

Advisory Council Meeting Minutes January 21, 2026

Location: Vancouver AAADSW Office – Columbia Conference Room and Zoom

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

Roll Call: Diane Craft, Roberta Doster, Sue Neal, Susan Petrie, Mary Repar, David Rorden, Apryl Schneider, Rick Seekins, Eileen Stearns-Raff

Excused: Joe Bosch, Kevin Callahan,

Absent: Greg Flakus

Staff present: Mike Reardon, Christina Marneris, Patti Atkins

Guests: Skamania County Commissioner Rob Farris

January 21, 2026 Meeting Agenda: Rick Seekins moved to approve the agenda. Susan Petrie seconded. Motion passed.

December 17, 2025, Meeting Minutes: Susan Petrie moved to approve the amended minutes. Rick Seekins seconded. Motion passed.

Announcements/Community Outlook:

➤ Diane Craft (Cowlitz):

Diane reported ongoing challenges in Cowlitz County related to seniors who are discharged from the emergency department without a way to return home, particularly during late-night and early-morning hours.

- When seniors are transported to the hospital via medical transportation and have no one available to assist them upon return, facilities often do not receive a clear report on the care provided or follow-up instructions.
- A few assisted living facilities have staff available for late-night or early-morning pickups, but most do not.
- If no one is available to transport a senior home, the individual must remain in the emergency department overnight until transportation can be arranged the following day.
- Diane is working to convene community stakeholders to discuss the issue and explore potential solutions.
- Christina Marneris will follow up with Diane to suggest additional stakeholders who should be included in the discussions.

- Initial stakeholder suggestions include Community in Motion (Medical Transportation Brokerage), the Cowlitz Tribe, and local hospital administrators.
- Roberta Doster (Skamania):
 - Shared property taxes are coming due in her community.
 - Roberta inquired if there is help for the people who are just above the threshold for assistance, but who still need help. The general example shared is someone who doesn't meet criteria to be considered "low income" but they still don't have enough income to cover the property taxes as well as their normal bills.
 - The concern is that if property taxes aren't paid, people will lose their homes.
 - Christina Marneris advised that she can reach out to the program in Clark County that has some assistance to find out what is available and to see if there are contacts for similar assistance in our other counties.
- Mary Repar (Skamania):
 - After a recent family experience, Mary realized the need for more hospice houses in our communities for people who don't have family to help.
 - She has requested that the Advisory Council look at proposing for more hospice houses in our communities.
 - Christina Marneris suggested having representatives from a hospice house in our service area present at a future meeting.
 - Mike Reardon shared organizations must obtain a certificate of need from the Department of Health in order to open a hospice facility.
 - Communities must demonstrate there is a need in the community.
 - Once the need has been proven, licenses can be issued to open a hospice house.
 - Diane Craft shared that in her experience working at a hospice facility, they are tightly regulated with even how the facility is constructed before patients and staff are involved.
- Rick Seekins (Clark):
 - Rick reported concerns about rising costs in manufactured home communities.
 - Although rent-control regulations offer some protection for current tenants, new tenants are facing significant rent increases when moving in.
 - Residents are struggling to sell their homes because prospective buyers would be required to pay substantially higher land rent.
 - In addition to increased rent, many communities are now separating out utilities that were previously included, causing monthly expenses to double or even triple.
 - Other Advisory Council members noted similar issues in Cowlitz and Skamania counties.
 - This trend is becoming a national concern and is being discussed at the federal level.
 - Mike Reardon requested additional information so he can raise the issue during his advocacy trip to Washington, D.C. in March.

Public Comment:

- No public comment.

Executive Director's Report:

- Mike welcomed all Advisory Council members as well as Skamania County Commissioner Rob Farris.
- Governor's Budget:
 - Area Agencies on Aging fared quite well

- Governor's budget includes funding for Health Homes through 6/30/2027 and no cuts to SCSA, FCSP, or Nutrition funding
- Nursing homes and assisted living facilities, \$150M in rate increases scheduled for July 2026 pushed out to July 2027
- Millionaires tax
- Advocacy:
 - AAADSW Lobby Day 1/22/2026
 - Legislative priority is Health Homes
 - Attended 49th LD Town Hall (Senator Cleveland and Representatives Wiley and Stonier)
 - Had meetings with Representative Stuebe and Senator Harris
- Other:
 - New Longview AAADSW office now has a permanent lighted sign.
 - The staff at the new AAADSW location in Longview are reporting an increase in walk-in traffic which is what was hoped would happen by having a more visible presence in the community.
 - Mike will be traveling to Washington, DC for legislative advocacy March 16 – 17, 2026.
 - Mike has announced his decision to retire, and his last day as Executive Director will be July 1, 2026.

Executive Committee:

- The Executive Committee met on 01/05/2026 and developed the agenda for today's meeting.

New Grants (Christina):

- The state recently applied for a federal Rural Health Transformation grant.
 - The grant included some funds being carved out for Area Agencies on Aging to expand dementia capable initiatives.
 - Washington state was awarded the grant.
 - AAADSW has notified the state of our interest in this funding.
 - If AAADSW is selected, we will expand our efforts to build dementia capable communities in SW Washington.
 - This funding would be specific for rural communities in the SW Washington area.
 - Funding would be available March 2026.
- National Councils on Aging (NCOA) awarded AAADSW a grant to support benefits enrollment of programs such as SNAP and Medicaid.

GWEC:

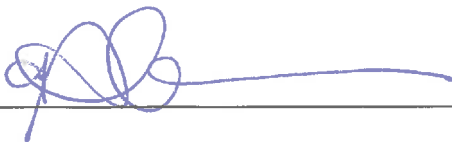
- Christina shared AAADSW partners with UW to offer the Northwest Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Center, which includes a virtual practicum that was developed for residents during COVID. In December 2025, a NW GWEC article on our Virtual Practicum was published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society. Christina will forward the link to the article.

Legislative Visits in January 2026 (Christina and Patti):

- We secured 16 of the 18 possible legislative appointments across six districts.

*Meeting adjourned at **12:59PM.***

Signature _____



Date _____

2/18/26

