

Kern County Commission On Aging

Yolanda Prado, Chairperson
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REGULAR COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES

June 26, 2023, 1:00 p.m.

Ben Austin Senior Center
1751 McKee Road, Bakersfield, CA 93307
and via Zoom

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Prado called the meeting to order at 1:11 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE & MOMENT OF SILENCE:

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

Chair Prado welcomed the new Commissioners, Anabel Hernandez, and Julie Juarez-Ceja.

ROLL CALL OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

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

Commission Members Present:

In Person –Susan Bodnar, Gloria Brown, Doris Duquette, Sherry Gomez, Devora Gonzalez, Kris Grasty, Anabel Hernandez, Norma Jackson, Julie Juarez-Ceja, Jan Lemucchi, Ellen Linder, Stephanie Lynch, Jeremy Oliver, *Yolanda Prado, and *** Judy Snyder

Virtually – None.

Excused Absences: Kevin Alvey, Barbara Goodlow, Linda Oswald, and Roger Oswald

SECRETARY OLIVER CONFIRMED A QUORUM WAS PRESENT IN PERSON.

Honorary Commission Members Present:

Aaron Flucker

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Laura M. Juarez – Office Services Coordinator
Andres Villaseñor – Senior Nutrition Program Coordinator
Angela Domingos – Senior Nutrition Program Coordinator

Guests:

In Person

Peggy Langels, Catherine Vasquez, Dawn Culpepper, Charlene Olivo, Cecil Langston, Vivian Harris, Connie Coleman, Sheila F. Roth, Everett B., Maria R. Jimenez, Rudy Jimenez, Lydia Gonzalez, Trudie Gregory, Joyce Amason, Lourdes Garcia, and Janice Ann Alvarez

Virtually

Leticia Ortega, Tammy Hartsch, Hermandeep Dhaliwal, and Leslie Devitt

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. A letter was sent to Don Pederson thanking him for donating the Dodger game tickets and preferred parking pass for the COA Opportunity Drawing held during the Elder Abuse Prevention Conference.
2. A letter was sent to The Area Agency on Aging Council of California (TACC) informing them that Commissioner Gomez will be the new representative for PSA #33 on TACC.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

None.

Commissioner Comments :

1. Vice-Chair Lynch shared that the Bakersfield Senior Center (BSC) dancers made the front page of the Bakersfield Californian on June 18, 2023. Women from BSC danced during the Juneteenth Celebration held at Silver Creek Park on Saturday, June 17th.
2. Vice-Chair Lynch thanked Kern River Valley and California City for sending her their newsletters every month. The senior centers are up and running as activities are planned and noted in the newsletters.
3. Jeremy Oliver, on behalf of Aging and Adult Services, presented a gift and certificate to outgoing Chair, Yolanda Prado, in appreciation and recognition for her contributions to seniors as the Chairperson of the Kern County Commission on Aging from 2019 – 2023.
4. Commissioner Grasty, Chair of the Commission on Aging Foundation, announced a \$100 donation would be donated from the Foundation in Chair Prado's honor to the Richard Prado Senior Center in appreciation for her work as Chair of the COA.
5. Chair Prado shared words of thanks as the outgoing Chair of the Kern County Commission on Aging and listed many tasks and events accomplished before, during, and after the pandemic.

