



330 Pacific Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
www.communityactionskagit.org
(360) 416-7585

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

April 23, 2026, 5:00pm

In attendance:

Members of the Board:

Public Sector:

Melissa Beaton – not present

Ron Wesen – present

Danny Hagen – present

Ash Gregorius – present

Elli Haddick – not present

Private Sector:

Kate Bennett – present

Silvia Reed – not present

Gregg Davidson – present

Morgan Curry – present

Carl Young – present

Client Sector:

Kati Ortiz – not present

Heather Wallace – not present

Loly Gomez – present

Tina Tate – present

Vacant

Staff: Bill Henkel, Sandi Phinney, Ayumi Orthmeyer, Michele Metcalf

I. CALL TO ORDER

President Danny Hagen called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm.

QUORUM PRESENT

II. CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes from the March 26, 2026 Board of Directors Meetings

Correspondence:

Statement from CEO of the National Community Action Foundation David Bradley on Future Leadership Transition

Press Release: Home Trust of Skagit Signs Purchase and Sale Agreement for 43 Acres in Hamilton; Begins Feasibility Work for Affordable Housing and Flood-Resilient Community Development

Division Reports: Melissa Self, Jazmin Flores and Sandi Phinney, Elizabeth Jennings, Taylor Babcock, and Michele Metcalf

Motion to approve the consent agenda (March Board minutes) made by Kate, seconded by Loly. Passed unanimously.

III. DISCUSSION AGENDA

6. Finance; Hagen

Ayumi reviewed the April Finance report through February 2026. She and Danny wanted to highlight what an amazing start to the year. We're showing a net income of \$713,807 year to date (before depreciation and unrealized gains), and \$46,469 net positive for the month of February (without FCS revenue, estimated at another \$42k). We're also doing well with cash flow (49.75 days cash in hand, and 35.59 days in investments), and we thus have moved an additional \$50,000 back into investments. Danny noted that because we have received several grant payments up front, there will be some months ahead that will likely look negative as we spend down these grants for their intended use.

Motion to approve the April Finance Report (thru February) made by Carl, seconded by Tina. Passed unanimously.

7. Personnel

Danny reviewed the annual HR Dashboard, prepared by our HR Director, Mindy Engstrom. We're now stable at about 100 staff, while we've expanded geographically (east county, Anacortes), and in certain key programs such as Energy Assistance. Looking ahead, we expect growth in areas of senior support, food, and education and employment. We're also seeing generational shift to a younger, newer workforce, and we will need to respond to this, including in our onboarding and retention strategies. We're happy that we achieved a 77% retention rate last year, the highest since COVID, when people were not changing employment as frequently. Turnover is higher, though that was attributed to planned staff reductions related to seasonal work and funding constraints, not voluntary turnover. Staff engagement remains high, and we're continue to embed and deepen DEI efforts across the agency across the organization. We are fortunate to have such a strong HR department and leadership, and a positive workplace culture, and these annual dashboards and other check-in's with staff allow us to compare across the years, and focus our efforts for the most impact.

8. State of the Agency; Henkel

Bill began his review of the Dashboard by talking about important transitions, including the recent announcement that the amazing Liz Jennings, our Community Engagement Director who has been here for more than 14 years, will departing soon for a part time position closer to home so she can care for elders. Liz's portfolio was deep and wide across all aspects of our community work, though we have excellent support teams in place for each aspect of this work. Please help get out the word about the job opportunity, and remember that a candidate doesn't need to have expertise in all areas of community engagement (advocacy/policy, donor development, volunteerism, coalition building), but would oversee and orchestrate all the pieces. Also, Melissa Self, our Deputy Director who has been at the organization over 30 years, will be retiring at the end of the year. It's a big deal.

Bill celebrated the progress on the Work Plan, even though we are just through the first quarter. One example is the launch of an AI pilot the first time in doing energy screening and scheduling. Under new revenue and programs, Bill thanked Morgan for serving on a funding committee for our new Farm Loan program through the Food Distribution Center, funded by a grant from the Skagit Valley Food Co-op. We had over 30 farm applications, and the committee settled on 10 top candidates, who will each receive approximately \$7,000 "loan," which will be repaid as produce. Morgan shared her appreciation that selection committee had a good equity lens in their decision-making, recommending a mix of types of farms, small and large, new and established, Spanish and English speaking, etc. Madeline did a great job getting the right voices at the table.

