

BWCCADV

**Bellingham - Whatcom County
Commission Against Domestic Violence**



1407 Commercial Street, Bellingham, WA 98225
360.312.5700 | www.dvcommission.org

2011 Meeting Minutes

BWCCADV

Bellingham - Whatcom County
Commission Against Domestic Violence

Meeting Minutes Froom
Thursday, January 27, 2011

The mission of the Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence is to provide leadership in the community's effort to reduce and prevent domestic violence.

Members Attending:

Laurie Alexander, Pat Buchinski, Karen Burke, Regina Delahunt, Mary Dumas, Bill Elfo, Sheri Emerson, Kirsten Hammer, Gary Jensen, Rebecca Johnson, Mike Knapp, , Dave McEachran, Linda Quinn, Todd Ramsay, Becky Skaggs, Linda Storck, Cherie Stutesman, Greg Winter

Members Absent:

Nikki Finkbonner, Jon Komorowski, Joan Hoisington, Dan Story, Bruce Van Glubt

Guests:

Sherry Mallory

Staff Attending:

Susan Marks, Director

Sue Parrot, Program Supervisor

Juliet Thompson, Program Coordinator

Meaghan Connell, Administrative Assistant

Rebecca Johnson, the Commission Chair, called the January 2011 Meeting of the Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence to order at 10:00 a.m., Thursday, January 27, 2011 at Bellingham Police Department, 505 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, WA.

Business Meeting

Welcome and Introductions were made by Rebecca Johnson.

Public Comment:

- Bill Elfo discussed the public meeting being held on February 3 at 6pm in City Council's Chambers. The meeting will be exploring options along with public comment about the

proposed construction of a new jail. Currently there are a certain number of offenders that officers are unable to book for offenses such as assault and DUI. Bill said that in order to hold DV offenders accountable we as a community need to support a reasonable plan.

MOTION: Approval of Minutes from November 18, 2010 Commission Meeting

- Todd Ramsay made a Motion to accept the November 18, 2011 Commission Meeting minutes. Bill Elfo seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

MOTION: Approval of DV Commission 2011 Budget

- Mike Knapp made a Motion to accept the DV Commission 2011 Budget. Regina Delahunt seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.
 - In the 2011 budget there was a carry forward from last year in part because the BWCCADV was without a director for 6 months.
 - All of the money for the CDS/GTEA3 grant is supposed to be spent by the end of June 2011, but we will ask for an extension and should know in March or April if that is approved.
 - Looking ahead at 2012's budget it is important to notice how essential the carry forward from the 2010 budget into 2011's budget is for the Commission's basic operations. Without that carry over, the budget will be much leaner next year.

Commission Projects

New Commission members will be contacted to see what Committees they are most interested in.

- DV Fatality Response Committee

Susan summarized the DV Fatality Response Committee, and how it was organized to take a closer look at the increase of fatalities over the past two years in Whatcom County.

 - The first meeting was held on January 10, 2011 and discussed gaps in the way we respond to victims, and concerns of how the media reports on DV cases. In the past DV fatalities have often not been identified in the newspaper as being DV-related, and there also have not always been phone numbers directing victims to services in the articles.
 - The Committee discussed the possibility of doing a Fatality Review with WSCADV . Collaborating with WSCADV would provide legislative protection during the Fatality Review Process. The Fatality Review process is about looking forward, and finding where were places we could have responded better.
 - The DV Fatality Response Committee will meet again to look into the Fatality Review process further; if it is decided that we will do a Fatality Review, other Commission members may be recruited.
- DV in the Workplace Committee

Sheri Emerson gave a report on the DV in the Workplace Committee.

 - Sheri Emerson discussed policies and procedures for employers to implement into their workforce that has been proposed by the DV in the Workplace Committee. This project had previously been on hold due to the vacancy of the Director position.
 - The first meeting was held in December with a lot of good discussion, good ideas and action items. Bill Elfo suggested developing outreach materials for calls out for DV in the workplace.
 - There is a commitment from this Committee to have an attorney review these policies each year.
 - Mike Knapp has set up a meeting in March at the City of Ferndale's Chamber of Commerce to discuss these policies.

- Susan checked in with all of the Commission members to see who has DV policies implemented in their own organizations, since it is essential as a Commission to know our own workplace policies and procedures. Becky Skaggs has informed us that Haagen has committed to implementing these policies.
- A mailing to the top ten employers will go out after the next DV in the Workplace meeting being held on February 25.
- Several members of the Committee attended a webinar that focused on workplace safety when DV is an issue.
- Gary Jensen suggested the Committee bring to these businesses a specific model for updating their manuals since at times it is difficult to keep employee manuals up to date, especially for small businesses.

Discussion: Benchmark and Small Cities Data Reports

- The 8th Benchmark Report was just published and soon the 2nd publication of the Small Cities Report will be completed.
- There was a discussion about the limitations in the data available in the benchmark reports, in that with this data there is no way to say why the numbers go up or down.
- Linda Storck has been a resource for gathering data for the Benchmark Report. The most recent Benchmark Report the Commission gathered data from the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), DV Agencies, Washington Association of Police Chiefs, along with the Jail.
- The Benchmark Report provides a snapshot of what is happening in Whatcom County. Rebecca Johnson asked, if there is a way to identify trends. Greg Winter said that the data from the Benchmark is not sample data and is the equivalent to census data, and it is challenging to explain a trend and what accounts for it.
- The question was asked of how people are using the Benchmark Report. Do they use it? Is it useful?
 - Rebecca Johnson said the Benchmark Report is very valuable to her as a grant writer.
 - Karen Burke stated that it is helpful to have the raw data and to see how often DV occurs in Whatcom County.

Discussion: Small Cities Outreach Project – Commission Role

Susan

- The original response to Spanish speaking victims in the small cities as written in the CDS grant was going to be to have a designated officer from the City of Everson respond to the DV calls; after meeting with the Chief of Everson it was determined that this was not going to work.
- Juliet held four meetings with professionals who respond to DV in the small cities to hear from these communities and find out what people saw as a need. From these meetings a pilot project was developed to serve Spanish speaking victims in the small cities that have limited to no access to services because of various barriers. The MOU has been signed by both Womencare and DVSAS to provide these services. The role of the advocates for this Pilot Project will be outreach in the small cities, along with providing services. Aline, who works with DVSAS and who is part of the grant, will be connecting clients to services in Bellingham and setting up various appointments to be done all in one day to help relieve some of the barriers facing clients that have little to no access to transportation.
- Part of the new proposal will also be to continue to meet with community leaders and also to reach out to Border Patrol to start a conversation about their response to victims of domestic violence while working with the small cities. At times, victims do not want to report DV because of fear of deportation. Border Patrol will always be backup or interpreters to officers in the small cities. Engaging in dialogue with Border Patrol about

special barriers DV victims face is important to our work in the small cities. Bill Elfo stated that he was interested in being a part of this.

- Bill will call the chief of Border Patrol and set up a meeting to discuss this.
- Kirsten Hammer said that she has gotten calls from Border Patrol. They have donated cell phones and have put Womenscare in their newsletter.
- Bill said that in April there will be a public forum on this issue.