6. Commissioner Brown shared that Honorary Commissioner, Dee Sutherland, sent her regrets that she couldn't be there at the meeting, but she is still interested in being an Honorary Commissioner and she will try to be at the next meeting.
7. Chair Prado thanked the Centenarian Committee for all their hard work in getting the program off to a great start. Commissioner Grasty gave out the first Centenarian certificate to Robert Berman, and 17 News Sunrise also gave a shoutout to him as he celebrated his 103rd birthday!
8. Chair Prado applauded Aging and Adult Services planning committee for the Elder Abuse Prevention Conference held June 15th. The room was full and lots of participation and pertinent information shared. Also, Commissioner Grasty took the lead on the Dodgers Game Tickets opportunity drawing and collected \$1,220 in donations!
9. Chair Prado announced the new Commission Member Listing was distributed to everyone. Please take a moment to review your information and let Laura know if anything needs to be changed.
10. Chair Prado shared that the Glossary of Acronyms has been revised and distributed to all Commissioners. If there's new acronyms that you come across that isn't on the list, please let us know so we can add it to the list.
11. Chair Prado shared that Laura revised the COA Brochure that was distributed during the Older Americans Month Resource Fair. She changed some of the photos to give it a fresh look, but she is hoping to be able to get an updated group photo of Commissioners during July's meeting in Taft. She encouraged all Commissioners to try to attend so we can get the group photo to update our brochure.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** for May 15, 2023, Regular Commission on Aging meeting were approved with revisions to pages 1 and 2.
Motion/Second/Abstained/Opposed (M/S/A/O)
Grasty/Lemucchi/Bodnar, Hernandez, Juarez-Ceja/None - Motion carried.
- **VOTE AND APPROVAL OF 2023-2025 COA OFFICERS** – All Nominees ran unopposed so no vote necessary. Chair Prado declared the following win by acclamation:
 1. For Chair – Stephanie Lynch
 2. For Vice-Chair – Judy Snyder
 3. For Parliamentarian – Kris Grasty

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

DELANO SENIOR CENTER – Andres Villaseñor

Andres Villaseñor reported Connie Pitkin and the volunteers at the Ben Austin Senior Center have been doing a great job running this site. The staff here have made great efforts to attract clients for congregate meals. Their activities include BINGO, card games, sewing,

and board games. BINGO on Thursdays have the highest senior attendance. The Ben Austin Senior Center kitchen was used when the Richard Prado Senior Center was closed earlier this year. Andres thanked the staff at the Ben Austin Senior Center for letting them share the kitchen space with them. Everyone had the goal of getting a hot meal out to our seniors, and they met that goal thanks to everyone's efforts. He also shared that they are transitioning to an in-person food line after having to go to Oliver trays during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are working on communication from kitchen to clients when substitutions to the menu are made, typically, because of a shortage of product or staffing levels.

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Karen McKenzie

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 Kern Behavioral Health is going through a systemwide change with their electronic health records as they work towards focusing more on client services. They have slowed down as they go through the transition but nonetheless the Volunteer Senior Outreach Program (VSOP) continues to serve our older population that might be struggling with isolation, staying independent, depression, grief, or anxiety. They know the pandemic left a lot of people struggling and thankfully there are people present today with VSOP but they want to help those that aren't there to cope with their anxiety so they can reconnect with the community.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Leticia Ortega

Leticia Ortega attended virtually and reported the following:

Recent Changes to the Medi-Cal (MC) Program

- In response to the Families First Coronavirus Relief Act – MC Renewals were put on hold and California halted the processing of most Negative Actions.
 - COVID-19 Pandemic provisions for Medi-Cal ended on March 31, 2023, and the unwinding period for Medi-Cal processing began on April 1, 2023.
 - In April, they started sending out Renewal packets for June Renewals.
 - If the renewal is not completed by June 30, 2023, for the first time in 3 years, a Medi-Cal case will be discontinued on July 1, 2023, for not completing a Renewal.
 - Once the Medi-Cal case has been discontinued for not completing the Renewal, the client will have a 90-day cure period in which to complete the Renewal and benefits will be restored.
 - Currently, property is waived when processing the Medi-Cal Renewal.

