

Kern County Commission On Aging

Yolanda Prado, Chairperson
5357 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93309
(661) 868-1054; (661) 868-1001 FAX



REGULAR COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES

March 21, 2023, 1:00 p.m.

Bakersfield Senior Center
530 4th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93309
and via Zoom

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Prado called the meeting to order at 1:00 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:

In Person - Gloria Brown, Doris Duquette, Sherry Gomez, Barbara Goodlow, Kris Grasty, Norma Jackson, Jan Lemucchi, Ellen Linder, **Stephanie Lynch, Sandy Morris, Jeremy Oliver, L. Oswald, R. Oswald, *Yolanda Prado, ***Judy Snyder, Debra Teofilo, and Bill Wright

Virtually – Kevin Alvey, Linda Oswald (later via Zoom), Roger Oswald (later via Zoom), and Debra Teofilo

Excused Absences: Susan Bodnar and Devora Gonzalez

SECRETARY OLIVER CONFIRMED A QUORUM WAS PRESENT IN PERSON.

Honorary Commission Members Present:

None.

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Laura M. Juarez – Office Services Coordinator

Guests:

Sally Westlake, Leslie Devitt, Lourdes Garcia, Catherine Vasquez, Gayla Hughes, Joseph Anderson, Anabel Hernandez, Lillian Espinoza, Dorothy Monarrez, Peggy Gonzalez, Sheila

Brooks, Florine Devern, Ruthie Jones, Rachel Prieto, Mary Harrison, Michelle Chatman, Dolores Edwards Richard, Johnnie Jackson, Erma Cole, Luvenia Wilson, Sheila F. Ruth, Laura Melendez, Dennis Fox, and Tawny Brady

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. A letter was sent to Tamia Smith, of Bakersfield Police Department, thanking her for speaking at the February 27, 2023, COA regular meeting.
2. A letter was sent to Supervisorial District 5, recommending the appointment of Anabel Hernandez, representing their district on the COA.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

None.

Commissioner Comments :

Commissioner Jackson welcomed everyone back to in-person meetings. She also thanked the Bakersfield Senior Center for hosting today's meeting and for the delightful meal that was served.

Chair Prado shared that she saw a nice article in the paper about Valley Caregiver Resource Center. It was very well done.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** for February 27, 2023, Regular Commission on Aging meeting were approved with revisions to pages 7 and 9.
Motion/Second/Abstained/Opposed (M/S/A/O)
Grasty/Lemucchi/Alvey, Wright/None - Motion carried.

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

BAKERSFIELD SENIOR CENTER – LaDonna Norwood

LaDonna Norwood, Board President of Bakersfield Senior Center (BSC), reported that they are very pleased that seniors are beginning to come back to congregate at the center. She thanked the Commission on Aging, Aging and Adult Services, and Supervisor Perez for issuing the March for Meals Proclamation. They are delivering 22 meals to seniors. They currently have 3 drivers. The City of Bakersfield, and the Kern County Housing Authority are collaborating with BSC in funding their new 53,000 square foot mixed use facility. It will consist of 4 floors, of which, 2 floors will have 36 units of affordable senior housing, and 2 floors will be used for their senior services and nutrition program. The project costs \$29 million. In February they celebrated Black History month, Valentine's Day, and had a fashion show. Thanks was given to Miss Barbara Goodlow for keeping the center up to date with all the numerous services and activity from the Commission on Aging.

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Leslie Wallace

Not in attendance.

VETERANS SERVICE – Jose Lopez

Not in attendance.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Elaine Anthony

Not in attendance.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Lourdes Garcia

Lourdes Garcia reported the Volunteer Senior Outreach Program (VSOP) continues to reach out and provide services to seniors 60+ years in the community that might be struggling with isolation, and as a result, have experienced low mood, anxiety, and/or grief. VSOP is a free program where they provide support and linkage to resources. Throughout the pandemic, a lot of seniors were very isolated, and that really caused some distress, on their mental health. They are always looking for volunteers to go out and visit some of these lonely seniors in our community. If you would like to volunteer, give them a call at 661-868-5021.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Gayla Hughes

Gayla Hughes reported they have been holding meetings via Zoom with their Call Center to go over information about the CalFresh allotments going back to regular allotments. Gayla distributed flyers, which are the notices that came out from the State, in regard to how the change in benefits will affect your cases going forward. Medi-Cal renewals have been on hold for the last two years but beginning in June, they will go back to normal processing of the renewals. If you have Medi-Cal and you receive a package saying you need to renew those benefits, be sure to complete and send it back in to ensure your medical coverage continues. The Department has self-help kiosks in the lobby to use whenever you come into the office. If you just need to turn in verification, print something, etc., they will send you to the kiosk and you can self-help and they will call you up to the window to pick it up so that way you do not have to check in to see a worker and wait. Staff have been working a hybrid schedule where they work one week at home and one week in the office, but as of today, all staff are working back in office as usual, so business is resuming normal functioning.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Not in attendance.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez reported they have the Home Access Grant program that is a free program for low-income individuals with a permanent disability to help make their homes more accessible. If they're not able to use the steps, they can have a walk-up ramp installed to their home. If they're not able to step over into their tub, they can remove the tub and put in a walk-in shower, install grab bars, put in a higher toilet seat, and other modifications to the home to help reduce the risk of falling. This program is for homeowners or renters, with the homeowner's consent. The office number to reach us is (661) 862-5024. They also have the Home Improvement Loan program that is low-income homeowners to apply to make repairs or replace things in the home like plumbing, electrical, paint, roof, etc.