Discussion: Impact of Economy on Domestic Violence in Whatcom County

Rebecca

- Rebecca Johnson
 - Over the last few months entities that have been able to sustain are now seeing large cuts. What is ahead in the coming year and what changes are organizations making?
- Linda Alexander
 - DCFS has seen cuts in the 6 regions they support (from Lynwood to the border to the Islands).
 - Currently DCFS has lost 100 staff members and 1 million dollars in funding.
 - They are still able to provide service dollars.
 - There seems to be more violence and desperation and drug use with the families. Some of the focus within DCFS has been, how we can help our staff be safer in their offices along with trying to prepare when we go into homes and things escalate.
- Bill Elfo
 - Brigid Collins which is a huge community resource in terms of child SA has funding that is in severe jeopardy. They have already had one-third of their budget cut.
- Regina Delahunt
 - Significant cuts in mental health treatment dollars; devastating to see what is happening.
- Todd Ramsay
 - Our community has not seen the worst of it yet.
 - Already there have been large cuts to the department of corrections.
 - Funding for the counties and the cities is greatly decreased.
 - Offenders are getting released early which not only hurts the criminal justice system, but social service agencies as well.
- Bill Elfo
 - The current budget has minimized the Department of Corrections and the reentry coalition not viable because of funding cuts.
- Gary Jensen
 - Finance concerns causes stress; 100 people getting their water shut off.
 - People have begun meeting with pastors at all the churches. Churches have volunteered to talk to these people who are facing water shut off.
- Karen Burke
 - The needs of the clients at DVSAS have become much greater. Their needs are being met by using more of a case management model that requires a lot more staff time. DVSAS is a volunteer run organization and with the shift more staff expertise is needed.
- Greg Winter
 - There is mixed news over the last 2 years.
 - More resources going towards homeless vets.
 - Over the last 2 years there has been a decrease in the number of people who are chronically homeless but an increase in families living with other families.
 - New resources have been added but for specific populations.
 - There are more trained volunteers to help assist along with more intensive outreach and engagement with the homeless.

- Just implemented a Vulnerability Assessment; there is a list from police of those individuals they have the most contact with along with people who are not accessing services. Todd said there has been an impact; the initial list was 25 people with an estimated cost for all services to be half a million dollars.
- Kirsten Hammer
 - DV is the leading cause of homelessness for women and children.
 - Unfortunately the turn- aways have increased and Womenscare has had to prioritize based on danger level. There is risk assessment that is done to determine this.
 - Housing program, housing retention and self sufficiency in those 18 months are important.
 - Women return to their abusers because of the lack of these resources.
 - Shelter is no longer enough; we need to think of the long term and all of the services in between that.
 - Funding sources HUD (3 year) switched from state to federal funding
- Pat Buchinski
 - The Agape House houses women dealing with mental health, DV, substance abuse, etc.
 - Seeing an increase of women who have lost their jobs and are alone and have no other means of income.
 - Agape House encourages them to go back to school and get their GED, along with looking at programs at Bellingham Tech or Whatcom Community College and get a trade
 - They can stay as long as they need to.
 - Agape house can usually take in Womenscare clients.
 - Completely privately funded.
- Sheri Emerson
 - When looking at the Community Resource Center staff there is a large number of individuals who have lost their job.
- Dave McEachran
 - There seems to be a lot more violence.
 - People are coming into the community that are not originally from this community. Bill mentioned people getting bounced back from the border. Greg stated that their homeless count may show whether or not this perception is actually true.

Staff Report

- Quarterly Report
 - The Commission was given the Quarterly Report from October to December of 2010.
- Protection Order Conference
 - Sue discussed the current CDS/GTEA3 grant. Part of the grant award is to do an audit of the Protection Order process to present with findings and recommendations. On May 13th there will be a daylong conference that will be cosponsored by National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. A Judge, along with a Law Enforcement Officer, will present at the conference. Currently we are not sure on the focus areas for the conferences because of the uniqueness of the civil PO process and the challenges for advocates, prosecution and law enforcement; one of the challenges is that it can end up starting in civil and ending up in criminal. During the conference there will be a topic devoted to firearms; many practitioners are unclear of their role.
 - Let Sue know of any topic suggestions you might have for the conference.
- GTEA4
 - Commission members will be asked to be cosigners on the MOU for the new grant due Feb. 23, 2011.

Closing Discussion

- Mike Knapp discussed Border Patrol and the concern from immigrant DV victims. Mike suggested there be some sort of uniform advisory so victims would know that the primary purpose is their protection, not immigration, and there should be a way to give that out.
- Ferndale police department going to become a sponsor for the Verizon hopeline program. The County who collects the most cell phones in a 6 month period of time will receive \$10,000 to go to a domestic violence cause.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30

THANK YOU for your time and dedication to ending domestic violence in Whatcom County!

BWCCADV

Bellingham - Whatcom County
Commission Against Domestic Violence

Thursday, March 24th, 2011 from 10:00 – 11:30 am
@ Bellingham Police Department

The mission of the Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence is to provide leadership in the community's effort to reduce and prevent domestic violence.

Members Attending:

Laurie Alexander, Pat Buchinski, Karen Burke, Regina Delahunt, Mary Dumas, Bill Elfo, Sheri Emerson, Kirsten Hammer, Joan Hoisington, Gary Jensen, Rebecca Johnson, Mike Knapp, Jon Komorowski, Sherry Mallory, Dave McEachran, Linda Quinn, Linda Storck, Greg Winter

Members Absent:

Nikki Finkbonner, Becky Skaggs, Dan Story, Cherie Stutesman, Bruce Van Glubt, Todd Ramsay

Guests:

Lonnie Bauman; Shannon Webb

Staff Attending:

Susan Marks, Director
Sue Parrot, Program Supervisor
Juliet Thompson, Program Coordinator
Meaghan Connell, Administrative Assistant

Rebecca Johnson, the Commission Chair, called the March 2011 Meeting of the Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence to order at 10:00 a.m., Thursday, March 24, 2011 at the Bellingham Police Department, 505 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, WA.

Business Meeting

1. **Welcome and Introductions** were made by Rebecca Johnson.

2. Public Comment

- No public Comment

3. MOTION: Approval of Minutes from January 27th, 2011 Commission Meeting

- Dave McEachran made a Motion to accept the January 27th, 2011 Commission Meeting minutes. Sheri Emerson seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

4. MOTION: DV Commission Treasurer, Cherie Stutesman

- Regina Delahunt made a Motion to approve Cherie Stutesman as DV Commission Treasurer. Linda Storck seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

5. Risk Assessment Presentation

- Susan explained the connection to DV Commission work. Recently the Commission submitted the grant application for the GTEA4 grant which included in the grant a community wide risk assessment

process. Being able to move forward with a community wide risk assessment will allow us as a community to help assure accountability of offenders. .

- Susan introduced Lonnie Bauman and Shannon Webb who attended a conference on Risk Assessments. The GTEA3 grant that the Commission currently has allows the Commission to send members of the Whatcom County community to these conferences.
- Presentation by Lonnie Bauman, Whatcom County Sheriff's Office
 - Currently there are several agencies coming together to target high risk offenders and high risk situations. The term "high risk" means extra precautions are given to those individuals and situations.
 - RCW can be very confusing in terms of, mandatory arrest, what constitutes a DV situation along with identifying the victim. We do not want to victimize twice.
 - In the training we were asked to assess some lethal situations that have emerged. We looked at DV fatalities, attempted homicides, suspects who have killed someone. We looked at statistical data and came up with 10 risk factors for possible lethality. Some of those risk factors are;
 - Threats. If you look at DV fatalities there are a high number of threats leading up to the fatality. Threats of suicide are specifically a very dangerous risk factor.
 - Stalking. When looking at DV fatalities a high number of incidents of stalking were taking place. Stalking is something we do not explore enough. Introduce this concept of charging for stalking. We need to recognize stalking when we are investigating and get them information on advocacy agencies.
 - Strangulation. High percentage of that act taking place before a homicide; ultimate power and control. We need to ask about strangulation, victims do not equate this to assault. Ask every single time, also ask about it if it has happened in the past.
 - Years ago we changed the way we handle no contact orders, only a violation of a distance order is a mandatory arrest, text messages or other contacts not a mandatory arrest. Stalking is a repeated incident that causes fear RCW defines this as two or more.
 - We want to try to get that information to the victims. Now before we leave the scene we call DVSAS and have the victims talk to an advocate. We taking on an increased rate of contact with DVSAS. Training to accommodate this was done by Zara Stevens and Jenn Mason. This year's focus is recognizing all of these things as risk factors. Investigation will be the same, officers will continue to tell victims they are concerned for their safety.
- Presentation by Shannon Webb, Womenscare Shelter
 - Shannon passed out handouts of the Safety First Model. Shannon discussed how important the first responders are in informing victims about services. We have to take a community approach through networking and collaboration. Lately there has been a high lethality rate. Currently Whatcom County does have some networking in place such as the Prosecutors Meeting, the DV Task Force, and the DV Commission.
 - What would a safety first model in our community look like? The cost was minimal. We could utilize already existing meetings to produce something positive. Counties that had implemented this had seen their fatalities drop to zero; clearly showing that this was working.
 - Having this program gives us the ability to go to judges and say "this is a Safety First case". The judges understood and knew what this meant, bring forth the danger and lethality level of the victims. We can do mapping with their police units so you can see where these offenders are living. Moving forward with this grant this would be something that could be very useful, we are already having standing community meetings it will not take much to shift the focus.

