

Kern County Commission On Aging

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



**REGULAR COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING
MINUTES**

July 17, 2023, 1:00 p.m.

Taft Senior Center
500 Cascade Place, Taft, CA 93268
and via Zoom

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Lynch 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, ****Secretary)

Commission Members Present:

In Person – Susan Bodnar, Doris Duquette, Sherry Gomez, ***Kris Grasty, Anabel Hernandez, Norma Jackson, Julie Juarez-Ceja, *Stephanie Lynch, ****Jeremy Oliver, **Judy Snyder, and Debra Teofilo

Virtually – Jan Lemucchi, Linda Oswald, and Roger Oswald

Excused Absences: Kevin Alvey, Gloria Brown, Devora Gonzalez, Ellen Linder, and Yolanda Prado

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
Angela Domingos – Senior Nutrition Program Coordinator

Guests:

In Person

Andres Blass, Regino Blas Castillo, Charles D. Morris, Bob Jordan, Katherine Morris, Sam Hobbs, Genel Hodges, and Catherine Vasquez

Virtually

Skippy Sumner, Aaron Brace (ASL interpreter) Juan Carlos Gonzalez, and Leslie Devitt

CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

1. Skippy Sumner, of California Telephone Access Program, also known as CTAP, with the assistance of ASL interpreter, Aaron Brace, shared that his role there includes giving virtual webinar presentations, conducting booths, networking meetings, and trainings. Program is also known as California Phones, which is a state mandated program under the offices of the California Public Utilities Commission. They are in the process of rebranding to California Connect. They are still the same organization. They have a social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. You can find further information on their website at www.cacconnect.org. Their program is funded through a surcharge which is on all telephone bills in the state of California, including wireless bills. It appears as a line item on your bill labeled "California Relay Service and Communications Devices Fund". Applying for this program is simple, easy, and fast. There is a certification form that you can complete. They provide specialized telephone equipment for Californians who have difficulty hearing, seeing, moving, speaking, or learning or remembering. Requirements to receive a free specialized phone are simple. You must live in California, already have a phone service, have a cellular or landline, and you need a signature from a certifying agent that you have the requisite difficulty in those areas mentioned above. There is another program, "California Lifeline" that can help you get phone service if you need it prior to coming to their program. They also offer smartphone trainings called "Bring Your Own Device". They offer trainings on the accessibility features of iPhone and Android phones. They provide trainings in English, Spanish, Chinese, and ASL. If you have difficulty getting internet, there is another program called "Affordable Connect Program" which is under the Federal Communications Commission for people who have limited income. If you would like any further information, you can reach out to Skippy via phone at (559) 478-2755, or via email: ssumner@ccaf.us.

Commissioner Comments:

1. Commissioner Hernandez shared information about California offering Respite Care Service for Medi-Cal patients. This program is live effective July 1, 2023, to help provide personal care to loved ones at home, on top of what hours they may already receive from In-Home Supportive Services.

2. Commissioner Jackson thanked the Taft Senior Center for the delicious lunch.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** for June 26, 2023, Regular Commission on Aging meeting were approved as prepared.

Motion/Second/Abstained/Opposed (M/S/A/O)

Grasty/Gomez/L. Oswald, R. Oswald, Goodlow/None - Motion carried.

