

Kern County Commission On Aging

Stephanie Lynch, Chairperson

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Commission On Aging
"Making a difference in the lives of senior citizens."

**REGULAR COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING
MINUTES**

September 18, 2023, 1:00 p.m.

Rasmussen Senior Center

115 E. Roberts Lane, Bakersfield, CA 93308

and via Zoom

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Lynch called the meeting to order at 1:08 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, ****Secretary)

Commission Members Present:

In Person – Kevin Alvey, Susan Bodnar, Gloria Brown, Doris Duquette, Sherry Gomez, Devora Gonzalez, Barbara Goodlow, ***Kris Grasty, Anabel Hernandez, Genel Hodges, Norma Jackson, Julie Juarez-Ceja, Jan Lemucchi, Ellen Linder, *Stephanie Lynch, ****Jeremy Oliver, Linda Oswald, and **Judy Snyder

Virtually – Anabel Hernandez

Excused Absences: Yolanda Prado

SECRETARY OLIVER CONFIRMED A QUORUM WAS PRESENT IN PERSON.

Honorary Commission Members Present:

Roger Oswald (after Action Items when he was appointed a Commissioner)

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Laura M. Juarez – Office Services Coordinator

GUESTS:

In Person

Royce Pinson, Nellie Rae Montgomery, Marcella Osborne, Cheryl Mathews, Rick Hightower, Donna De Gough, Jerry A. Boles, Juan Hernandez Garcia, Roger Oswald (until he was appointed an Honorary Commissioner), Gayla Hughes, Wendi Blanquette, Valeria Rojas, Tawny Brady, Sheila Roth, Amanda Ruiz, Desiree Ingalls, and Catherine Vasquez

Virtually

Hernandeep Dhaliwal and Brynn Carrigan

CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

1. None.

Commissioner Comments :

1. Commissioner Jackson thanked the Rasmussen Senior Center for the delicious lunch.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** for July 17, 2023, Regular Commission on Aging meeting were approved with one revision to page 1.
Motion/Second/Abstained/Opposed (M/S/A/O)
Gomez/Grasty/Gonzalez, Linder, Alvey/None - Motion carried.
- **APPROVAL OF HONOARY COMMISSIONER** – Roger Oswald was appointed to be an Honorary Commissioner effective September 18, 2023.
M/S/A/O – Executive Committee/All/None/None - Motion carried.

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

RASMUSSEN SENIOR CENTER – Desiree Ingalls

Desiree Ingalls reported the North of the River Rasmussen Senior Center has served 4,615 congregate meals for the months of July and August 2023. The Meals on Wheels Program has served 15,863 meals for the months of July and August. The Senior Center offers Live Music and Dancing Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Lunch is served at 12:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. They also offer an Afternoon Movie on the second Wednesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. Grocery is offered on Tuesday afternoons, and Penny Bingo on Friday afternoons. Various other activities are offered throughout the week and can be found on their monthly calendar located at the Rasmussen Senior Center, or on their website @ www.NORFUN.org. North of the River is hosting a Fall Festival on October 14, 2023, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Almondale Park on Verdugo Lane.

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Karen McKenzie

Not in attendance.

VETERANS SERVICE – Jose Lopez

Not in attendance.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Brynn Carrigan

Brynn Carrigan shared information about their Grounded in Health Initiative that is a year-long collaborative approach between Public Health and Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services to educating the community on how mental health and physical health are interconnected, and how we can both be impacted positively and negatively by how we care for our bodies. Kern County has some of the highest rates of obesity and mortality due to chronic disease in the state. The focus is on how we recover as a community from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a negative impact on our physical activity while isolating, not interacting with others, eating habits changed, having our food delivered, not making healthy choices ourselves, and most importantly, we delayed preventative healthcare. Every month, they will select a topic that they will talk about in detail. Some of those are very traditional topics like exercise and nutrition, and some other non-traditional topics like sleeping habits, and just taking time out for yourself to just breathe. They launched a website: www.kerngroundedinhealth.com where those topics will be covered every month, as well as links to resources available throughout our community. She shared other information about the importance of preventative health care to get people healthier and keep them from serious diagnoses.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Valeria Martinez

Valeria Martinez reported Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services is celebrating September as Suicide Prevention and Recovery Month. There are various events taking place around our community. A calendar of events flyer was left at the senior center for whoever is interested. On Thursday, September 28th, there will be a virtual Multi-County suicide prevention presentation that is free to everyone. She encouraged those struggling with isolation, depression, and anxiety to reach out for help by calling their Access and Assessment Center at the Mary K. Shell Mental Health Center 661-868-8010. Their Crisis Hotline is 1-800-991-5272, and their Suicide Prevention Hotline is 1-800-273-8255. If you know of anyone in need, please encourage them to reach out.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Gayla Hughes