- Rebecca asked how long before they saw an impact in the counties. Shannon said that it varied one was two years since they had a lethality. One community was able to begin this program after a horrific lethality; thus there was big community support for this.
- If we did the Safety First program we would want to incorporate Batters Treatment Intervention. Would like to see more communication between victims services and Batterers Treatment, this would be helpful for probation.
- The people that qualify for Safety First would have different folders. We can zero in on high risk offenders, police can go to jail welcome them to the Safety First club and let them know we will be watching you, if there is an arrest in another jurisdiction we send the information over.
- Jon said that there could be due process issues.
- Dave said that had a system similar like this with juveniles.
 - Shannon will email more information and Susan can email it out to the entire Commission.
- Regina asked what the magnitude would be for individuals that would qualify to be in this program. Lonnie said that people on the board would vote to see who qualifies. We would need to find out what the criteria is. Shannon said that the criteria looked different depending on the county.
 - Already have systems in place that flag people. We could bring these speakers out to talk to the different systems and show what this would look like.
- Mary asked if this was a branded or trademarked program? Shannon said that it was just a program that they called Safety First. Lonnie said that this was not a private entity, a protocol could be localized, and involve Batterers Intervention, Probation and Victims Service Agencies.
- Bill asked if they accomplished this with existing resources. Shannon said yes this was from existing resources.
- Rebecca noted that she was hearing a lot of interest for this program. Susan stated, that if we get the GTEA4 grant this would be a smooth transition, there are resources to lead and start up a program like this, we should know about the grant at the end of September.

6. Commission Projects

- DV in the Workplace
 - Instead of specifically targeting major employers in Whatcom County the committee has decided to continue to work at a grass roots level.
 - Susan, Mike, Gary and Bill presented at the Ferndale Chamber of Commerce meeting.
 - The DV in the Workplace Committee is trying to identify incentives for employers to adopt these tools into their workplace. One incentive may be recognizing individuals and businesses that implement these tools. Committee and staff are committed to doing this.
 - Susan said that during her presentation for the Chamber, she realized that very few people knew about the Domestic Violence Leave Law. It is important to get employers in line with state and local laws
- DV Fatality Review Susan 5 mins.
 - The DV Fatality Review Committee has met twice and now are done. The focus of the two meetings was around doing a formal fatality review along with how the media responds to domestic violence.
 - WSCADV is interested in having Whatcom County be the first county to do the review.

- During the Executive Committee meeting the discussion was around the realities of how time consuming this may be on Commission staff and team members, along with the importance of having protection on confidentiality and liability.
- If the Fatality Review is done with WSCADV we will receive Legislative protection.
- This review is about looking forward and not back, find gaps in our response as a community. WSCADV has done amazing work and has great recommendations but not specific to our community.
- If we were to take this on we would be looking at 2 to 3 cases once cases have been closed. The review will look at everyone that was involved in the victim's life, what happened when they asked for help. Doing this review is useful to our plan to respond and end DV.
- This review would be a 6 to 9 month process similar to safety audit. This would be very intensive and would have staff support. We are looking to Jake Fawcett to find out what resources they have used.
- The people that are currently on the Fatality Response Committee are interested in being on the Fatality Review Team.
 - If you are interested please let Susan know.
- Bill asked if the Washington state had a model to do this review; Susan answered yes.
- Regina asked if we would we repeat this process after doing it? Susan said that we do not want to immediately commit to doing this continuously. Perhaps look at this review after it has been completed and see if we want to do another one in a few years.
- Shannon suggested that the Fatality Review would be great groundwork for the Safety First program.
- Rebecca asked if we could look at the current risk factors and implement things immediately instead of spending the time on a fatality review. Should we use our resources to do that instead?
- Mary asked how we could pursue change if we don't understand how fatalities are happening in our own community. What is the data and resources to use for this?
- Greg said that the state has been doing Fatality Reviews since 1998; what has our history been in looking at these recommendations? Rebecca said that the DV in the Workplace Policies and Procedures came from a recommendation in a Fatality Review
- Karen said that they do these reviews every two years and recommendations are very broad based. An example of this; *Victim services should reach out to schools*. A county wide Fatality Review will be specific – possibly coupling with safety first.
- Greg asked if WSCADV has recommended safety first? Sue said that she had not seen an exact reference to create a specific program from a WSCADV fatality review.
 - The DV Commission would like to get Jake Fawcett from WSCADV to come to the next meeting.

7. Discussions on DV Commission Projects – Small Groups

Susan

- Small Group Discussions: 15 mins.
 - Media response to DV – Facilitated by Susan
Participants: Susan, Sherry Mallory, Pat Buchinski, Mary Dumas, Gary Jensen, Mike Knapp and Bill Elfo
 - Strategies for the media response to DV in Whatcom county –
 - Would like to see the media label DV incidents as such

- Let them know that they can use the Commission along with other service agencies as experts if they have any questions.
- Would like print media to insert an information box in article that would list resources and where to seek help.
- STRATEGIES
 1. Meet with community advisory boards of various media outlets
 2. Use blog on website – take on these articles with link and discuss that case
 3. Mike suggested partnering with law enforcement agencies, during a press conference bring in DV people.
 4. Get resources in student newsletters , work with students at Western so they can identify DV.
 5. Make it as easy as possible for the media, give them sound bites that they need.
- Safety Audit implementation – Facilitated by Sue
- Participants: Sue, Greg Winter, Laurie Alexander, Kirsten Hammer, Sheri Emerson, Dave McEachran, Joan Hoisington
 - Discussed the role of the commission on implementation of the Safety Audit
 1. Will meet with each agency to get a sense from them as to what kind of support and assistance they need from the Commission. Will ask for a progress report at 6, 9 to 12 months. There are often reasons why they could not meet the recommendations.
 2. Assist in implementing individual items. Have Law and Justice Committee possibly get reformed.
 3. Report to the City and County Councils – funding issues the agencies might want to address.
- On-going funding for DVS
- Facilitated by Juliet and Rebecca
Participants: Juliet, Rebecca Johnson, Linda Storck, Karen Burke
 - Looked at current strategy and decided to amplify it. Will present to each of the City Councils.
 - Discussed buy in on getting the Commission at the county meetings. Rebecca suggested an Adhoc Committee for support. When the amount is broken down by 5 cities it is not as daunting.
 - Discussed approaching large employers in the counties; hard to put that into perspective now. Gary stated that you would want to do these meetings in August. September is too late try to get in as early as possible in the budget cycle. Then a follow up presentation in front of every council. Figure out what the schedule is for each city.

8. Staff Report

Susan

- STEP grant
 - OVW Grant standing for Services, Training, Education and Policies to respond to Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, and Stalking in Secondary Schools Program. Susan is currently working with the Ferndale school district on this grant, it will be for three years with up to a \$550,000 award. The 1st year will be all planning. There will be ten sites in the country that will receive the award. All of the key players are on the Commission.
- Law & Justice Committee
 - Susan would like to reform the committee. Susan will contact people individually asked everyone to let her know if they are interested.

