

Kern County Commission On Aging

Yolanda Prado, Chairperson
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**REGULAR COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING
MINUTES**

January 23, 2023, 1:00 p.m.
Video Meeting via Zoom

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Prado called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE & MOMENT OF SILENCE:

The flag salute was completed and a moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

*(*Chairperson, **Vice Chairperson, *** Parliamentarian)*

Commission Members Present:

Susan Bodnar, Barbara Goodlow, Jan Lemucchi, **Stephanie Lynch, Sandy Morris, Jeremy Oliver, Linda Oswald, Roger Oswald, *Yolanda Prado, and ***Judy Snyder

Excused Absences: Gloria Brown, Doris Duquette, Devora Gonzalez, Kris Grasty, Norma Jackson, and Bill Wright

A QUORUM WAS PRESENT

Honorary Commission Members Present:

None.

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Laura M. Juarez – Office Services Coordinator

Guests:

Monica Fitzgerald, Jens Blum, Peggy Langels, Leslie Devitt, Jose Lopez, Joseph Anderson, Elaine Anthony, Gayla Hughes, Hermandeep Dhaliwal, Tammy Hartsch, and Kandi Mosqueda

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. A letter was sent to District 3 Supervisor, Jeff Flores, recommending the appointment of Sherry Gomez to the Commission on Aging.
2. We received a card from former Commissioner Roland Maier, thanking all the COA members. He enjoying the time spent on the commission and with all best wishes and a special thanks to Jeremy, Lito, and Laura for all their support. Mr. Maier resigned from the COA effective December 31, 2022.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

None.

Commissioner Comments :

1. Chair Prado discussed meeting in person for the Commission on Aging meetings beginning in March 2023. There was discussion about having Hybrid meetings and what the Brown Act says about that. There are two options for teleconferencing per the Brown Act.

Option A: Agendas must be posted at each teleconference location where a legislative body member is present, all teleconference locations must be listed on the agenda, which means Commissioners would have to disclose their address, all teleconference locations must be ADA-compliant, and at least a quorum of the legislative body must be present within the agency's territory.

Option B: Can be used only in the event of "just cause" or an "emergency circumstance." The request to appear remotely pursuant to the emergency exception should be placed on the posted agenda, if possible. If insufficient time to place the request on the agenda when it is posted 72 hours prior to the meeting, the body can still act on the request. Agendas do not need to be posted at each teleconference location. A member attending remotely must participate through both audio and visual technology. When a vote is taken, the member must disclose if someone over the age of 18 is in the same room and their relationship to that person. Local agencies do not need to allow public participation at each (or any) location where members are joining remotely, but instead must "clearly advertise" how members of the public can participate on the agenda. Agencies must, however, allow for public attendance and participation at the primary meeting location where the quorum is present. In the event the meeting broadcast is disrupted, the meeting must pause until it is restored. A quorum of the legislative body members must participate in person at a single physical location within the body's territory, as identified on the agenda. The location must be open to the public and ADA compliant.

2. Chair Prado commented on the Resource Guide that Commissioner Lemucchi shared with the Commission. These guides are available at the Aging and Adult Services Department in English and Spanish. You can also access the Resource Guide on the California Department of Aging's website.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** for November 21, 2022 Regular Commission on Aging meeting were approved as prepared.
Motion/Second/Abstained/Opposed (M/S/A/O)
R. Oswald/Lemucchi/None/None - Motion carried.

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Leslie Wallace

Not in attendance.

VETERANS SERVICE – Jose Lopez

Jose Lopez reported their office is open and they can assist veterans. They were able to transfer to a mode of service where they can handle almost everything completely remotely, so that clients don't have to come in person. This helps to protect the client's health, and to do things a lot faster and save time and gas. They are able to assist clients with a call back, so essentially, if you call our office, we put you into a queue where one of their accredited representatives will return your call. Approximately 98% of everything that they do, can now be done over the phone and for those rare instances when we need to see somebody in person, an appointment will be made for that individual to come into the office.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Elaine Anthony