- Asset Verification Program: This is a monthly report that is distributed to program staff that will include asset information on Aged, Blind and Disabled (ABD) cases. It will identify the value of assets whether disclosed or undisclosed that a client may have. Staff will not need to request a new verification. At application, the client may verbally attest to the value of their property and will be verified with this report. As long as the client remains under the property limits, they will remain eligible. The property limit for a single individual is \$130,000, and an additional \$65,000 per person up to a maximum of 10 people per case. Effective January 1, 2024, there will no longer be a property limit for Medi-Cal.
- Effective January 1, 2020, with the passing of Senate Bill 104, full scope eligibility is mandatory for all individuals under the age of 26, regardless of immigration status, who are otherwise Medi-Cal eligible (Young Adult Expansion).
- Effective May 1, 2022, with the passing of Assembly Bill 133, it expanded eligibility for full scope Medi-Cal to individuals who are 50 years of age or older, and who do not have satisfactory immigration status, who are otherwise eligible (Older Adult Expansion).
- Per ACWDL 23-08, effective January 1, 2024, adults aged 26 through 49 will be eligible for full scope Medi-Cal, regardless of their citizenship or immigration status if they meet all other eligibility criteria (Age 26 – 49 Adult Expansion).

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Peggy Langels reported the new Chief Workforce Development Officer for the County is Aaron Ellis. Teresa Hitchcock accepted a new position as CEO for Calaveras County. They were informed that they will be taking a \$1.6 million cut to their budget for 2023 -2024. Cuts are being made in several areas. They have a new grant starting this fiscal, P2E 2.0 (Prison to Employment). They have a few others lined up too. Ser-Jobs for Progress, Inc. is a program for seniors to work. Contact Jean Cardenas at 661-635-2792, ext. 52792. The office is open Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Friday from 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Job Squad Every Thursday at 9:00 a.m. on Facebook Live. Along with Facebook, they are also on YouTube and Instagram. Their website is: www.americasjobcenterofkern.com/.

They also announce jobs on the following television platforms:

- KGET TV 17 – Job Corner Segment, Monday 12:30 – 1:00 p.m. (Studio 17 Live)
- Telemundo Valle Central – Spanish Job Corner, Tuesday evening News 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.
- KBAK 29 / Fox 58 – Putting You to Work Wednesday, Wednesday evening news 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez reported the Kern County Home Access Grant Program provides accessibility improvements (widen doorways, ramp with handrails, accessible toilet, grab bars, or replace tub with accessible shower) to make a residence more accessible for a

person with a permanent physical disability living in a low-income household within Kern County entitlement jurisdiction. Income verification is required for all people living at the residence. Rental property and owner-occupied property can be improved under the program. In all cases, the owner of the property must agree to the specific improvements. The applicant must have a permanent physical disability which restricts access to or around the residence. The disability must be verified by a doctor evaluation form completed by the applicant's primary physician familiar with the disability. After review of the application and doctor evaluation, the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department will contact the applicant for an inspection of the residence to determine specific needs and eligible improvements. All work must be completed by a California licensed and insured contractor. The Kern County Home Improvement Loan Program provides eligible improvements to replace air conditioning, heater, roof, electrical, plumbing, carpet, linoleum, windows, insulation, and painting. Available to owner occupied single-family residence with gross household income below the income limit adjusted for household size as determined by Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). There must be sufficient equity to secure a first or second mortgage. A second mortgage is only considered if the existing first mortgage is a fixed interest rate, fully amortized, current loan. A property with a reverse mortgage is not eligible. A deed of trust is recorded on the property to secure the mortgage loan. Monthly payments can be made, and the balance paid in full at any time. Loan renewed every five years only if the owner occupies the residence, property taxes and insurance are current, and household income is below the annual income limit.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Tammy Hartsch

Tammy Hartsch attended virtually and reported they received an email from the California Department of Aging stating the California Governor announced that they're implementing a Calgrows workforce training and development program which is currently open for registration. This program offers hundreds of free training courses to caregivers who work with older adults and people with disabilities to help develop their skills and provide quality care and give incentive payments to those who qualify. These trainings are offered virtually and in person. For more information about this program, you can search their website at <https://www.calgrows.org/>. They also received Community Living Fund Program funding from the Department of Rehabilitation that is specific to assisting individuals who might be in a skilled nursing facility or Diversion services for those who are in jeopardy of being admitted to a skilled nursing facility. If you know of anyone in need of this service, please contact their Intake department at ILC.