- The Protection Order Conference will be on May 13; the actual brochure for this will go out soon.
- Susan will send an email about the cell phone collection drive so everyone can forward the information onto their coworkers. The contest is done at the end of May. This is for any phone. These phones will get serviced and have 3000 minutes put onto them. The phones are given to victims of DV. Ferndale Police Department is coordinating to win this competition would give us a national stage to show what Whatcom County is doing.

9. Adjourn

Rebecca

Upcoming Meetings

Executive Committee	Tues, 4/19/2011	11:00 – 12:30	@ Bellingham P.D.
DV in the Workplace Committee	Fri, 4/29/2011	12:00 – 1:00	@ DSHS
DV Commission: Annual Meeting	Thurs, 5/26/2011	10:00 – 11:30	@ Bellingham P.D.

THANK YOU for your time and dedication to ending domestic violence in Whatcom County!

BWCCADV

Bellingham - Whatcom County
Commission Against Domestic Violence

Thursday, May 26th, 2011 from 10:00 –
11:30 am

@ Bellingham Police Department

The mission of the Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence is to provide leadership in the community's effort to reduce and prevent domestic violence.

Members Attending:

Pat Buchinski, Karen Burke, Mary Dumas, Bill Elfo, Sheri Emerson, Kirsten Hammer, Gary Jensen, Mike Knapp, Dave McEachran, Linda Quinn, Todd Ramsay, Manuel Reta, Becky Skaggs, Dan Story, Cherie Stutesman, Bruce Van Glubt, Greg Winter

Members Absent:

Laurie Alexander, Regina Delahunt, Nikki Finkbonner, Rebecca Johnson, Jon Komorowski, Sherry Mallory, Joan Hoisington, Linda Storck

Guests:

Darla Woolman

Staff Attending:

Susan Marks, Director
Sue Parrot, Program Supervisor
Meaghan Connell, Administrative Assistant

Todd Ramsay, the Commission Vice Chair, called the March 2011 Meeting of the Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence to order at 10:00 a.m., Thursday, May 26, 2011 at the Bellingham Police Department, 505 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, WA.

Business Meeting

Welcome and Introductions were made by everyone at the meeting.

Public Comment

- No public Comment

MOTION: Approval of Minutes from March 24, 2011 Commission Meeting

- Pat Buchinski made a Motion to accept the March 24, 2011 Commission Meeting minutes. Todd Ramsay seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Election of Officers

Approval of the following slate of officers:

Chair: Sheri Emerson

Vice Chair: Todd Ramsay

Secretary: Kirsten Hammer

Treasurer: Regina Delahunt

Past Chair: Rebecca Johnson (no vote required)

Susan asked for other nominations from the floor. None were made.

MOTION: Approval of the 2011-2012 Slate of Officers

- Mike Knapp made a Motion to approve the slate of officers as presented. Dave McEachran seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Strategic Plan .

- Update on process

– Becky discussed the first Strategic Planning meeting that took place on Thursday May 5th. The Committee met with Andy Cline to discuss this process. Andy is helping to build 3 to 5 key initiatives.

- Review of 2008 - 2010 strategic plan

– Rebecca, Regina, Sue and Susan met to look over the previous Strategic Plan to determine what has been completed, along with what is still relevant. Some of the areas in the previous Strategic Plan that the group thought still remained relevant was:

Maintain the DV Commission's achievements in increasing DV awareness and improved practices.

Identify and improve systemic responses to domestic violence

Develop community coordinated response to DV

Consider children's needs in our efforts and increase children and youth access to appropriate DV prevention and services

Develop a strategy for expanding DV Commission funding base

– There is also a list of on-going DV Commission initiatives (may or may not be included in the new strategic plan, but will continue to be a part of the work of the DV Commission), these include:

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Benchmark Report

Regularly evaluate the composition of the DV Commission

Conduct regular stakeholder informational presentations (e.g. City and County Councils)

Participate in Whatcom County Triple Play

– Manuel asked about expanding cultural competency in regard to children. There are many different cultures in Whatcom County and it continues to grow. What can the Commission do?

– Todd discussed having representatives from the Commission attend *The Future of Health in Whatcom County* forum at Christ the King Church on June 24th from 12pm-6pm.

Mary said that anyone can drop in. Someone from the Commission could host a 90 minute open space discussion. The forum is about looking at the framework of healthcare in Whatcom County and

discussing what kind of healthcare do we want in our community. There will be real time download of what the community is saying.

Susan will follow up with this.

•Survey

- The next step in the development of the new Strategic Plan will be to send out a survey to various stakeholders in Whatcom County.
- Data will be collected from the survey and the three themes that come out of the survey will be brought back to the full Commission.
- Susan stated that the goal with the new Strategic Plan is to have three to four broad initiatives that over time as needs arise we can fill in how to reach the goals of these initiatives. We do not want to end up in a situation where we cannot bring new priorities to the forefront.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

- October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM). The staff is going to begin working on facilitating activities for the month and putting together a calendar of events.

If anyone is interested in being a part of this committee please let Susan know.

We would like this year to be a larger scale community event. This is a celebration of survivors, our community and our accomplishments.

RACE FOR THE END

- Karen discussed Race for the End that takes place in October during DVAM. Race for the End is a 5K/10K walk run in Whatcom Falls Park. Karen suggested that DVSAS, Womenscare, and the Commission partner together this year on this event.
- Mary suggested the vigil becoming a point along the course of Race for the End. Have a point during the race where the survivors are recognized.

VIGIL

- Communities use vigils to mourn those lost. The missing link at our vigil is the connection between the survivors and the victims. Let our clients know about DVAM and the vigil. Do a better job with outreach to the survivors. Let them know they can share their story.
- Bern Haggerty suggested making a map of locations in Whatcom County where we have had fatalities to bring awareness to community members.

Safety & Accountability Audit Presentation

- Sue acknowledged all of the members on the safety audit team, and explained that the audit does not happen without the team.
- Randy Carroll said that a project like this would not be possible without someone to lead, and this is not the first time Sue has coordinated an audit for the greater Whatcom County community. Without all of the sacrifices and time she has made this would not have been successful

• Sue Parrott - Program Supervisor, BWCCADV

The Protection Order and Safety Audit is a part of the GTEA grant. This is BWCCADV's fourth Safety Audit. Some background on Safety Audits is that they are quite similar to a financial audit in that you examine from the point of where something goes in to when it goes out.

We are not auditing people, we are looking for directives.

This process was designed by Ellen Pence and the question that is asked is, are the systems really working for Domestic Violence. This tool can be used in a lot of different arenas.

- With this audit we started from the point of a petitioner coming into one of the two DV agencies or the court. From here we observe the courts response to the petition and what law enforcement did with the order in terms of service.
- The agencies that volunteered for the Safety audit included, *Bellingham Police Department, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services, Ferndale Police Department, Whatcom County District Court, Whatcom County Sheriff's Office, Whatcom County Superior Court, and Womenscare Shelter.*
- The safety audit team that is selected is multidisciplinary. The audit team included, Karen Burke, Executive Director, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services, Randall Carroll, Consultant, Profectus, LLC, Bern Haggerty, Staff Attorney, Lummi Victims of Crime, Mary Holton, Legal Assistant, Northwest Justice Project, Sue Howell, Detective/Patrol Officer, Bellingham Police Department, Michelle Hull, Staff Attorney, Lummi Victims of Crime, Evan Jones, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, Whatcom County Prosecutor's Office, Jo Justesen, Legal Support Coordinator, Womenscare Shelter, and Ronaye Tylor, Police Support Services Lead, Ferndale Police Department.
- Each of them underwent training before the audit process. The audit started last August and the team worked until January.

In the safety audit process how you identify gaps is by listening as well as looking at things objectively. The team asked petitioners what worked and what did not work, and had a focus group for advocates and asked what had worked best for them. During this process always keeping in mind, *if I was a petitioner what I would need*, and looking at all possibilities. They also did 43 formal interviews and read through 50 case files. Had each person interviewed describe their work routines.