Gayla Hughes introduced herself and Supervisor, Wendi Blanquette, who gave a brief overview of the IHSS Program and who is eligible to receive services. The IHSS Program will help pay for services provided to you so that you can remain safely in your own home. To be eligible you must be 65 years of age or older, or disabled, or blind. IHSS is considered an alternative to out of home care, such as nursing homes or board and care facilities. Services include housecleaning, meal preparation, laundry, grocery shopping, personal care services, accompaniment to medical appointments, and protective supervision for the mentally impaired. Eligibility Criteria:

- You must physically reside in the United States.
- You must also be a California Resident.
- You must be eligible for Medi-Cal.

- You must live in your own home.
- You must submit a completed Health Care Certification Form.

The Medi-Cal asset limit is \$130,000 for a single applicant. A packet was shared with this information, as well as a copy of the application. Jeremy assisted Wendi with answering questions from those in attendance regarding Aging and Adult Services IHSS program. For assistance with determining Medi-Cal eligibility and/or to process the application, call their Customer Assistance Tele Center at 1-877-410-8812.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Not in attendance.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez reported the Kern County Home Access Grant Program is to make a home more accessible for someone who is low-income and disabled. They can put in a ramp, grab bars, remove a bathtub and put in a walk-in shower, and other modifications to make the home more accessible. There is a lifetime expenditure of \$4,500. Mobile homes do qualify for the program. Low-income requirements are based on household income. To apply for this program, call 661-862-5024. They also have the Home Improvement Loan Program that is available for homeowners to replace or repair existing items such as paint, roof, electrical, etc. A lien is placed on the property and there are no monthly payments. The loan is paid when the home is sold, or the applicant moves from the home. All work is done by a licensed contractor, and they will monitor the construction of the work as the completed, then they will pay the contractor directly for their work. An applicant cannot request a second loan if they already have a loan through their program. To apply, call their office at 661-862-5024.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Hermandeep Dhawali

Hermandeep Dhawali attended virtually, and shared ILC Kern County's mission is to empower people who are aging and/or have disabilities to grow creatively, professionally, and personally. They educate the community about aging and disability related issues. They've been serving Kern County for over 35 years and offer many free programs to community members such as American Sign Language (ASL), where they provide interpreting services for schools, social services, training, and other functions. They have the Assisted Technology (AT) program that provides basic computer skills, wheelchairs, shower benches, crutches, walkers, and any other types of durable medical equipment the individual may need. Their Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) program provides assisted technology equipment such as daily living skills, mobility techniques and instructions, transportation information, and even optical device training for visually impaired individuals. They have the California Community Transition (CTT) program that assists with coordinating and locating affordable housing, home setup, adaptive equipment, and self-care training for daily routines. In addition to their programs, they have many services, such as the Independent Living Skills, which is designed to improve or maintain the ability of an individual to live as dependently as possible. These trainings are held at ILC of Kern County every second and fourth Tuesday of the month from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. They have Information and Referral where a community member can ask a question or concern about disability or

aging related. They also offer peer support that includes group discussions and activities that are related to disability rights, awareness, and issues.

VICTIM WITNESS PROGRAM – Leslie Devitt

Not in attendance but provided a report for Chair Lynch to give on her behalf. Their office is moving to 1300 18th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301. The main line number is 661-868-2340. Leslie's new phone number is 661-868-5962. The Elder Crimes Trends for the third quarter are as follows: 1 homicide (total of 4), 3 workplace violence (total of 14), 27 family violence (total of 112), and 8 stolen vehicles (total of 18). There's been a big increase in stolen vehicles. The September issue of the Dependent/Elder Abuse Review (DEAR)/Elder Death Review Team (EDRT) Newsletter talks about Romance Scams. Next month's issue will be about Medicare Open Enrollment. To subscribe to the monthly newsletter, send an email to Leslie at ldevitt@kernda.org.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Jeremy Oliver

Jeremy Oliver reported the following:

FEDERAL

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) is reviewing comments on the Older Americans Act. The US Administration for Community Living has issued the first Notice of Proposed Rule Making for Adult Protective Services. If implemented, the proposed rules would impact APS programs across the country. This is the first-ever Federal Regulations for APS. The proposed rule aims to improve consistency and quality of APS services across states and support the national network that delivers APS services, with the goal of better meeting the needs of adults who experience, or are at risk of, maltreatment.