VICTIM WITNESS PROGRAM – Leslie Devitt

Leslie Devitt attended virtually and reported the July DEAR newsletter will feature the Cooling Center information and that will go out Friday, June 30th. The Elder Crimes Trends report for the second quarter are as follows: 3 stolen vehicles for a total of 9 for the 1st and 2nd quarter of 2023; family violence continues to be the highest point from 35 in 1st quarter to 48 in the second half, with a total of 83 in the first half of the year; workplace violence almost doubled with 4 in the 1st quarter and 7 in the second quarter making 11 for the first half of 2023; and 0 homicides for the 1st quarter but 3 homicides for the 2nd quarter, totaling 3 for the 1st half of 2023.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Jeremy Oliver

Jeremy Oliver reported the following:

FEDERAL

The Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 was passed allowing for a temporary increase in federal borrowing to avoid default until 2025. The Act did increase some work requirements for SNAP food assistance program recipients aged 50 to 54.

STATE

The CA Legislature submitted its budget bill SB 101 to the Governor for review, which will lead to additional discussions before a final budget is passed prior to the July 1st deadline. Within the requested budget is an extension of the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) funding to December of 2024 which will allow Area Agencies on Aging more time to spend allocations of funding for nutrition programs, fall prevention, legal assistance, information and assistance, to name a few specific to Aging & Adult Services Department.

CalGrows is open for registration with hundreds of courses available to caregivers working with older adults and adults with disabilities, helping support Californians on a path to a career in health care and ensuring the state retains highly qualified health care workers. The overall intent to continue to grow the workforce around the needs of our aging population.

DEPARTMENT

The Board of Supervisors proclaimed the month of June as Elder Abuse Awareness month. We appreciate everyone who attended this year's Elder Abuse Conference and especially thank our presenting agencies District Attorney, Sheriff, Federal Bureau of Investigations, Long Term Care Ombudsman, and Protective Services Staff. Over 200 attendees with many being first time at our conference.

Potential flooding due to snow melt has passed the peak warning period and the County has returned to normal monitoring of progress.

The Digital Divide program funding was extended to June 30, 2024, which was the original date until the State retracted time periods.

The IHSS program is continuing to address compliance rates and making strides to remain in compliance with State requirements despite losses of staff due to medical leaves, etc. We are also watching closely Assembly Bill 120 and Senate Bill 120 regarding IHSS Fiscal Penalty for counties that do not complete a contract with IHSS providers. Current language allows a 7% one-time penalty to the county, but the newly proposed language changes the penalty to 10% ongoing annually until the collective bargaining agreement is reached.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

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

No report.

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

Commissioner Snyder reported approximately 28 CSL proposals were submitted. Their virtual annual session will be held October 24-26, 2023. They will be going to Sacramento October 31st through June 1st for training and other CSL business. They are hoping the Assembly proposals get picked up.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – K. Grasty

Commissioner Grasty reported the following:

- Recently Reappointed: None.
- New Appointments: Julie Juarez-Ceja – appointed by Alzheimer's Disease Association of Kern County. She will assume the existing term previously held by William Wright, and her term will expire January 1, 2025. Anabel Hernandez – appointed by District 5. She will assume the existing vacant term, and her term will expire August 18, 2024.
- Resignations: Sandy Morris – resigned 06/15/2023. A letter was sent to Mary Vasinda, of Around the Clock Care, requesting a new appointment.
- Expired Terms: Kris Grasty – Term Expired 06/17/2023. Laura sent a letter to District 5 for reappointment. No Board meetings until July 18th so not expecting reappointment until after July or August due to scheduled Budget meetings.
- Appointments Soon to Expire: Susan Bodnar – Ridgecrest Regional Hospital, Term expires 08/01/2023. Yolanda Prado – Aging and Adult Services, Term expires 09/08/2023. Roger Oswald – District 4, Term expires 09/15/2023. Stephanie Lynch – District 3, Term expires 09/22/2023. Doris Duquette – District 2, Term expires 09/29/2023. Laura will send letters of reappointment as their term dates near.
- Vacancies: District 1 – for term expired 05/04/2023. Around the Clock Care, Term expires 08/07/2023.
- New Applications Received: Sonia (Harpreet) Dhillon – Received 06/20/2023. Educational and work background is in nursing. Will discuss with the COA Executive Committee.