Elaine Anthony reported that Public Health and Kern County Behavioral Health Services teamed up in January 2023 for the "Grounded in Health" program. Since COVID, they've seen a lot of depression and suicide out in the community, and on top of that, a lot of Fentanyl deaths. There is more information about this program on their website, along with tips and exercises to keep the mind and body healthy. The Federal and State, State of Emergency was extended until April 11, 2023, which means Public Health would still be required to wear face masks. COVID case rates here in Kern County is 9.5, which is up from 7.4 per 100 thousand. Positivity rate is 13%, up from 12.1%. There were 74 patients hospitalized due to COVID, down from 75, and 7 patients in ICU, down from 10. As for COVID boosters, I would say to get your third vaccination 6 to 8 months after your second one. For those in the over 60 years population who have comorbidities should get their fourth one, which protects you from Omicron, a very, very contagious variant, but it's highly likely that you can bounce back from Omicron with recovery rates like 97.9%. Therefore, it's up to the individual if you want to get that fourth vaccine, because as it is now, it seems to be mutating. We also have flu data at the State level. Given our flu activity right now is low, but that doesn't mean that you should not take the flu shot. The average flu positivity is 16.6 and at current, we have 7% with average flu hospital admissions at just 2.7. Many times, that patient also has comorbidities, whether it be something or heart failure, high blood pressure, or other things going on as well. There was a lot in the news last year about Monkeypox, and

the State of Emergency for that is going to end at the end of this month, and the Feds have moved Monkeypox vaccine into regular immunizations. So that's not something that they're concerned about now. It also depends if you are on that target population that would get Monkeypox. "Know Your Numbers" is a program that Public Health launched where they go out into the community to provide health screenings. We will take their vitals, height, blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol numbers, and then we have a team that goes once a week to go over and educate them regarding nutrition and exercise. After 6 weeks, Public Health nurses will go and do a final screening where we measure all their vital signs, blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar to see if your numbers have come down, and that is why the program is called "Know Your Numbers". Our Public Information Office, Michelle Carson will usually announce to the public our next "Know Your Numbers" event is going to occur. Reservations are not required; this is a first come, first serve.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Jens Blum

Jens Blum reported the Volunteer Senior outreach team works with seniors 60 and older. We are an early Intervention prevention program free for one-year for seniors to help those seniors going through some isolation, depression and anxiety. We also help them work on coping skills and link them in with other resources in the community. They try help promote maintaining their independent living. In terms of operations, we continue to be fully open seeing clients at the office, and then mainly at their home. Our team is getting a little bigger. We have an intern from Bakersfield College who started last week, and we also got another volunteer. We are slowly expanding, and we continue to get referrals and always looking for more clients, as well as volunteers from the community.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Gayla Hughes

Gayla Hughes provided information about Medi-Cal renewals. She attended a State meeting last week with the Public Health emergency coming to an end. They are going to start back processing Medi-Cal renewals and taking action on cases that have been on hold for the last 2 years. The Medi-Cal renewal packets are going to be mailed out to everyone who has an active Medi-Cal case that needs to have a renewal completed in the month of June. They will start taking action to run Medi-Cal renewals in July, and so when we have our seniors or anybody who is receiving those medical packets, they do need to complete them and turn them back in with the requested verification. Otherwise, those cases will start to be discontinued in July. We are going to do some media coverage. The State is creating some commercials, and there is going to be some outreach and flyers and multiple notification sent out to our customers so that they know that they do need to turn those packets in. If you hear anybody who gets a packet in the mail, or needs to complete their medical renewals, let them know that it is important that they send them back in because now that the public health emergency has been lifted, we will begin to start discontinuing cases and doing some actions on cases. As we get more information, I'll share that, and also with our seniors, with some of the new rules that's in place due to assets limits. Whenever they do get those packets, they can self-attest to the amount of money they have in the bank, the value of their vehicles, etc. They can just give us that information on the renewal packet, we will take that information, and we will put it in our system and run it. We have a new report that's going to come to us each month in regards to assets and as long as they're within a reasonable range, and they're not over \$69,000 for a single person, or \$130,000 for a married couple, we will not request verification for the assets. That's also a