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

TAFT SENIOR CENTER – Angela Domingos

Angela Domingos was the guest speaker and gave her report prior to the meeting. She reported Taft's regular attendance for congregate seniors is usually in the mid to upper 20s. Our Taft seniors are very active and enjoy their activities they have access here at the Westside Parks and Recreation facility. These activities include BUNCO (every Tuesday), Senior Movie Day (every Tuesday)- for \$5.00 they can get a popcorn and drink while they watch the movie. Bingo (every Thursday), Additionally, the seniors have access to play Corn Hole and utilize the Bowling Alley weekly. The Taft seniors appreciate the new menu items and are good at making suggestions for more activities. She shared about the menu guidelines and how the menu is created. The Older Americans Act provides funding for the Nutrition program through the Administration for Community Living (ACL), in addition to many other Aging and Adult programs. They also provide the guidelines for how they create the monthly menus which is aimed at a 70+ year old female whose activity level is sedentary as stated. With this goal, they begin creating the menu with what they call the Cook's Breakout Menu, utilizing this binder of recipes, (handouts provided) of the 2023 May Breakout Menu. Each page contains one week of menus. Once this is created, it is sent to the Registered Dietician for final approval. The dietician notes the sodium content, variety of proteins, and other menu items. This is what the cooks use to access the recipes, provide the correct serving portions, and ensure that meal is adequately served. They utilize US Foods as their supplier of food items, so the cooks also use the Breakout menu to check existing inventory and make weekly orders. Once the Cook's Breakout menu is approved, they create the Monthly Menu that is distributed to the seniors which corresponds to the Breakout Menu. Occasionally they have to substitute menu items if the delivery is late or unavailable. They are implementing the Frozen Meals program to all new clients; therefore, eliminating the waitlist at each site. They have an in-house dietician who follows the same guidelines, and the menu must be approved. She provided a copy of the flyer from Rev Foods in both English and Spanish along with a copy of July's menu. She explained how the program works in that it's a weekly delivery containing 5 frozen meals along with fresh fruit and milk for each meal. The driver is not to leave the meal unattended, and they are to check in with the clients.

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Karen McKenzie

Not in attendance.

VETERANS SERVICE – Jose Lopez

Not in attendance but sent his report for the Chair to read on his behalf:

Dear Commission on Aging,

I am sorry I could not attend today's meeting. I am holding interviews with the goal of expanding our team and improving our processes to better serve Kern County. I would like to thank Laura and Jeremy for allowing me to be a part of this and letting me spread the word that we are here to help! Please do not let distance be a roadblock to services, call or email our office to speak to a representative about veteran or survivor benefits, or anything else veteran related. Ninety-nine percent of our services are achievable over the phone and in those rare instances that an in-person meeting is needed, we'll schedule an appointment to either come into the office or for a representative to perform a home call. Our contact information is as follows:

Phone: (661)868-7300

Email: kernvets@kerncounty.com

Address: 1120 Golden State Ave., Bakersfield, CA 93301

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Public Health Nurse

Not in attendance.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Juan Carlos Gonzalez

Juan Carlos Gonzalez announced that he will be taking over as the main Coordinator over the Volunteer Senior Outreach Program (VSOP) services and is looking forward to work with the Commission on Aging and learn more about the role of the Commission.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Gayla Hughes

Not in attendance.

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 modifications to a home for someone who is low-income and disabled. They can put in grab bars and rails, high toilets, remove a bathtub and put in a walk-in shower, and other modifications to make the home more accessible. The program is free to the applicant, but they must have a permanent physical disability and living in a low-income household within Kern County entitlement jurisdiction. It is available for homeowners and for renters with the homeowner's permission. The Home Improvement Loan Program is available for homeowners only to make eligible improvements to replace paint, roof, electrical, etc. Available to owner occupied single-family residence with gross household income below the This is an interest-free, deferred payment loan. A lien is placed on the mortgage and the loan is paid when the home is sold, or the owners move. 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.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Hermandeep Dhawali

Hermandeep Dhawali attended virtually and reported ILC offers a range of services for individuals with disabilities or aging adults. A few of their programs include Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB), California Community Transitions Program (CCT), Assistive Technology (AT), Information and Referral services, and many more. To learn more about ILC's services or programs, everyone is welcome to attend their ADA Conference that's happening July 26th at 8:30 a.m. at the DoubleTree Hotel. They will have a few guest speakers from various disability rights groups, from the US Department of Justice Civil Rights division, from the Department of Health and Human Services, and from the National Council of Disability. They will also have vendors booths, raffles, food, and networking opportunities.