Bern Haggerty – Staff Attorney, Lummi Victims of Crime

This report is not meant to be a simple judgment, but more of an exercise in what can be done to improve this process.

- Gap #1: Courthouse and courtroom procedures make it possible for respondents (batterers) to contact and intimidate petitioner (victims), resulting in safety concerns for petitioners (victims).
Overall Problem: Physical assaults at the courthouse and intimidation along with abuse in court. If no one shows up to get a PO then that in is a serious problem. If this process discourages people in getting a PO then we are sending the wrong message. The message should be that if you are seeking a protection order and you get one, you will be safe.
- Availability of a Deputy is critical for those seeking a PO. While the judge is watching and listening to them testify someone is watching the abuser to make sure they are not being intimidating. If there is intimidation by the abuser it will not be tolerated.
- Use of the same elevator along with the close proximity of seating while petitioner is testifying in the courthouse poses a safety and intimidation concern as well.
- Some recommendations in filling these gaps would be to have everyone know the role of the Deputy in the courtroom. Practices, Procedures & Guidelines, DV Manual for Judges along with a Centralized DV Protection Order Court for all POs.

- Gap #2: Although the domestic violence protection order process is pro se, it is complex and not all petitioners receive the assistance and support necessary to understand the process and make fully informed decisions.

- Filing a PO without a safety plan and without an advocate contributes to this gap. One of the key recommendations from WSCADV's fatality review is for all courts issuing protection orders to have advocates onsite. Doing this could make a significant difference.

Victims of domestic violence should know that there is no wrong door and that they will be helped.

Randy Carroll – Consultant, Profectus, LLC

Gap #3: Petitioners seeking protection orders face procedures and responses across and within agencies that are inconsistent and sometimes not fully grounded in an understanding of the law and dynamics of battering.

- The strength of this Commission is the collaborative mission to make changes in this community.

- We need to strengthen the broad dynamics of domestic violence, not paint everyone with the same brush and make sure all of the people involved have focused training for their work setting.

- Courts and law enforcement strengthen practitioners' knowledge on the dynamics of domestic violence and battering by conducting training relevant to the practitioners' position and work setting.

- Courts, law enforcement and domestic violence agencies as needed, build in systemic training and an understanding on the overall domestic violence protection order process for all key practitioners.

- Courts create and utilize a checklist to ensure orders are completed. King County has developed a check list and does sit on the State Coalition. This is working for King County.

- Courts review the process for ex parte hearings and consider ways to increase information to petitioners, if appropriate, when temporary orders are denied.

- We need to get outside of where we are in our specific disciplines to look at the overall problems and issues.

- Gap #4: Standard and consistent responses to reducing respondent access to firearms (and dangerous weapons) in the protection order process are lacking, despite petitioner safety concerns and practitioner knowledge of the dangers of domestic violence and firearms.

There is currently a federal law prohibiting the possession of firearms.

What does law enforcement face if the courts do not ask for the firearms to be surrendered? Put a work group together on how to do this, firearms is the weapon that is used in the majority of fatalities.

- In regard to resource constraints, with the workgroup, everyone can get together to help consolidate and combine resources, get creative ideas on how to streamline the process.

- Order for weapons surrender needs to be a part of the safety planning process. Accountability is a large piece of this audit.

- Gap #5: Multiple practices and procedures around service and process of protection orders place victims at risk at a time when the need for safety is actually heightened.

- Some of the recommendations for this gap included 24/7 Service of protection orders and entry into WACIC and NCIC (no weekends or evenings off)

- Law enforcement agencies review the practice of not serving notice of hearings without an order... or courts order the service.
- Safety of the victim is foremost and Law Enforcement needs to reconsider contacting the respondent prior to serving an order or notice of hearing.

Jo Justesen - Legal Support Coordinator, Womenscare Shelter

Gap #6: Assessment of the context, severity and impact of violence and implications for risk, danger and safety for the petitioner is not consistently addressed throughout the protection order process. The danger level goes up as soon as the PO has been submitted.

We need a fuller exploration, understanding, and response to risk and danger indicators. Some recommendations are:

- Judicial officers receive ongoing judicial education to recognize the increased lethality risk represented by stalking, sexual assault, homicide and suicide threats by an abuser, as well as an overview on all risk factors associated with lethality and dangerousness.
- Court staff, law enforcement and dv agencies receive ongoing training on stalking and sexual assault within dv and incorporate training into standard practices.

THANK YOU for your time and dedication to ending domestic violence in Whatcom County!

BWCCADV

Bellingham - Whatcom County
Commission Against Domestic Violence

Thursday, July 28th, 2011 from 10:00 – 11:30 am
@ Bellingham Police Department Training Room

The mission of the Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence is to provide leadership in the community's effort to reduce and prevent domestic violence.

Members Attending:

Laurie Alexander, Karen Burke, Mary Dumas, Bill Elfo, Sheri Emerson, Rebecca Johnson, Mike Knapp, Todd Ramsay, Manuel Reta, Becky Skaggs, Linda Storck, Cherie Stutesman,

Members Absent:

Pat Buchinski, Regina Delahunt, Nikki Finkbonner, Kirsten Hammer, Joan Hoisington, Gary Jensen, Jon Komorowski, Dave McEachran, Sherry Mallory, Linda Quinn, Dan Story, Bruce Van Glubt, Greg Winter, Darla Woolman

Staff Present:

Susan Marks
Meaghan Connell

Sheri Emerson, the DV Commission Chair, called the July 2011 Meeting of the Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence to order at 10:00 a.m., Thursday, July 28, 2011 at the Bellingham Police Department, 505 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, WA.

Business Meeting

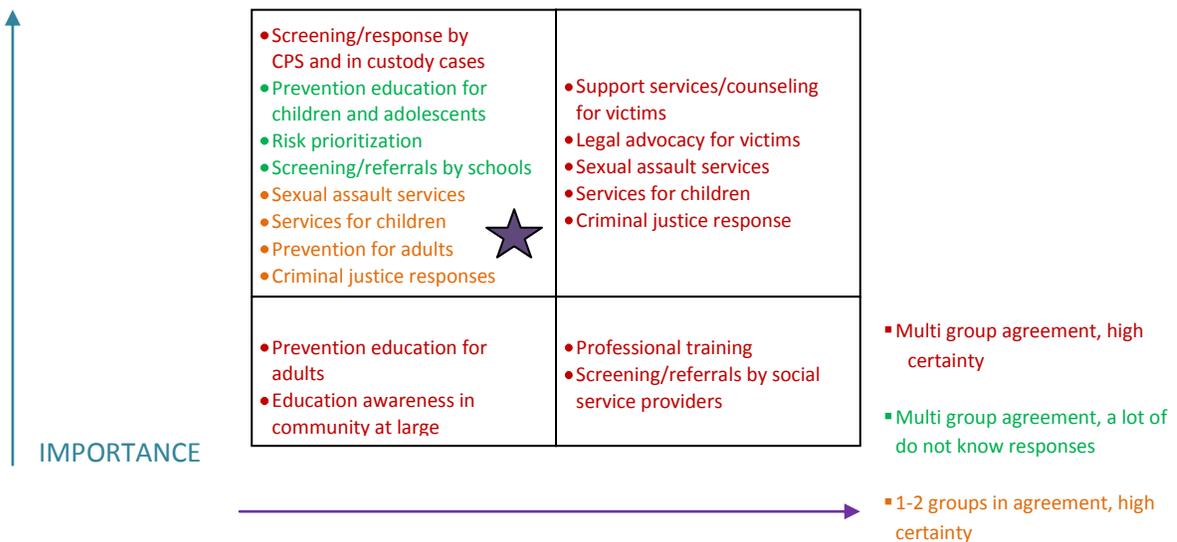
1. **Welcome and Introductions** were made by everyone at the meeting
2. **Public Comment**
 - No public Comment
3. **Consent Agenda**
 - Did not have a quorum present to approve minutes from May 26, 2011 Meeting, and the 2011 REVISED Budget. These will be presented again at the September meeting.
4. **DV Commission Survey**
 - Survey Results
 - Susan presented on the community survey results with a reminder that this information was more about input from the community, not necessarily a specific direction.
 - Had a total of 299 respondents, out of that number 249 completed the survey. This gave us an 83% completion rate.
 - The survey results also contained 30 people in perpetrator treatment and 21 victim survivor service respondents.

