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JACK LOUWS
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

March 5, 2019

Dear Executive Louws

It is with pleasure and great anticipation I submit this application for commissioner of the Housing Authority of Whatcom County (HAWC). As a life-long resident of rural Whatcom County and 29-year employee of Opportunity Council (OC) I have observed the needs of our community members with lower incomes and the positive impact the HAWC has had on our community.

Over the last 32 years I have worked on many of the same issues the HAWC mission is intended to address. Working for the OC and living in rural Whatcom County I have witnessed the challenges many lower income residents face in accessing safe and affordable housing. The HAWC has made major strides over the years developing housing throughout Whatcom County yet the need continues to outpace the development of strategically placed resources. We continue to see some of our most vulnerable residents living in substandard housing. We know substandard housing has negative health impacts for children, seniors and people with compromised medical conditions. We also know that the stress of living in substandard housing or being homeless can exacerbate negative mental health conditions. The continued work of the HAWC can help address these issues through development, education and partnerships that increase access to safe, affordable housing.

As executive director of Opportunity Council, I have direct experience working with and partnering with the HAWC as well as working on the development of public policy and legislation that helped further the missions of both organizations. I understand the importance of being able to tell the stories of the people we are responsible for serving, telling these stories and emphasizing the need to the general public as well as governmental and legislative decision makers.

Over the years I have had direct involvement working both paid and as a volunteer with community groups and nonprofits to develop services that address local needs. Community development whether addressing housing, hunger, transportation or access to facilities requires a multipronged approach that includes needs assessment, advocacy, citizen involvement and education. Facilities and services are a challenge to get funded so it is critical that once funded organizations like the HAWC continue to deliver on their commitment to administer and maintain high quality facilities and develop effective services.

As a HAWC commissioner I can bring the perspective of having lead a nonprofit with an annual budget over 23 million dollars, an annual budget that doubled during my time as executive director. As executive director I was involved in developing annual budgets, negotiating leases, new grant contracts and supervising 7-9 direct reports who in turn supervised over 200 additional employees. I pride myself in not only increasing access to services for the people we served but also improving facilities and addressing employee compensation and benefits. During my time at the OC my primary goal was to develop a more sustainable organization that would continue to help meet the needs of the underserved and underrepresented.

I would be proud and am eager if appointed to serve as HAWC commissioner, thank you for considering my application.

Dave Finet



David W. Finet

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Objective

Seeking a volunteer opportunity that will contribute to a healthy, environmentally sustainable and socially equitable future for all citizens in our community.

Experience

June 2017 - July 2018

- Advocacy coordinator for the Washington State Community Action Partnership: The organizational mission is working to build healthy communities and eliminate poverty through a unified network of Community Action Agencies across Washington State.
- Developed advocacy strategy and coordinated the efforts of 30 Community Agencies across Washington State to achieve organizational goals.
- Met directly with legislators to advocate for policies and develop legislation related to the mission of Community Action.

August 1986 - January 2017

- Worked for Opportunity Council in Bellingham Washington serving Whatcom, Island and San Juan Counties
 - During my 29 years at Opportunity Council I had a number of positions starting with an entry-level position in weatherization then mid management positions in the housing department and my final 10 years as executive director. Throughout my career I was responsible for grants management, budgeting, reporting, supervision, personnel recruiting and program development.
 - I supervised from 7 employees to ultimately over the years being responsible for over 200 employees.
 - Administered an annual budget of over \$23 million working with over 100 funding sources.
 - I worked closely with funders at the federal, state, county and local city levels to develop and administer antipoverty and community development facilities and programs.
 - Spearheaded an effort to work with a community group to establish the East Whatcom Community Council at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center.
 - Partnered with local nonprofits to deliver services and develop housing opportunities for people with low incomes.
 - Implemented a rural home rehabilitation revolving loan program to help lower income homeowners have access to resources to repair their homes.
 - Worked with Northwest Youth Services to launch the concept and development of 22 North subsequently completed by Opportunity Council after my retirement.

Education

- Graduated from Nooksack Valley High School in 1975
- Attended Yakima Valley College and Skagit Valley College 1976-1977

Skills

- Understanding and experience with grants management
- Familiar with the housing needs of people with low income in Whatcom County
- Personnel management and professional development
- Experience in organizational development and financial management
- Advocating for the development of resources to help the disadvantaged and people with low incomes