Apryl Schneider (Clark):
 - Apryl is a Legislative Liaison with AARP.
 - AARP is sending a letter of support to Washington's Department of Health regarding charity care rules around medical debt.
 - Proposed changes are around income considerations
 - AARP is advocating that retirement accounts be excluded from income considerations.
 - AARP is also advocating around income considerations for senior property tax exemptions.
 - Federal law requires mandatory IRA distributions at age 73
 - The IRA distribution is considered income
 - Mandatory IRA distribution is causing substantial increases in property taxes for some seniors as the extra income puts them over the thresholds for property tax exemptions.
 - A case study was shared about a gentleman in Washington State who received the mandatory IRA distribution which increased his annual income by about \$12,000. However, because of the loss of property tax exemptions, he loses about *half* of the \$12,000 increase to property taxes. This increase could potentially result in him losing his house.
 - Apryl will be checking with AARP to find a contact for people to write to in support of their advocacy surrounding these issues. She will report back with what she finds out.
 - Mike also suggested that the Advisory Council write and send a letter of support.

Reports:

Executive Director's Report: Mike thanked everyone for sharing their local community reports. He expressed his appreciation of members' advocacy and commitment for older adults and individuals with disabilities in their local communities.

- 2026 State Legislative Session:
 - Most important Legislative Session since 2008
 - DSHS Decision Package (DP)
 - DP is how state agencies/departments request funding. It is the first step in a very long budget process that ends when the 2026 legislative session ends in March/April 2026, and the Governor signs the final budget.
 - Revenue forecasts, September and November. Governor's SFY 2027 budget based on November's forecast
- Federal:
 - House and Senate begin negotiations. Federal Government shutdown on 9/30/2025, if budget is not passed.
 - Look for advocacy alerts and opportunities
- Other:
 - SAO (State Auditor's Office) report – Unmodified Opinion
 - Area Plan Grants
 - 3 awardees

Executive Committee:

- The Executive Committee met September 4 to develop the September 17, 2025 Advisory Council meeting agenda.

Presentations:

- Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services Presentation (Julie Johnston)
 - Because Wahkiakum County is a small community with limited resources, Health and Human Services has become a “hub” for resources and services to help community members.
 - Service overview:
 - Public Health
 - Septic Certificates
 - Food safety (restaurants)
 - Public Health RN who primarily works with WIC program
 - Provides childhood immunizations
 - When supply and funding is available, the Public Health RN will provide vaccinations for adults and seniors.
 - Services are offered at the “West end” of Wahkiakum County on Thursdays. The rest of the week they are provided at the “East end” office location.
 - Drug take back services as well as free safe storage boxes for medications
 - Behavioral Health
 - Mental health outpatient services
 - Drug and alcohol/substance disorders outpatient treatment
 - Typically, they are a Medicaid facility, but they are in the process of working to expand the services to Medicare recipients.
 - Developmental Disabilities Services
 - Job coaching and help with employment for adults
 - Resources
 - Community Assistance
 - Housing instability grants
 - Work with the homeless population
 - Utility assistance
 - Employment services through WorkSource
 - Transportation system (Wahkiakum on the Move)
 - Fixed routes
 - Seniors are free
 - Non-Emergency Medical Transportation through Community in Motion (Medicaid Medical Transportation)
 - Reserve–A–Ride (also contracted through Community in Motion) for non-Medicaid recipients for life sustaining treatment (when funds are available)
 - Information and Referral services through AAADSW
 - General resource phone calls or requests as well as hands-on assistance in accessing resources
 - Assistance in removing barriers in connecting with resources
 - Technology assistance (some seniors in the community still have rotary phones and also don’t have internet services).
 - Assistance with getting grab bars
 - Assistance with accessing services/programs within Wahkiakum County as well as outside of the county
 - Help with access to food banks
 - Education
 - Fraud prevention
 - Emergency preparedness

- Outreach events
 - Living Well Event (November 7, 2025 at the Hope Center)
 - Goal of the event is to bring as many services as possible to one accessible location to provide services for one day.
 - Some of the services that are in the process of being set up are:
 - Telehealth services
 - Vaccines
 - Possibly a dental van
 - DSHS services
 - Mobile DOL services
- Present 2026 Officer Nominee Slate
 - Nominees are Apryl Schneider as Chair, Rick Seekins as Vice Chair and Dave Rorden as Secretary
 - Motion to close nominations
 - Rick Seekins moved to close nominations. Susan Petrie seconded the motion.
 - Voting on nominations will be held at the November 2025 full Advisory Council meeting
- Vote on Bylaws revisions
 - Rick Seekins gave a brief overview of the major updates and the recommendations
 - Rick Seekins moved to approve Bylaws revisions. Susan Petrie seconded the motion.
 - Motion passed for Bylaws revisions
- Celebrated Marianne Burkholder and her 3 years of service.
 - Mike highlighted Marianne's advocacy for Wahkiakum County, her support of seniors and participation in community events like the Senior Prom.
 - Christina presented Marianne with cake, a card and a flower

Public Comment:

- Susan Petrie expressed her appreciation to Mike, Christina and the Advisory Council for the continued advocacy for seniors.

*Meeting adjourned at **1:30PM.***

Signature Susan C Petrie Date Nov 19, 2025