STATE

The Governor signed many legislative bills into law, SB 423 and SB 4 make it easier to build apartments for lower income persons and for churches to also build affordable housing. AB 12 will limit amounts for security deposits to one month's rent. SB 544 reinstates some flexibility for remote meetings of State boards and commissions. The bill was amended to exclude advisory boards that don't have decision-making authorities. Additionally, SB 43, which expands the definition of Grave Disability, the expanded definition of grave disability would also consider whether a person faces a substantial risk of serious harm, by failing to provide for their own medical care or personal safety. It would include not just mental illness, but also severe substance use disorder and chronic alcoholism.

DEPARTMENT

The IHSS program has received the highest number of new referrals at over 1,000 for the month of August. We continue to experience some staffing shortages due to turnover in staff and medical leaves. We're closely watching the implementation of CAL-AIM initiatives which will include establishing MOU's with local Medi-Cal managed care plans.

Adult Protective Services also saw a high number of referrals for the month of August and staffing backfill needs. The Digital Divide program continues to expand, and we have additional devices to assist with the needs of our clients as well as staffing.

The HICAP program is getting ready for open enrollment from October 15 - December 7, 2023. Please send in requests early so you can be scheduled. Commissioner Gonzalez stressed the importance of having a Power of Attorney or medical agent on file in place and not waiting until it's too late because seniors have the authority to change their Medicare plans now, but if they become hospitalized and unable to make decisions on their own, it will be difficult to make any changes. Jeremy shared that a lot of robocalls happen around this time of year. You can register your phone number with the "National Do Not Call Registry" to help minimize some of those spam calls. You need to register your number every year.

September 22 is Senior Day at the Fair, and we want to encourage everyone to attend.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

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

No report.

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

Commissioner Lemucchi reported the CSL's California Collaborative Long-Term Services Support for California Board is meeting next week. CSL's annual session will be held on October 24-26, 2023. It will be held virtually again since the Capitol is under renovation. On October 30, 31, and November 1, 2023, CSL general meeting at the Capitol, to meet new CSL members, there are about 50% new members. During this meeting, they will be discussing proposals to submit to Legislatures that are advocating for senior issues. Vice-Chair Snyder shared that Commissioner Lemucchi has been amazingly busy this year with CSL. She Chairs and is often looked at as a source for the management side of CSL. Jeremy Oliver shared that a representative from Assemblymember Dr. Jasmeet Baine's office, Juan Hernandez Garcia, attended today's Commission on Aging meeting.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – L. Oswald:

Commissioner Oswald reported the following:

Recently Reappointed:

1. Yolanda Prado – Reappointed by Aging and Adult Services Director. Her new term expires 09/08/2025.
2. Susan Bodnar – reappointed by Ridgecrest Regional Hospital. Her new term expires 08/01/2025.
3. Kris Grasty – reappointed by District 5. Her new term expires 06/17/2025.
4. Stephanie Lynch – reappointed by District 3. Her new term expires 09/22/2025.

New Appointments:

1. Sonia (Harpreet) Dhillon - appointed by District 4. Her term expires 09/15/2025.

Resignations:

1. Debra Teofilo resigned effective 07/18/2023. A Special Vacancy Notice is posted until September 21, 2023.
2. Roger Oswald resigned effective his term expiration date of 09/15/2025.

Expired Terms:

None.

Appointments Soon to Expire:

1. Doris Duquette – her term will expire 09/29/2023. Laura sent a letter to District 2 for reappointment.

Vacancies:

1. District 4 – for term expired 09/15/2023 (replacing Roger Oswald).
2. Around the Clock Care, for term expired 08/07/2023 (replacing Sandy Morris).

New Applications Received:

None.

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 Lynch reported the Exec. Committee met September 6, 2023. A Centenarian protocol was developed in draft form and was sent to all Commissioners for review. A flyer was created for the Centenarian Recognition program and a second mailer to senior facilities will go out. They also discussed Senior Day at the Kern County Fair. Commissioner Jackson will go over this later in the meeting. The COA Highlights were sent to the Board of Supervisors on September 12, 2023. Chair Lynch asked Commissioners to complete and return their Emergency Contact forms and give them to Laura. Lastly, they discussed Honorary Commissioners.

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

No report. The Committee will be meeting September 21, 2023.