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 June 7, 2023, and they discussed today's agenda and other items already covered in this meeting. There was a discussion about having a committee to work on the California Master Plan for Aging (MPA). Commissioner Snyder shared It's been a work in progress for years. Commissioner Lemucchi was very

instrumental getting information from Kern County into the mix in terms of what the needs were in Kern County. The point behind it is for the State and local governments, communities, and the private philanthropic organizations to build an environment that is age-friendly and disability friendly for senior citizens of the state and what has been developed for the county to work with is called the Master Plan for Aging Playbook that has different suggestions. We, as the Executive Committee, feel it's time to engage our local leaders and start engaging our community, probably starting with our senior centers through discussions at the senior centers. If any of you have suggestions that you would like to offer on how to create a friendly environment regarding age or disability in Kern County, please do not hesitate to bring it to the Executive Committee to discuss this. Commissioner Lemucchi shared that on the California MPA website, there is a MPA dashboard showing all the counties in California, and you'll see a lot of work on the MPA happening in the Bay Area and L.A. but nothing for the central valley and other places in California, and it's a shame. We want our local administration, and our local government to be more aware of the needs of older adults and people with disabilities. Chair Prado added, with respect to this particular mission, we're going to make it part of the Senior Center Advisory Committee.

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

Commissioner Snyder reported the committee met May 18, 2023. The next meeting is July 20, 2023. AASD staff are doing a great job meeting standards the State set for the IHSS program.

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

Commissioners Devora Gonzalez Martinez, Norma Jackson and Doris Duquette visited Parkview Julian (Skilled Nursing Facility) on 6/26/23 from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Commissioner Jackson noted every resident's room in the facility has an outdoor patio area (with grass) where residents can exit to and sit or visit with family. She also noted the facility is a 99-bed capacity, and rooms fit 3 or 2 residents at a time. The facility uses big print to display activities and facility menu. Commissioner Jackson would recommend Parkview Julian to anyone looking for nursing home placement. Commissioner Duquette was disappointed during the facility visit as it did not have their star rating posted at their facility, as required. When Commissioners asked to review Parkview Julian's star rating facility, staff did not know why it wasn't posted up and were unable to locate the rating. Commissioners requested to review the facility's "survey binder". The facility survey binder showed Parkview Julian had recent citations with California Department of Public Health in April 2023 regarding water leaks, catheter bag issues, dignity, and respect violations, not reporting a change of condition to physician, etc. Commissioner Duquette noticed some patios around the facility have more shade and grass than others. Commissioner Duquette would not recommend Parkview Julian.

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

Chair Prado announced there is nothing to report regarding Marketing, but the Committee will get together to schedule Orientation for our new Commissioners.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE – G. Brown; N. Jackson

No report.

SENIOR CENTER ADVISORY – B. Goodlow

No report.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

Commissioner Duquette reported she sent two birthday cards, and one came back. She will continue to send cards as needed.

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

Commissioner Gomez reported they will meet in September. She is looking forward to attending her first TACC meeting.

TRANSPORTATION – Y. Prado, J. Lemucchi

Chair Prado reported the next meeting is scheduled for July 2023.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – G. Brown

Commissioner Brown reported they will continue to recognize senior nutrition volunteers as the Commission visits the different senior centers. She also requested help on this committee.

INFORMATION ITEMS –

- Cooling Centers – Information about the Cooling Centers can be found on the Kern County website at <https://www.kerncounty.com/government/aging-adult-services/services/cooling-centers>. Flyers are also posted on AASD social media pages.
- Commissioner Brown announced that she will need to be excused from attending July's COA Regular meeting but she will try to join via Zoom.

NEXT MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, July 5, 2023 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, July 17, 2023 1:00 p.m. Taft Senior Center 500 Cascade Place, Taft, CA 93268 (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 2:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Oliver
Secretary

JO/lj