This is a no interest, no payment loan, but it is secured as a lien on the property. They will go out to do an inspection of the property and get an estimate for how much they think it's going to cost. They will then bid it out to license contractors, and then, as the contractor is completing the work, they will pay the contractor through their loan program. As long as the homeowner remains in the home, they don't have to make payments on the loan, but if they ever move or sell the property then our mortgage would have to be paid in full. To apply for either programs, call the office at (661) 862-5024.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Tammy Hartsch

Tammy Hartsch shared a PDF copy of ILC's brochure. They're working on trying to reach more individuals and organizations within the community to bring awareness to the services that they offer. Tammy asked if everyone would look at the brochure to see all the services that they offer at ILC. They're also working on enhancing and increasing their intake department because they've had an overflow of individuals contacting them for intake for different services. They receive about 30 to 40 calls a day for intakes. They are getting out and participating in outreaches and are also working on their marketing to brand ILC and letting the community know about their services and that they're here to help.

VICTIM WITNESS PROGRAM – Leslie Devitt

Leslie Devitt reported they track elder crime trends like stolen vehicles, family violence, workplace violence, and homicides. For the first quarter of 2023 there's been 5 stolen vehicles, which tend to be older vehicles. Sadly, they have had 27 reports of family violence since January 2023 and is usually mother/son, or Grandma/grandson. They have not had any elder homicides. They can also go out to your organization or other senior centers, to provide educational presentations to your staff.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Jeremy Oliver

Jeremy Oliver reported the following:

FEDERAL

The President's Budget was released through the White House this month. The Budget includes important investments in programs and policies that help advance equity and ensure low-income older adults can meet their basic needs. These include:

- \$150 billion to improve and expand Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) to help older adults and people with disabilities live at home and support the direct care workforce
- \$258 million to support 2,200 units of new affordable housing for older adults and people with disabilities, and expanding housing vouchers to 180,000 more households
- Increased administrative funding for the Social Security Administration to support efforts to improve service delivery and advance equity,
- Strengthening Medicare by extending Part A trust fund solvency, and
- Funding for HHS and other agencies to strengthen language access services

STATE

Continue to watch funding and await updates to the state budget with anticipated revenue shortages at the state level.

A new bill, AB 1672, was introduced that would change who would be able to negotiate IHSS providers wages or "collective bargaining". Currently the counties are the entities that negotiate the wages/benefits for IHSS Providers, but this bill would shift this to the State.

Locally

The Board of Supervisors appointed Jeremy Oliver to be the Director of the Department. The Department has been assisting clients in the impacted areas of the county due to the recent flooding and evacuations. Initially, the Department reached out to those in impacted areas to ensure they were aware of the warnings and evacuations in the area. Additionally, the Department assists with coordinating evacuation efforts, or any additional needs related to being in a shelter. The County continues to monitor the ongoing weather changes and assess the ability to have those impacted return safely to their homes. Our Health Insurance Counseling Advocacy(HICAP) has started up a quarterly newsletter called "The Medicare Scoop" that is email blasted to those wishing to sign up. The Department is in early preparations for a Health Fair event to be held at our location on May 20, 2023, and Elder Abuse Prevention Conference on June 15, 2023, at Hodel's.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

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

No report.

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

CSL Senator Lemucchi reported she is happy to announce that her CSL Senate Proposal 6 was picked up by Assembly Member Connolly out of Marin and Sonoma County, and it is AB 582. The bill has to do with tax credits for older individuals living in high-fire risk areas, and it is being heard right now at the Assembly Tax and Insurance Subcommittee. So hopefully they'll pass that at the House.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – S. Morris, K. Grasty

Commissioner Morris reported William (Bill) Wright was reappointed by Alzheimer's Disease Association of Kern County. His new term expires 01/01/2025. There were no appointments. There were no resignations and no expired terms. There is one appointment soon to expire, Kevin Alvey, term expires 04/24/2023. If Commissioner Alvey wishes to continue serving on the COA, Laura will send a letter of reappointment to Valley Caregivers Resource Center for reappointment. There are two vacancies: 1 in District 1, and 1 in District 5. There were no new applications received. Old applications received in 2022 are from Lex Fairfax, received 10/12/2022 (still interested in serving), Teresa McFarland, received 10/13/2022 (still interested in serving), and Anabel Hernandez, received 11/29/2022 (letter of recommendation of appointment was sent to District 5 on 03/08/2023). James Riccomini, received 01/31/2023, and Teresa Barnum, received 02/13/2023 (unable to serve at this time).