- Mary asked if we knew how many people got the survey. Susan said that we cannot be sure, it was a snowball sampling, people were asked to forward it on.
- Each person who took the survey had to identify their field of service/could only pick one. They were also asked to select their Organizational role.
- The survey responses brought in different levels and backgrounds in regard to the community's responsibility of a response to protect victims, and reduce domestic violence. Majority of people considers this a priority. Good we got some that did not think of it as a priority; it shows we got a wide range of responses, including those that are not connected to this issue.
- An observation on the data we received from those in perpetrator treatment was that in the surveys some respondents said they did not know anyone that had been abused or who had been abusive.
- The field where respondents had the most familiarity with the DV Commission was the Civil and Criminal Justice.
- Discussion: What stood out in survey results?
- *DV Priority by Field of Service* - Those in the field of service that identified themselves by Business and Interested Community Member saw significant drop in Domestic Violence being a priority.
- *DV Community based Services Evaluation* – We want to focus above the line as being our potential priorities. This is a great tool to be able to visualize this.
- This graph has really helped us determine where are focus should be moving forward. It was also suggested that this graph would be good when looking at reallocating resources to see where we are spending money that might be a low priority.
- A trend that came across from the surveys was a low knowledge on perpetrator treatment. This might be because people are more aware of victim related responses and may not know about other DV responses in our community.
- The survey results showed Professional Training to be Low Importance-High Effectiveness, Todd said that the comment he was receiving as to why people responded in this way is that we continue to get the same training and it seems to be stuck in a rut. Mary suggested that maybe we have capped out the effectiveness of this domain and we might need to come at it from another side. We are looking at a complex system, not a duality; it is not just a choice between this or that. Rebecca suggested that we not put equal value on each one since they are not necessarily equal quadrants. Karen pointed out that in the survey the participants were asked to rank these different areas by importance, and personally if it was a choice between general education and professional training, professional training would have been lower on the list.
- Manuel stated that children's lives are at stake at times, how many times are the teachers involved? How much education do the teachers have? How can they get this feedback to help them along? Susan said that these questions have kept coming up. Becky suggested using Domestic Violence Awareness Month to bring this into the schools.
- Rebecca noted that culturally specific services and programming was ranked as low importance, but we don't know if any people of color and/or from the non-dominant culture responded to the survey – so perhaps this is not representative of the actual need.
- Greg and Susan are going to talk about a way of getting this information back to the community.

5. Strategic Plan

- Review of retreat, missed opportunities, strategic initiatives
-

<p>Opportunities Missed</p> <p>Fatality Review and Response</p> <p>Funding Opportunities</p> <p>Follow-Up on initiatives and resources already set up (health care, media, audits)</p> <p>Perpetrator Plan</p> <p>Family Justice Center (discussion)</p> <p>Differentiation of DV Commission role from service providers</p>	<p>To Explore and implement systems coordination opportunities:</p> <p>1) Children/Youth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Policy Screening in CPS/Custody Cases Prevention in early childhood/elementary Supervised Visitation <p>2) Perpetrators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> System Review <p>3) Victims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DV in the Workplace Fatality Review Health Care Medical DVS (Small Cities Advocate) <p>4) Civil/Criminal Justice System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training/Conferences Audit Recommendations <p>5) Community Plan to End DV</p>	<p>Strategic Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic violence specialist (prosecution based advocate in small cities) Professional trainings and conferences (CJ, DV, Schools, health care, media) Follow up audit recommendations Perpetrator systems review Fatality review DV in the workplace Screening referrals – CPS and Custody Cases School Policy Early childhood/elementary age intervention and prevention Supervised visitation
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The charts above including the community survey.

EFFECTIVENESS

show the results of the strategic planning retreat, importance/effectiveness measures from the

- A few months ago it was determined that we needed to update our strategic plan. Andy Cline was hired to facilitate this process as a consultant; this is the first result after the group met.
- We will not be making any final decisions and will use the full DV Commission as a sounding board when we come back in September. As we move forward with the strategic plan we want to continue to be looking at this from the thirty thousand foot level.
- Please put resources aside right now and do not think about this in terms of what we can and cannot do. It is easy to get caught up in the detail of things. As we move forward then we can look at what funding may dictate where we go.
- During the retreat we each discussed what opportunities we thought the Commission may have missed and then from there discussed what stood out on this survey.

- Taking what we heard from the group we began breaking these things out and bucketing them. Previously the Commission has had similar committees as to how we have bucketed these different initiatives; we feel this means that we are on the right track.
- Regina helped to bring the history and background piece during this discussion. Some questions we asked the group was: What did we miss from the survey? What did we miss from the history? What did we miss from the work that we do?
- Rebecca said that it would have been good to pull out people that took the survey who used to be, or are currently, on the Commission to differentiate from service providers.
- Manuel asked specifically about doctors that may have taken this survey.
- Karen said that there is a huge percentage of victims that do disclose to doctors.
- Discussion: Anything you want to add/subtract to list?
- Looking at the list of initiatives and potential committees, if these would be our committees again going forward, they need priorities.
- We pulled initiatives from the survey that fell within this. Again it was important to keep the initiatives at a thirty thousand level. Some of these initiatives could be things that are handed over. Or we may have to look for funding specifically for an initiative.
- Once the initiatives are decided they will then go back to the DV Commission committees, and they will define it. Please remember that all of these have priority they just need to be put into an order
- Prioritizing of strategic initiatives (sticky dot exercise)
- Rebecca stated that the work of the Commission is to do system reviews and audits, what we are being asked to do with the Strategic Plan is to target what we want to do over the next few years. Mary agreed saying it is about prioritization; strategy vs. tactics.
- Sheri agreed, all of these initiatives are important, if something does not get any dots it does not mean it will fall off the table.
- Becky stated that once this process is complete and these initiatives have been prioritized this will give Susan and Becky time to look at this and see if we are able to move forward. This is an exciting opportunity, many have stayed on the Commission because of the work we have done in the past, as we go forward the goal will be when we come back in September we will have this plan. Susan said that If we have to we can bring this back in November.
- If we receive the STEP grant (we will know in September) it will put the school policy at the forefront. Manuel asked about the DV School Policy the Meridian School district adopted, and why no other school district has adopted it. It was explained that a past Commission member was the Superintendent of Meridian School District so it was able to go forward. Manuel asked if there was any feedback from the Meridian School district about the policy. Todd said that the Commission has not had any contact with the Superintendent or Principals to follow up on this policy.
- Discussion: Highlight what emerges from prioritization
- The Fatality Review received the most Red Dots (1st Priority) followed by the DVS position. If you take a look at these and where they fall in the groups, it will give the committees the ability to define them and a path of how we can change DV in our community.
- Next steps
- Susan will send this out the strategic initiatives via email so the Commission members not at the meeting can vote on their prioritized initiatives.

6. Staff Report

- DV Awareness Month

- The Vigil and the labyrinth will be on the same night. We will be changing the venue of the vigil as well. The court can be a difficult space for a survivor so this year the Vigil will be held on the Library Lawn. And the Labyrinth will be inside the Library. Melanie Springer who is a motivational speaker will be speaking at the Vigil.
- It is very important that Commission members be there.
- Race for the End will be October 2nd this is put on by Womenscare and DVSAS.
- Friday October 28 Assumption Church will be putting on a non denominational prayer service.
- Verizon Wireless Hopeline Grant
- Mike Knapp spearheaded this campaign of who could collect the most cell phones. Whatcom County was the winner. Thank you to everyone who helped. The Commission will receive a ten thousand dollar award. Mike Knapp was presented with a cake made by decorators at Haggan to look like a cell phone.
- **Adjourn @ 11:30**

THANK YOU for your time and dedication to ending domestic violence in Whatcom County!

