

# Mt. Baker Foundation Partnership and Planning Meeting Minutes

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM  
EAST WHATCOM REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

## In attendance

Greg Winter, OC  
Jessica Bee, EWCC, CVCC, OC, MBCC, CVPRD  
Richard Whitson, EWCC, CVPRD  
Cheryl Thompson, EWCC  
Shorty Bjornstad, EWCC  
Carl McDaniel, CVCC, MBCC, CVPRD  
Rebecca Cayen, EWCC  
Rebecca Boonstra, EWCC, CVPRD  
Wa'Lynn Sheridan, MBCC, CVCC  
Kristi Slette, WFCN, CVCC, MBCC  
Matthew Thuney, SFVCA, KAVZ  
Jeff Margolis, SFVCA  
Aly Robinson, WCHD  
Astrid Newell, WCHD  
Debbie Ahl, MBF  
Larry Ziels, MBF  
Scott Wallace, MBF  
Ione Adams, MBF

*EWCC: East Whatcom Community Council*

*CVCC: Columbia Valley Community Connections*

*OC: Opportunity Council*

*MBCC: Mt. Baker Community Coalition*

*WCHD: Whatcom County Health Department*

*CVPRD: Columbia Valley Park & Recreation District*

*SFVCA: South Fork Valley Community Association*

## **Mt. Baker Foundation Introduction and Background: Debbie**

Debbie shared the vision and mission statement of the Mt. Baker Foundation and provided background. The funding came from Mt. Baker Kidney Center which served Whatcom County for 40 year. It was a 5 star kidney center, very well run and cared for building and organization that was very supportive of staff and patients. The Kidney Center sold operations to DaVita Corporation to run the dialysis center in May of 2016.

The Board considered dispersing funds from that sale to another foundation or creating their own. They went through a year or more of visioning, which was filled with meetings and information about socially purposeful investment and need for community engagement in the process. At the end of visioning process the board was determined to create their own Foundation; the name comes from Mt. Baker Kidney Center.

The Board of MBF is comprised of many members from the Legacy board but new members have joined. They continue to scale and build board as needed. Some of the important things to the Board were to be a catalyst to create transformational change for years to come in Whatcom County. Debbie presented the vision (how they want the world to be) and the mission (what guides their day to day work).

All board work is done through three committees. These are investigative committees looking into how the Foundation can help in the specific issues. The committees are early childhood care, upstream factors leading to chronic disease, quality of life and quality of care for kidney disease and dialysis patients.

The last committee is unique, more granular types of supports - oral health care and urgent dental care for dialysis patients, for example.

- One grant goes to general assistance policy for people with Kidney Disease and/or on dialysis.
- One grant went to pay for kidney research at UW

Upstream Factors Committee

- Also interested in having someone from East County on this committee

This committee is focused on the root causes of chronic diseases: ACEs, social determinants of health, etc. They have adopted a place-based approach focus on East County. MBF is interested in engaging stakeholders and populations/communities not currently represented at the table such as the Nooksack Tribe, Ukrainian, and Hispanic communities. They want to hear from the broad East County community. MBF has funded the Food bank for \$425,000; they are committed and very interested in East County.

No preconceived ideas, here to learn, help, and facilitate. Not here to tell.

*What about East County has sparked MBF interest?*

Scott: Sense of community, readiness to address challenges they face.

Larry: community is trying to improve; maybe MBF can help facilitate that.

### **Conversation about Last Meeting**

Kristi: Last meeting was to understand what MBF was asking of the community and if we were ready to walk together in this work. Important conversation: when we say East County, what do we mean? Community is not always geographic. What do we need to consider for equity? Sense of community, but also senses of communities.

Wa'Lynn: constantly working on engaging community members. Constantly improving on what that looks like. Recognizing the capacity of professionals.

Greg: There have been efforts to engage larger groups of people for various things - capture and build on some of the work that has been done, learn from those activities.

Kristi: numbers don't always look like the effort put out.

Shorty: The group we want to help is also busy; they may not be able to reach back. Daycare is an issue with many neighbors.

Wa'Lynn: Possibilities of National Night Out and pop ups (table, information, Hello Neighbor newsletter distribution). There are opportunities for partnership with existing work.

Kristi: Kendall Summer Fest prioritization session and pop ups could have suggestion boxes.

Jeff: question leads to major problem here: communication. We have a radio station, but prohibited by geologic formations to getting farther south. It is hard to get internet here. Anything that lends to communication will be transformative.

Matthew: Foothills Communication Hub project - how to keep people informed, electronic communication, radio, paper newspaper.

Conversation about Internet/communication difficulties in East County.

### **Description and Discussion about East County**

MBF does not have a boundary in mind.

Potentially high poverty rates in the Columbia Valley an interest for investment?

Many things that were a part of the selection of East County, MBF saw a need, a community that was striving to improve.

Wa'Lynn: different communities: Maple Falls + Glacier, Deming (farm land), Highway nine and East - South Fork.

Cheryl: Food Access Plan mirrors MBSD because FFB serves MBSD boundaries

Kristi: Glenhaven does have youth and families that need support. Where do we go with this big east county word?

Shorty: Do we take the assumption that this building is the core of the region? If we take that assumption what could we do to most help the core?

### ***Where could there be the biggest impact regarding social determinants?***

Debbie: create a successful level of community engagement - what is a reasonable parameter? 15 mile or 15 minute drive time around the EWRRRC? (Hub, resource development, social services). What is a successful strategy for community engagement and reasonable level?

### ***Brainstorming for Broader Community Engagement***

Ethnic Communities not currently represented in this meeting

Ukrainian Community, live in the UGA, they have an Orthodox Church

Hispanic Church in Maple Falls

Nooksack Tribal participation

Slavic Church Youth Group - Friday nights at 7:30

Maria from the Library

Debbie: Develop the strategy and population that makes sense. Propose a process to Debbie and Board, no timeline.

MBF: We are not looking for this to be a burden. We want to assist in whatever you need.

MBF would like inclusion of teens, elders, Nooksack Tribal, Ukrainian Communities, Hispanic community.

What is the right model of community engagement?

Capacity of people at the table is limited; possibility of expanding capacity? Offer someone an opportunity for employment?

Greg: Reaching out to mavens in communities - community engagement through food. Strong cross section of the work happening at meals, something to consider.

Community meals program is struggling, little funding. Could be a way to engage broader community.

#### **Next Steps**

- Develop strategic plan for reaching out to communities with scope and plan.
- Identification of some residents that represent missing populations, ask outside of typical comfort zone (Ronda B., Maria, Andrew, Martha, Ivan (pastor at church))
- Opportunities are really soon to start getting input: thumbs up - do we want a box and sign for priorities? (Thumbs up)

Why is it important to engage? We are looking for priorities and community needs; ensure all different voices in the community are represented. Be nimble about how that engagement works.

Looking for someone to represent the congregation, not the population, take information back to their communities. Their input is valuable for us to make decisions.