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

Commissioner Gonzalez thanked Jeremy for his assistance regarding a Conservatorship case. She also thanked Assemblymember Dr. Jasmeet Baines' office for reaching out to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program. An agency reached out to her about their interest in writing a Bill to have Medicare cover Ozempic for older adults. There is a growing interest in covering that medication to combat obesity. The Long-Term Care Committee visited San Joaquin Nursing Home and Rehab Center. She obtained their Pet Policy. They do not accept in-training pets, but their Administrator will have to approve it. Commissioner Duquette shared that it is a very nice facility. It had just been repainted and recarpeted.

The rooms are beautiful, and the staff were wonderful. Jackson shared that this is a large facility with 94 residents. They have one Registered Nurse for daytime shift. They have CNAs and LVNs. For the evening shift, they have one Registered Nurse for residents who need IV service. Commissioner Gonzalez added that the law requires facilities to have a minimum of one Registered Nurse. Commissioner Duquette also added that sometimes the Administrator is also a Registered Nurse so there could be more than one Registered Nurse, but primary duties are Administrator.

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

No report.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE – G. Brown; N. Jackson

No report.

SENIOR CENTER ADVISORY – B. Goodlow

Commissioner Goodlow reported the Bakersfield Senior Center continues to strive to build a new building. They had a Casino Night, and it went very well. They had a lot of participants and sponsors, so they did very well. They will have a Car Show on November 1, 2023, from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. The Bakersfield Senior Dancers will be performing at the Kern County Fair on September 22, 2023.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

Commissioner Duquette reported there were two birthdays in August and 4 in September. She will continue to send cards as needed.

THE AREA AGENCY ON AGING COUNSEL OF CALIFORNIA (TACC) – S. Gomez, Vacant

Commissioner Gomez reported she virtually attended her first meeting on September 6, 2023. They discussed data gathering for the CA 2030 Initiative, and for the Home and Community-Based Analysis, and how it's supposed to be analyzed and the reports due at the end of the year. Her TACC report was emailed to all the Commissioners for their review.

TRANSPORTATION – Y. Prado, J. Lemucchi

Commissioner Lemucchi reported the Kern Cog Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee met on August 9, 2023, and were told that they required to meet just once each year, but Kern Cog is to meet quarterly and they have an ongoing process to hear of and resolve any unmet needs here in Kern County regarding public transportation. GET was there to talk about the Metro Bakersfield MOVES program (www.bakersfieldmoves.com) which is a long-range transit program. A survey went out to talk about unmet transportation needs here in Kern County. They talked about four public transit systems here in the County and switching their vehicles from gas to electric, although we might not meet requirements for that after all. The next meeting is scheduled for November 8, 2023.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – G. Brown

Commissioner Brown thanked the senior nutrition volunteers.

INFORMATION ITEMS –

- Kern County Veteran Standdown – October 11, 2023, from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Stramler Park. Commissioner Goodlow encouraged all homeless veterans to come out. The Ridgecrest Veteran Standdown is scheduled for October 29, 2023, at the Kerr McGee Center in Ridgecrest, CA.
- Centenarian Recognition Program – this matter was covered during “Executive Committee Report”.
- Kern County Senior Day at the Fair September 22, 2023 – Commissioner Jackson requested volunteers to help greet seniors at the door and hand out programs in two shifts, 8 a.m. -10 a.m., and 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Commissioners are requested to wear their COA shirt and/or COA name badge. Doors open at 9 a.m. so Commissioners are asked to be there by 8:30 a.m.
- Commission on Aging Shirts – If Commissioners would like to purchase a COA shirt, please contact Laura Juarez to try on the new style of shirts and to place your order.
- COA Group Photo - Chair Lynch announced Commissioners will be taking a group photo at the October COA Regular meeting. Please wear your COA shirt and/or name badge.
- Congregate Meals - Commissioner Brown shared that there isn't many senior congregating at the centers now that AASD offers grab and go lunch boxes. Jeremy shared that they are working on ideas to get seniors to congregate at the centers, such as adding a tv and Wi-Fi access.
- Commissioner Gonzalez reported she will not be attending the October COA Regular Meeting. Commissioner Bodnar also reported she will not be attending the October COA Regular Meeting. Chair Lynch reminded Commissioners to please let Laura know if they will be attending the meeting or not, and whether they will be having lunch prior to the COA Regular meetings. Also, when Laura sends emails to all Commissioners, please reply only to “Sender” and not “Reply All” when responding to her emails.

NEXT MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, October 4, 2023 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, October 16, 2023 1:00 p.m. Richard Prado Senior Center 2101 Ridge Rd., Bakersfield, CA 93305 (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 2:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Oliver
Secretary

JO/lj