VICTIM WITNESS PROGRAM – Leslie Devitt

Leslie Devitt attended virtually and reported the July DEAR newsletter featured Cooling Center information, and August's newsletter will be about contractor fraud and how to avoid it. The Elder Crimes Trends report for the second quarter are as follows: 3 homicides (up from 0 for a total of 3), 7 workplace violence (up from 4 for a total of 11), 50 family violence (up from 35 for a total of 85), and 4 stolen vehicles (down from 6 for a total of 10).

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 seeking input on proposed updates to the regulations of the Older Americans Act program. Comments must be post marked by August 15, 2023, or you can go to [ACL.gov](https://www.acl.gov). Last substantial update to the OAA program, which sets the rules that all Area Agencies on Aging must adhere to, was in 1988. The OAA authorizes a wide range of programs and services that help older adults age in place.

STATE

Budget was passed with the following areas of interest:

- Managed Care Organization Provider Tax effective April 2023 to December of 2026 which should provide additional revenue to offset the Medi-Cal expansion.
- California Food Assistance Program Expansion (CFAP) - \$40 million one-time General Fund to begin automation and outreach efforts beginning July 2023 for expanding CFAP to income-eligible individuals aged 55 years or older, regardless of their immigration status. Issuance of food benefits is anticipated to begin in October 2025.
- In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Collective Bargaining—\$1.5 million one-time General Fund to analyze the costs and benefits of a statewide or regional approach to IHSS collective bargaining, and statutory changes to amend the current penalty structure for counties that fail to reach an IHSS collective bargaining agreement from 7 percent one-time to 10 percent ongoing.
- IHSS Minor Recipient Provider Eligibility—\$60.7 million ongoing (\$27.9 million General Fund) and statutory changes to eliminate provider eligibility requirements that only

apply to minor recipients and allow all minor children to have access to their provider of choice.

- Advancing Older Adult Behavioral Health—\$20 million General Fund in 2023-24,
- \$20 million General Fund in 2024-25, and \$10 million General Fund in 2025-26 at the California Department of Aging to support the continuation of the Older Adult Friendship Line, a targeted ethnic media campaign for older adults, and competitive grants to local jurisdictions to build organizational capacity to identify and address older adult behavioral health and substance use disorder needs.
- Mello-Granlund Older Californians Act Modernization Pilot Program—\$37.2 million General Fund annually across five years starting in 2022-23 for pilot programs supporting community-based services programs, senior nutrition support, family and caregiver supports, senior volunteer development, and/or aging in place. This reflects \$186 million General Fund spent over five years instead of three years as originally planned in the 2022 Budget Act.
- Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Spending Plan Extension—The Budget includes an extension for all HCBS initiatives to fully spend allocated funding until December 31, 2024.

Department

Frozen meals have been implemented within the county through Revolution Foods. All new Meals on Wheels recipients will be enrolled in this option, which is a once-a-week delivery of 5 frozen meals and fresh fruits and vegetables to the clients home and into their refrigerator if they need assistance. Clients currently under the program will not see any change. Staff have also been informed that there are no changes to their employment at this time and if anything, they may have different assignments as the Frozen meal option continues to grow or expand. We anticipate being able to serve previously hard to reach areas of the county. No changes to congregate dining as a result of this option.

IHSS program has begun Electronic Visit Verification or EVV. This requires providers who do not live with their recipients to electronically check in at the beginning and end of their workday. This took effect July 1, and state provided final guidance end of June, which has resulted in significant calls to understand the new system. There is a mobile application that can be used. This is a federal requirement and the state paid penalties as a result of not being in compliance since January of 2021.

Adult Protective Services continues to see growth of APS referrals and have changes in staffing. Digital Divide program continues to expand, and we have additional devices to assist with needs of our clients as well as staffing.

Department is obtaining additional space to keep up with additional staffing needs, thankfully all within the same location of our existing staff. Anticipate a new secured parking area for the Department's vehicle fleet in the next 4 months to allow for better parking of staff vehicles and ensuring the county vehicles are secure from the ongoing catalytic converter theft.

Extreme temperatures came on over the end of the week and the Department reached out to clients at risk to provide resource information and encourage use of the cooling centers.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

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

No report.