change going forward on renewals. They don't have to provide all of that information now but as I get more information, I'll share that information with you.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Peggy Langels reported SER Jobs moved into their southeast building at 1600 East Belle Terrace. If you know anyone 55 or older, that are in within their guidelines that is looking for a job, they can check here. Their local office contact is Kathy Irving at 909-374-7214. All of our workshops are still going virtual online. If you know anybody who wants to attend a resume workshop and interviewing workshop, they are more than welcome to go on our America's Job Center of California (AJCC) website, which is www.americasjobcenterofkern.com. There you can find about recruitments, workshops, and trainings that are going on. They can also complete their pre-application on there and will be assigned an appointment time with one of our career coaches. We have quite a few recruitments going on this month. We are back to doing recruitment in person. You can come in and talk to people now when you are doing recruitment and actually talk to the employers in person, which is a good thing. Kern Health Systems is doing a bunch of hiring Tuesday, January 24th. Key staffing has one on January 25th. They are looking for Janitorial Sanitation Production, as well as for Dispatching Admin. There's a lot of other different positions open for recruitment like Detention Officer, Deputy, etc. A new warehouse just came into Bakersfield and they are going to be hiring a lot of workhouse positions on Friday, January 27th. Panama School District is doing a big hiring too, and they have a lot of different positions open, and that will be on Wednesday, February 8th. If anybody is interested in any of those, just have them go on the JCCC website and they can click on that recruitment and it'll give them all the information as to when and where it's going to be, what the application process will be, etc. The cafeteria is open again. They have a new menu every week, so you can find their menu online, or if anybody wants it for the week, you can let me know and I will find it for you. The food is delicious and meals costs between \$12 and \$14. So come over and enjoy that whenever you have time it's a wonderful meal.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Kandi Mosqueda

Kandi Mosqueda reported they still have funds for the Home Access Grant program, which is to give handicap accessibility to homes, such as widening doorways, installing ramps with handrails, handicap accessible toilets, grab bars, replace the tub with an accessible shower. That is for those residing in Kern County jurisdiction, low-income, permanently disabled individuals. Renters can apply, with homeowners' consent. There's plenty of funding for the program so interested persons can reach out to Kandi at 661-862-5024 to get an application. If an applicant needs help completing the application, she can help with that and can even go to their homes to help them fill out the application. Mobile homes are also in this Grant program. Income limits to qualify for the program start at \$43,650 for a single person and then it goes up depending on how many people are in the home. Kandi can also be reached via email at kandim@kerncounty.com.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Hermandeep Dhaliwal

Hermandeep Dhaliwal reported their mission at Independent Living Center Kern County is to empower people who are aging and have disabilities, to help them grow creatively, professionally, personally, and to educate the community about aging a disability-related issues here in Kern County. ILC has served the community for over 35 years, with services that

are completely free and no charge to consumers. We have many programs, such as American Sign Language (ASL). It services, Assistive Technologies, Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB), and CCT, which is California Community Transitions program. Alongside these programs, we have independent living skills where we have trainings that are designated to improve and maintain the ability of an individual to live as independently as possible. We have these trainings every second and fourth Tuesday of every month, from 2-3 p.m. We have Information and Referral (I&R), which is used to help answer any questions a community member has about disability or even aging. We have trained professionals in the Intake department that will have the information or will refer you to the correct agency that can get you the answer for your question. We also have peer support, which are group discussions and activities that are related to disability rights awareness and issues.

VICTIM WITNESS PROGRAM – Leslie Devitt

Leslie Devitt reported on the 2022 trends of Elder Crimes in 2022 with 43 stolen vehicles, 117 family violence, 18 workplace violence, and 6 homicides.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

INTERIM DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Jeremy Oliver

Jeremy Oliver reported the following:

FEDERAL

December Congress and the President released the Omnibus Appropriations Bill. This bill included federal funds for Older Americans Act, which provides funding for many of the Department's programs such as Home and Community Based Services, Nutrition, Family Caregiver Support Programs, Native American Nutrition/Supportive Caregiver Services, Evidence Based Health Promotion, State Health Insurance Assistance Programs, Disease Prevention, and Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. Each program saw a modest increase in funding levels for the next year. Additionally, it provided additional funding for Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program and included language that requires lifting of the Public Health Emergency (PHE) requirements under Medi-Cal by April 1, 2023. This will result in Medi-Cal redeterminations to be restored for those that meet the requirements for annual redeterminations. Clients who receive Supplemental Security Income or SSI would not fall into this category, but we anticipate about 40% of our IHSS clients will meet the requirements to have redeterminations of their Medi-Cal. Please be sure to watch for any notices for redeterminations and ensure that instructions are followed or IHSS services may be held up if Medi-Cal terminates.