We also received \$550k from Skagit Community Foundation in flood recovery funds. That money (along with other upfront grants) will pad our finance reports in the early months, but that money will be spent out soon. We're also still celebrating the success of Spirit of Hope, and the Donor Development Committee reviewed survey results for what people enjoyed, and areas for improvement. The attendance was lower than expected this year, with competing events such as the Tulip Festival Gala, but we still had a strong gross of \$132k, and a net of just over \$100k, only slightly down from last year despite the lower turnout, partly because our expenses were lower as well.

We were happy to hear the Skagit Valley Chamber will be awarding the agency the "Make a Difference" award at their April 30 event, and we expect a good turnout of staff and board. In terms of some of our key projects of late, we're grateful that the Skagit Council on Aging bravely stepped up to say they would take on the Senior Nutrition contract, with a commitment to retaining the same level of services at least through the year. We supported this effort, mostly in the background, and with hundreds of hours of staff and board time, and we're happy and grateful to see this positive transition, even if we are not taking the lead on it, and our efforts are largely in the background, and perhaps un-noticed. Similarly, we're partnering with and trying to support another organization, the Home Trust of Skagit, with a complicated housing project in Hamilton. In both of those situations, the lead organization has much less capacity than we do, but are able to focus on these projects in a way we couldn't, as we have so many things already on our plate, even if the end result of both efforts is very much aligned with our mission. Some things we support may get to success, others may not, but the support is an important thing we do. Bill said this is in some ways similar to how we approach our work with clients: our role is supportive, not directive, without the direct "levers of control." Danny compared this to one of the tenants of Leadership Skagit, the importance of enabling others to act. Though sometimes this means "toiling in obscurity," it's the right thing for our mission, and the right thing for our community – and allows us to focus our own efforts in other areas, while helping us build the most important resource of all, relationships of trust.

Housing Development

Bill reminded the board that the Kulshan View phase one groundbreaking is just prior to the May 28 in person board meeting, and will start at 4:00, not 4:30. We are also pushing forward on the possible purchase of Cascade Place, which includes the Cascade Landing apartments on the second floor. We have contracted with Ally Consulting for a feasibility study, and to create a capital funding plan. We also have conducted a capital needs assessment, and should have the results within a few weeks. We have begun discussing with the owner, Dan Mitzel, the terms of the purchase. Note that we also set up a framework of a purchase and sale agreement when we first set up the master lease. Currently, with the master lease on the 34 units, we're about breaking even on Cascade Landing. We estimate we would save up to about \$350,000/yr of lease payments if we were to be able to buy it without any private debt (less than that depending on whether we have new loan repayments). Phillipa Nye is our consultant and will be at our Board work session on May 6 for a deeper dive into all of this. Note that we do have a pre-development grant due tomorrow, which would be helpful to cover the fees of our consultant's time and the various studies needed for successful capital fundraising. As we begin negotiations, we know that Dan Mitzel will be a hard bargainer, and is currently signaling he would not sell it for less than \$7 million, even if an appraisal came in less than that (the assessed value is about \$5.2 million). Nevertheless, we intend to proceed with an appraisal, which we'll need not only for negotiations, but also for funding applications. This evening, we are seeking endorsement to move forward with negotiating a Purchase & Sale agreement. Ron asked about potential funding sources, and Michele and Bill reviewed some of the potential sources collected by Phillipa. Note also that a P&SA would need to include a period (likely to at least next fall) for fundraising before completing a purchase.

Motion to endorse moving forward on negotiating a Purchase & Sale Agreement on Cascade Place made by Gregg, seconded by Tina. Passed unanimously.

A discussion ensued about possible names for the Kulshan View property. Tina shared a summary of the conversation with the Housing Work Group that generated four leading options. She personally preferred "Kulshan

Vista Village,” as “vista” is Spanish for “view,” and “Kulshan” is a Native American name. Village also has a warm feel to it.

Motion to approve official project name for the Kulshan View development to Kulshan Vista Village, as recommended by the Housing Work Group, made by Kate, seconded by Ash. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. ADJOURN: Meeting adjourned at 6:04pm

BOARD REVIEW & APPROVAL:	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved as submitted	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved with changes noted below
x _____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Board Secretary <input type="checkbox"/> Acting Board Secretary		Date Signed