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – K. Grasty, S. Lynch

No report.

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

Chair Prado reported the Exec. Committee on March 1st, and they discussed today's agenda, and most of the things that have already been covered, the Elder Abuse Prevention Conference, Older American's Month, and Volunteer Recognition. They also discussed the possible merger of AASD with DHS. There is a C4A conference coming up in May in Glendale, CA. There's room for a couple of Commissioners to attend. Laura sent out information to the Commissioners to see who is interested in attending.

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

Commissioner Snyder reported the IHSS Advisory Committee met March 16, 2023, and that was exciting for them, because they were able to meet in person. The point that stood out to her for IHSS is that Michelle Gomez and her staff are working very hard to stay in compliance with the State mandates. They are meeting their quotas and percentages to have applications processed in a timely manner, and to keep up with their clientele. For the most part, all the way through the pandemic, they have exceeded the compliance, expectations, and for the first time they just fell slightly under their norm, and there's no fault there because they are overwhelmed right now. So, she'd like to continue supporting IHSS. They have relied on extra help staff, which was previously a nine-month position, but are now two-year positions. Hopefully, all of this will level out, and surely this is not just what's happening in AASD, it's likely happening in the other county Departments, so we support you. Staff have gone above and beyond having worked around the clock, so to speak, at the worst part of the pandemic. They were working 7 days and through the pandemic they've had to rotate their staff in and out of the offices to keep people safe and they've also had to deal with all the mandates associated with exposure and keeping people quarantined and keeping people safe, so I applaud you. You've done an excellent job. Another thing that stood out to her from this meeting had to do with what effects the CalFresh max allotment being cut will have on food banks, Catholic charities, and other organizations that work hard to keep the community fed. Gayla Hughes of DHS shared that the Coronavirus First Act amendment that was imposed for Coronavirus gave every CalFresh household an additional \$95. It was an emergency allotment due to the health pandemic but will be ending in March. CalFresh benefits will go back to their regular allotment. She encouraged those who can, to give generously to the food banks. KGET is having a food drive on Wednesday. The need is going to be very real, as we know cost of food has increased. The committee has 3 consumer vacancies to represent and be appointed by Supervisorial Districts 1, 4, and 5.

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

Chair Prado reported the Orientation Committee just finished two new Commissioner orientations this past week, and will finish the next two this week, and then we are ready for more commissioners to do more orientations as needed. With respect to the Marketing Committee, they will be working on defining what to give away during the Senior Health Fair in May.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE - G. Brown; N. Jackson

Commissioner Brown reported she hasn't received any requests for nominations. Commissioner Goodlow received one nomination for Chair. Submit your nominations for Chair, Vice-Chair, and Parliamentarian to Commissioner Brown by phone or Commissioner Goodlow or Commissioner Jackson by email. Officer positions are for two years.

SENIOR CENTER ADVISORY – B. Goodlow

Commissioner Goodlow reported the Bakersfield Senior Center (BSC) celebrated Black History month, Valentine's Day, and on February 24th, they had a fashion show with 12 models, and we also had a sweet little music group that came from Compassion Christian Academy, and they were marvelous little singers. They were great, they were children. She and Lilli presented their senior nutrition volunteers with certificates from the Commission on Aging, thanking them for the many volunteer hours generously given to the BSC. They have some awesome volunteers at BSC. They also had a great month serving 1,418 meals during the month of February.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

Commissioner Duquette reported she is still working off her old Commissioner contact list, but she has talked to Laura and will get the new members added to it as of today, including Jeremy. We are. We just voted today on the certificates that we are giving out. Regarding recognizing the Centenarians, they are working on how to get names submitted to them because certain facilities will require specific criteria. They are working on a letter to submit to facilities requesting information for Centenarians in their facilities.

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

No report.

TRANSPORTATION – Y. Prado, J. Lemucchi

Commissioner Lemucchi reported the committee met February 8, 2023. The main focus was informing them of the opening and completion of Highway 58 to the 99 by the end of February or early March. Other grants that are coming available for the public transit systems for them to take advantage of.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – G. Brown, S. Lynch

Commissioner Brown reported they will be giving out pens to recognize senior nutrition volunteers. that will be giving out as we visit senior centers throughout the year.

INFORMATION ITEMS –

- COA Officer Nominations – this was discussed during the Nomination Committee report.
- Chair Prado thanked the guests for staying through the entire meeting. She also thanked the Commission on Aging for hanging through the last couple of years meeting via Zoom. Lastly, she shared an event they had at the Richard Prado Senior Center, “Plato de Platica” where they had officers come to the senior center to sit down and talk with seniors. They had 5 officers and someone from 9-1-1 who stayed for over an hour. It was a nice event.

NEXT MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, April 5, 2023 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, April 17, 2023 1:00 p.m. California City Senior Center 10221 Heather Ave. California City, CA 93304 (COA Ex-Officio Members and the public may attend in person or via Zoom. Please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052 for the link to join)

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 2:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Oliver
Secretary

JO/lj