STATE

Governor Newsom has declared that the COVID-19 state of emergency will be lifted at the end of February 2023. All should see additional program requirements returning to pre-pandemic operations. This impacts meetings per the Brown Act and a return to in person meetings. There are some exceptions that allow teleconferencing but in general, they are not as liberal as the current allowances.

The Governor released his budget in which there is an estimated 23-billion-dollar short fall in

anticipated revenues. Currently he not proposing to tap into the 36-billion-dollar reserves. To address the projected budget deficit, the Governor's Budget proposes funding delays, reductions and pullbacks, fund shifts, trigger reductions, and limited revenue generation and borrowing. Although we do not have comprehensive lists yet of the impacted items in each of these categories, it is our understanding that most of them are not in the health and human services area.

The budget projects a 4.9% increase in IHSS caseload for this year 2022/23 and 4.3% in 2023/24. Additional funding will be allocated to the Electronic Visit Verification to bring CA in compliance with the Federal 21st Century Cures Act requirements (the state is currently out of compliance and being penalized for this). The state has reduced funding for IHSS social worker training.

Locally

The Department continues to see growth in referrals and is seeking additional workspace to accommodate staff expansion. A vendor has been selected for frozen meal delivery and the Department will be looking at implementing frozen meal delivery for new Meals on Wheels clients. Access to Technology funding has been approved and we will be adding additional staff to assist with educating seniors on technology.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

BYLAWS COMMITTEE – L. Oswald, K. Grasty, B. Goodlow

No report.

CALIFORNIA SENIOR LEGISLATURE (CSL) – J. Lemucchi, J. Snyder

Commissioner Lemucchi reported Legislative Committee members in January, February, or walking the House to promote the proposals that we had picked up by Assembly Member and Senate Members.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – S. Morris, R. Maier

Commissioner Morris reported there are no recent reappointments, there was one new appointment: Kevin Alvey, appointed by Valley Caregiver Resource Center. His new term expires 12/21/2024. There was one resignation: Roland Maier, effective 12/31/2022. A special vacancy notice was posted 01/12/2023-01/26/2023. There is one expired term: Bill Wright, a letter was sent to Alzheimer's Disease Association of Kern County for reappointment. Appointment soon to expire: Norma Jackson, a letter will be sent to Director of Aging and Adult Services for reappointment. There are five vacancies: Two in District 1, District 3, District 5, and NOR (replacing Judy Snyder). There were no new applications received. Old applications received in 2022 are from Misty Newton (no longer interested), Tawny Rocha (unable to contact), Sherry Gomez (letter sent to District 3), Mae Linder (letter sent to NOR), Lex Fairfax, Teresa McFarland, and Anabel Hernandez. Commissioner's will continue to review applications and will make recommendations for appointments as needed.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – K. Grasty, S. Lynch

Commissioner Lynch reported this even took place on December 6, 2022. Prior to that we had a working group that put together little packets of hot chocolate and a special little bag with poem of appreciation for the staff. A special thank you to Commissioner R. Oswald, Commissioner L. Oswald, and Commissioner Goodlow for coming, and to Laura for keeping us organized. Before COVID, we had Employee Recognition twice a year so hopefully we can get back on that schedule.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – B. Goodlow, K. Grasty, J. Lemucchi, S. Lynch, L. Oswald, Y. Prado, J. Snyder

Chair Prado reported the committee met January 11, 2023 and discussed today's agenda, COA Commissioner recruitment, and the COA Bylaws. With respect to the Bylaws, there was something that AASD Administration found that needed to be revised for a little more clarity, and some of the verbiage. It's been addressed and went through the Exec. Committee, and then it will go forward to County Council. Once approved, it will then go to the general members for approval and then to Board of Supervisors for final approval.

IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (IHSS) ADVISORY – J. Snyder

Commissioner Snyder reported the Committee met January 19, 2023, and pretty much went over items Jeremy has already touched on. The Committee is also challenged with vacancies on this board. There are three consumer vacancies in Supervisorial Districts, 1, 4, and 5. If you are aware of a consumer who might be interested in serving, we could certainly appreciate an application coming in. They could probably reach out and talk to Laura. We have been challenged for quite some time with those vacancies, but we are also struggling to have quorum to move forward on action items, or if and in the case of when we are adhering to the Brown Act and in person it's going to be a big challenge. We're only looking at a 12 person committee, and we currently have 9 people, but when we have absences, we lack a quorum. We didn't have a quorum this last meeting, and we are trying to approve meeting minutes from September 2022. A consumer doesn't have to be receiving IHSS services, but the person does have to receive some type of services for disabilities. The next meeting will be March 16, 2023.

LONG TERM CARE – S. Bodnar, D. Duquette, D. Gonzalez, N. Jackson, R. Oswald

No report.

MARKETING & ORIENTATION COMMITTEE – Y. Prado, D. Duquette, S. Lynch, S. Morris, J. Snyder

No report.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE – G. Brown; N. Jackson

No report.

SENIOR CENTER ADVISORY – B. Goodlow

Commissioner Good low reported the Bakersfield Senior Center will be kicking off Black History month. Beginning February 1, 2023, and they will be having a program which will start at 9:30 a.m. Anyone that wants to attend, we'll be glad to have you.

Commissioner Snyder shared concerns that are happening at North of the River (NOR) Rasmussen Senior Center with the tiny village that is proposed across the street. That is a village of small buildings to house the homeless. NOR is addressing their concerns and they're working with the Rasmussen Senior Center Director, Desiree Ingalls, and also went before the Board of Supervisors. They are expressing their concerns for safety and how things are going to be managed. Other concerns include whether that increases meal provision. If people just come into the center expecting a meal. If they are of age, then yes, meals will be provided, but what about younger people trying to come in there for a meal? The congregate members have expressed their concerns to the staff at Rasmussen, and so I just think our radar needs to be up about this. We should be paying attention if there are public discussions or think about what we can do to support Rasmussen as they navigate this change across the street from their facility. Jeremy added that the campus would be somewhat enclosed, in terms of the original plan designs, and then they would also have some additional security. As a result of that, as well there would also be Service providers on site to help those with mental health issues, etc. It is to try and build a comprehensive campus for those that have the need. As you are aware, there is a lot of homeless that are in that area. Judy added that it's a bigger issue than what is just on the surface, because there have already been concerns and instances dealing with people who wander into the center who have problems and causing problems for the congregate members and such. It's certainly not every day, but the staff want to be ready to manage whatever happens, and to have the support to be able to manage it. NOR is being responsive and trying to work with the county on this.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

No report.

THE AREA AGENCY ON AGING COUNSEL OF CALIFORNIA (TACC) – Wright, Vacant (Alternate)

No report.

TRANSPORTATION – Y. Prado, J. Lemucchi

Chair Prado reported she was not able to attend the meeting in November but was able to get some notes about the meeting. The city of Arvin is working with the police department to train all the transit drivers on the use of Narcan, which the buses will now have available on board, and the City is willing to assist in providing training. Golden Empire transit held a ribbon cutting ceremony in November for the First Commission Commercial Scale Hydrogen Station in Kern County and their efforts made to meet with the State-mandated goal of 0 emissions for public transportation for 2040. They're moving a little bit faster in some places, but Kern County is moving on in there, and they're hoping to make this happen. The next meeting will be February 8, 2023, and I do plan to attend and have more information for you next month.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – S. Lynch

Commissioner Lynch reported certificates for the senior nutrition volunteers at Rasmussen Senior Center and Bakersfield Senior Center were prepared and mailed to Commissioner Goodlow and Commissioner Snyder. All other senior center volunteers have received their certificates. We appreciate all the volunteers who help us at the senior center sites.

INFORMATION ITEMS –

- **Smile Amazon** – Will be going away effective February 20, 2023. They will give a one-time donation to each Non-Profit Organization, an amount equal to 3 months of what they earned in 2022.

NEXT MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, February 1, 2023 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, February 27, 2023 1:00 p.m. Via Zoom (4th Monday due to holiday) If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Oliver
Secretary

JO/lj