BWCCADV

Bellingham - Whatcom County
Commission Against Domestic Violence

Tuesday, October 4, 2011 from 9:00 – 10:30
@ Bellingham Police Department Training Room

The mission of the Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence is to provide leadership in the community's effort to reduce and prevent domestic violence.

Members Attending:

Laurie Alexander, Mary Dumas, Sheri Emerson, Todd Ramsay, Manuel Reta, Becky Skaggs, Linda Storck, , Nikki Finkbonner, Kirsten Hammer, Joan Hoisington, Jon Komorowski, Dave McEachran, Sherry Mallory, Linda Quinn, Dan Story, Bruce Van Glubt, Darla Woolman

Members Absent:

Pat Buchinski, Karen Burke, Regina Delahunt, Bill Elfo, Gary Jensen, Rebecca Johnson, Mike Knapp, Cherie Stutesman, Greg Winter

Staff Present:

Susan Marks
Meaghan Connell

Guest:

Ty Schroyer: Perpetrator Treatment Provider; SeaMar Community Health Center

Sheri Emerson, the Commission Chair, called the October 2011 Meeting of the Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence to order at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday October 4, 2011 at the Bellingham Police Department, 505 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, WA.

1. **Welcome and Introductions** were made by everyone at the meeting

2. **Public Comment**

- No public Comment

3. **Consent Agenda**

Sheri

5 mins

- **MOTION: Approval of Minutes from the May26, 2011 Commission Meeting**
- **MOTION: Approval of DV Commission 2011 REVISED Budget**
- **MOTION: Approval of Minutes from the July 28th, 2011 Commission Meeting**
- Todd Ramsay made a Motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Becky Skaggs seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

4. **Staff Report**

- Meeting availability for 2012
- Commission members were asked to fill out their availability with the worksheets provided for 2012 and fax or email them back to Susan so we can set a meeting schedule for next year.
- GTEA grant update

- Susan informed the Commission that for the fourth time the Commission will be the recipient of the GTEA grant. This really does show what a good job we have done through our previous grants. At the end of the GTEA 4 grant we will have had this grant for eight years, and will have received 1.2 million dollars from OVW for the community.
- We will start the GTEA 4 grant in January and will hopefully have the remainder of the GTEA 3 grant spent by the end of the year.
- One of the key gaps addressed in the GTEA 4 grant is to have all victims have an advocate throughout the court process. We will now have a legal advocate at the courthouse to help with this. This is a new position.
- Mary asked if the Small Cities Report would include translation service from Border Patrol and when it becomes an immigration issue, this is a matter of accessing who is tracking that data. Susan was unsure if that data is being tracked. Mary will follow up on this.
- STEP grant update
 - The STEP Grant is a brand new grant and pilot project. We are one of ten sites selected for this grant.
 - The Ferndale School District is the recipient of the grant and the Commission will be responsible for the grant implementation. Linda Quinn is Ferndale’s Superintendent and a Commission member and is very committed to this.
 - This grant also means we will need to hire someone to coordinate this.
 - This project is an expansion on our current School Policy.
 - The Ferndale schools that are involved will be the middle school and the high schools.
 - The hired person will be a Commission staff member who will be full time for the next three years.
 - Susan also noted that there was a total of 6 weeks to complete the STEP Grant application and we already had the superintendent and police chief of Ferndale at the table in support of it, which helped get a strong application, and shows the importance of having a body such as the Commission.

5. Strategic Plan Becky 55 mins

- Background on strategic plan
 - Becky began discussing the process of where we are with our Strategic Plan, and how we got to this point.
 - This process goes back to over a year ago. In the summer of 2010 Kathy Washatka came in to work with the Commission to help figure out where we would go in the future. During this transition Kathy Washatka did interviews with Commission members. Everyone agreed that Domestic Violence was important to spend time on in our community, and that people on the Commission wanted to be utilized.
 - From there the Executive Committee began looking for a new director.
 - Within six months after hiring a Director, we had a Strategic Planning Committee. Everyone on the DV Commission was invited to participate on this Committee, to ensure that anyone who wanted to be intimately involved in the process had the opportunity.
 - In April we hired Andy Cline a consultant to help facilitate the Strategic Planning Process. Andy had wanted us from this process to walk away with three to five initiatives.
 - In May after our meeting we came out with two outcomes:
 - Susan Marks, Sue Parrott, Regina Delahunt, and Rebecca Johnson - Looked over prior Strategic Plan to decide what was still relevant.
 - Susan Marks, Kirsten Hammer, Becky Skaggs and Greg Winter – Developed a community survey to send out to various community members from a variety of backgrounds. The

- survey was distributed in June and July, we received around three hundred responses and received a lot of information on people's perceptions.
- In July the Strategic Planning Committee met again and came out of that meeting with ten possible initiatives. From this meeting we still needed to have those initiatives narrowed down to three to five.
 - That same month we held a full Commission meeting where we did the sticky dot exercise on the priority of initiatives from Commission members. We also got feedback from the Commission meeting on the initiatives and the process up to this point. We did not have a quorum for the July Commission meeting so Commission members were emailed and asked to give their priorities on the initiatives; almost every Commission member gave feedback.
 - The final initiatives have come from strategies from our previous Strategic Plan, the Community Survey, and Commission member input.
 - Here we are today with our Draft Strategic Plan; this version has gone through two drafts with language changes done through the Strategic Planning Committee. With the grants we have just received we can see this plan even more clearly over the next two years.
 - Presentation of draft Strategic Plan
 - Becky read the VISION of the Commission:

The Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence envisions a safe and non-violent community in which all people are free from physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Until that vision becomes a reality, we will assure the community makes the safety of domestic violence victims and their children a priority, while holding perpetrators of violence accountable and providing them with options and long-term support for change. We will promote understanding, sensitivity and respect within our diverse community to create non-violence through holistic, community-based solutions that empower the community to help and care for itself.
 - This fits very well with where we are today.
 - As we move forward it is helpful to keep in mind the VISION of the Commission as we move through our new Strategic Plan.
 - Becky read the MISSION AND PURPOSE of the Commission that is found in our Ordinance:

In accordance with the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County ordinances that established the DV Commission, the Bellingham Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence provides leadership in our community's efforts to reduce and prevent domestic violence.

To fulfill this vital mission, we:

- *Develop, implement and monitor a comprehensive domestic violence plan.*
- *Increase community awareness and understanding of domestic violence.*
- *Serve as an advisory body regarding domestic violence issues to local governments, service agencies and the community as a whole.*
- *Develop community benchmarks to monitor change.*
- *Promote collaboration and coordination among all institutions, systems and services that respond to victims, children, offenders and others who are impacted by domestic violence.*

Serve as a community forum on domestic violence and create a mechanism for identifying issues, concerns, needs and resources.

- Mary asked if Community Benchmarks are already in place. Susan stated that this is our annual Benchmark Data Report.
- Becky moved into the GOALS of the Strategic Plan saying that these GOALS are not in any order of priority.

GOALS

To guide our work and respond to the urgent challenges facing our community in responding to and ending domestic violence, the DV Commission will focus on the following initiatives:

- *Enhance the community response to child witnesses of domestic violence.*
 - *Conduct a formal fatality review of recent intimate partner homicides.*
 - *Ensure follow-up on past DV Commission projects.*
 - *Conduct a perpetrator systems review.*
- In the past we have broken out into various Committees and have worked on different aspects of the plan. All of our initiatives originally ended up falling into our previous Committee structure. Susan and Becky were challenged by the Executive Committee to not do this, and to look at more specific Work Groups that allows us to bring people in who can ask good questions and utilize our resources much better going forward.