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

Commissioner Lemucchi reported she was unable to attend the COA meeting in person today because she was asked to join a few of the CSL members to discuss with a consulting firm that the Department of Aging is working with on an initiative called "Future Ready California for Aging". She will have more on this later. They are interviewing multiple AAA's, as well as other entities, such as CSL, on how we can improve older adults and people with disabilities with their resources, accessibility, and other issues regarding a shared database system similar to the ADRC program.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – K. Grasty

Commissioner L. Oswald reported the following:

- Recently Reappointed: Judy Snyder – reappointed by Commission on Aging to continue serving on the IHSS Advisory Committee for another two-year term. Her new term expires June 30, 2025.
- New Appointments: None.
- Resignations: Roger Oswald – will resign from the Commission when his two-year term ends on 09/15/2023.
- Expired Terms: Kris Grasty – Term Expired 06/17/2023. Laura sent a letter to District 5 for reappointment. A follow-up email was sent July 13, 2023.
- 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. Stephanie Lynch – District 3, Term expires 09/22/2023. Doris Duquette – District 2, Term expires 09/29/2023. Laura sent emails to the Commissioner asking if they wish to continue serving. She will send letters of reappointment when do for those who responded that they would like to continue serving.
- Vacancies: District 1 – for term expired 05/04/2023. A letter was sent to District 1 on July 14, 2023, recommending the appointment of Sonia (Harpreet) Dhillon. Around the Clock Care, Term expires 08/07/2023.
- New Applications Received: None.

Commissioner Teofilo announced that she will be resigning from the Commission on Aging effective July 18, 2023, due to relocating to another state. Chair Lynch thanked her for her service on the Commission.

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 on July 5, 2023, and they discussed today's agenda and formulated some Ad Hoc committees. One of the committees is the Master Plan for Aging. There are currently four Commissioners on that committee, but the full Commission will be working on the Master Plan for Aging. The Kern County Fair Board is meeting tonight at 5 p.m. at the Fairgrounds and several members of the Commission will be attending to express their concerns about Senior Day at the Fair. You are all welcome to join. We will only be able to speak during public comments so that limits us to 3 minutes each.

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

No report.

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

No report.

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

Commissioner Prado reported the committee is working on coordinating a date for new Commissioner orientation.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE – G. Brown; N. Jackson

No report.

SENIOR CENTER ADVISORY – B. Goodlow

Commissioner Goodlow reported the Bakersfield Senior Center continues to do well. They still have their activities, exercise, and lunches at the center. The lunches are almost 100% participation. On the front page of the July 16, 2023 Bakersfield Californian newspaper, there was an article about the need for another building for the Bakersfield Senior Center due to aging, ceiling tiles are faded, chipped roofing, and hunched fencing. They had water leaks last summer and were forced to close part of the center down until repairs were made. Break-ins have been bad because the building is so old. Even though they have security, they still break-in. They stole amplifiers and music equipment, so the center had to replace that. She is happy that they will be building a beautiful building and is unsure where they will go to congregate for two years during construction.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

Commissioner Duquette reported she sent one birthday card and will continue to send cards as needed. Commissioner Snyder thanked the Commission for her birthday card.

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

Commissioner Gomez reported the California Interagency Council of Homelessness (Cal ICH) is seeking members for their Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAB). They are asking individuals with current or past experience of homelessness to apply. The deadline to apply is August 11, 2023.

TRANSPORTATION – Y. Prado, J. Lemucchi

No report. Next meeting is in September 2023.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – G. Brown

No report.

INFORMATION ITEMS –

- Ad Hoc Committees – you are encouraged to look at the committees and volunteer. You can serve on up to three Operating Committees, and Ad Hoc Committees are not included. The Ad Hoc Committees are as follows:
 1. Senior Day at the Kern County Fair
 2. California Master Plan for Aging
 3. Historian
 4. Centenarian

NEXT MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, September 6, 2023 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, September 18, 2023 1:00 p.m. Rasmussen Senior Center 115 E. Roberts Lane, Bakersfield, CA 93308 (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 1:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Oliver
Secretary

JO/lj