Enhance the community response to child witnesses of domestic violence.

- *Form a DV Commission work group to focus on enhancing the community response to child witnesses of domestic violence.*
 - *Research the process of screening and referrals for domestic violence in child protection and child custody cases, and provide and implement recommendations for improvements as needed.*
 - *Research the need for expanded intervention and prevention efforts and, if applicable, develop a plan to support community domestic violence agencies addressing these needs.*
 - *Consider projects related to supervised visitation and the model school policy as able.*
- Becky noted that the STEP Grant falls very well into place within this initiative.
 - Mary stated, that the last meeting Manuel mentioned cultural competency in child welfare, is this something that will be addressed here.
 - Manuel asked if emotional and mental were the same; Susan said that yes they were generally two words used for the same type of abuse.
 - Susan said that one of the things this work group would do would be to prioritize one of these areas. With the work group we would also bring stakeholders in that may not be members of the Commission for input, someone from the STEP Grant would also be involved.
 - There was discussion about the word “witness” and whether or not it is a criminal justice term.
 - Susan noted that witness does not necessarily mean seeing it, but that they are a part of it, they see the police coming, they see CPS; the Commission’s job would be a systems response addressing this.
 - It was suggested to use the word “experience” or “impacted by”.
 - Manuel noted that when children see their mother’s taken away that is very traumatic and emotional for them.

Conduct a formal Fatality Review of recent intimate partner homicides.

- *Use the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV) as a consultant to design and lead a formal fatality review process in Whatcom County.*
 - *Form a fatality review team, ensuring the participation of representatives from a variety of relevant disciplines as well as representatives from the DV Commission.*
 - *Conduct a fatality review of 2 – 3 recent intimate partner homicide cases in Whatcom County.*
 - *Write and release a report with findings from the review and recommendations for changes to improve victim safety and offender accountability in high lethality domestic violence cases.*
 - *Implement recommendations from the fatality review report.*
- This is not an audit. This is not a critique of the investigation. We will not be critiquing the Officers or the Prosecutors or anyone. It is a review of the entire situation leading up to the event, not a review of the response. A Fatality Review is done to minimize or eliminate victimization in the future by learning from the past.
 - The Fatality Review will be in partnership with WSCADV. WSCADV has currently been doing Fatality Reviews at the state level but would like to focus on a community.
 - For the Fatality Review we would pull together a team from a variety of disciplines, this will be slightly more in depth than a work group.
 - The team would review two to three fatalities; these cases must be closed.
 - Doing this would improve victim safety, and offender accountability in high lethality cases.

Ensure Follow-up on Past DV Commission Projects

- *Use the DV Commission’s Law & Justice Committee to prioritize and, as determined necessary, follow up on: recommendations from the Safety and Accountability Audits, and on-going funding for the Domestic Violence Specialist position.*
 - *Work with the full DV Commission to prioritize and, as determined necessary, follow up on: Domestic Violence in the Workplace, and the Health Care Survey Project.*
- This will fall on the Law and Justice Committee or the full DV Commission.
 - Susan said that the Health Care Project was a project that the Commission did several years ago. It looked at when people disclosed DV to healthcare providers along with screening questions that doctors would ask.
 - Mary asked if the Media Kit went away. Susan said that it did not and she is hoping to continue on with that project this year.

Conduct a Perpetrator Systems Review

- *Form a DV Commission work group to focus on improving accountability for perpetrators of domestic violence.*
 - *Conduct an information-gathering review of the current response to perpetrators in the civil and criminal justice systems and perpetrator treatment.*
 - *Identify improvements needed to achieve perpetrator accountability as applicable.*
 - *Work with the DV Commission to prioritize improvements and implement change as needed.*
- Linda noted that bullet one and three seemed to be very similar. Linda also said that she would like to see something mentioned about access to treatment, some cannot afford treatment or

cannot find a treatment provider. Linda said that there are those that would comply if they could, but treatment is very costly.

In addition to these strategic initiatives, the DV Commission will continue on-going projects including:

- *Coordination of Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM)*
- *Compiling and publishing the Benchmark Report*
- *Updating and publishing the Dating and Domestic Violence Resource Manual*
- *Providing annual presentations to the City and County Councils of Whatcom County*

All DV Commission efforts will focus on the following tactics:

- *Accomplishing systems change using the influence of DV Commission members.*
- *Providing high-level professional trainings and conferences.*
- *Raising community awareness.*
- *Reporting out to local governments on changes needed and accomplishments made.*

Discussion of plan:

- Becky noted that overall in the Strategic Plan there are some language changes, but that this plan is achievable in the next two years.
- Todd suggested that we approve the plan, pending the wording changes.
- Susan will change the phrase “child witness” to “children impacted by”.
- Susan said that in regard to cultural competency, we will add this as a tactic; it is something that we want to continue in all of our projects, not just in one or two.
- Becky noted that as the Strategic Plan was being built it was clear that there were ongoing projects, along with things we do not want to lose sight of.
- Sherry Mallory asked if there were additional Benchmarks we should be tracking? Susan will have the Law & Justice Committee and/or the full Commission discuss this as we prepare to write the next benchmark report, and make a note of considering additional benchmarks under “ongoing projects.”
- Laurie noted that there was never a training done on the Whatcom County Coordinated Community Response: DV, Children, and Child Maltreatment manual. Susan will add this as a possible project under the Child Witnesses Work Group.
- Bruce asked about the second bullet on the Perpetrator Systems Review, and how would we conduct a review. Susan said that the group might find out what the current response is, identify improvements that are applicable. Action steps are a way to start and figure out where to go utilizing the Work Group. Becky said that a lot of this is about bringing people together to answer these questions. A cross section of those who are interested in or have knowledge in these areas along with what are the issues and potential challenges.
- Bruce suggested that on the fourth bullet of the Perpetrator Systems Review to change the wording from IMPLEMENT to RECOMMEND. In his opinion, this would help us to get support from the courts. Linda agreed.
- Becky said that w our initiatives represent children, perpetrators, victims, and the larger system.
- Next Steps
 - Becky noted the language changes that need to be made on the Strategic Plan.
 - Change “witness” to “impacted by”.
 - Under the Perpetrator Systems Review, ID barriers to access to perpetrator treatment.

- Change fourth bullet of the Perpetrator System Initiative from IMPLEMENT to RECOMMEND.
- Add media outreach under raising community awareness.
- Add cultural competency under tactics.
- Add consideration of additional benchmarks under ongoing projects.
- Becky asked the full Commission if we are ready to adopt the Strategic Plan with the recommended changes.

- **MOTION: Adoption of the 2012-2014 Strategic Plan**

- Laurie Alexander, with said edits made a motion to adopt the 2012-2014 Strategic Plan. Manuel seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.
- Manuel asked if the Strategic Plan would be available in Spanish and Russian.
- Susan said that she would investigate that.

6. DV Awareness Month

- The Vigil is this Thursday October 6. We have moved it to the Downtown Public Library Lawn. We would like more survivors and community members to be involved. The courthouse is not the most comfortable place for some people to go. Wanted it to be more of a community space.
- On October 19th and 20th there will be a DV Conference hosted by Lummi Victims of Crime. Invitations were passed out to all Commission members. Nikki will also email the information to Susan, and she will send it out to the full Commission.
- Access Freedom is providing a training on domestic child trafficking on November 3rd. Darla will email the information to Susan, and she will email it out to the full Commission.
- Linda asked when the Commission's presentation to the City and County Councils will be on the Audit report. Susan said that the County Council presentation will be to the Finance Committee on October 11, and the City Council presentation will be on Monday October 24 to the Public Safety Committee. Todd is doing an agenda bill so the Council is aware of the presentation.

7. Adjourn @ 10:15

- Sheri thanked everyone for coming and Becky for the Strategic Plan presentation.

THANK YOU for your time and dedication to ending domestic violence in Whatcom County!