

**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**

**November 20, 2023, 1:00 p.m.**

Rosamond Senior Center

2500 20<sup>th</sup> Street, Rosamond, CA 93560

and via Zoom

**OPENING**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Lynch called the meeting to order at 1:16 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, Gloria Brown, Sonia Dhillon, Doris Duquette, Sherry Gomez, Barbara Goodlow, \*\*\*Kris Grasty, Anabel Hernandez, Genel Hodges, Norma Jackson, Julie Juarez-Ceja, Jan Lemucchi, Ellen Linder, \*Stephanie Lynch, \*\*\*\*Jeremy Oliver, Linda Oswald and Yolanda Prado

**Virtually** – \*\*Judy Snyder

**Excused Absences:** Kevin Alvey, Devora Gonzalez, and Julia Juarez-Ceja

**SECRETARY OLIVER CONFIRMED A QUORUM WAS PRESENT IN PERSON.**

**Honorary Commission Members Present:**

Roger Oswald

**Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:**

Andres Villasenor, Senior Nutrition Program Coordinator

Laura M. Juarez – Office Services Coordinator

## **GUESTS:**

### **In Person**

Marvin Brown and Catherine Vasquez

### **Virtually**

Juan Hernandez, Lourdes Garcia, Sheila Roth, Hermandeep Dhaliwal and Leslee Devitt

## **CORRESPONDENCE:**

None.

## **COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:**

### **Public Comments:**

None.

### **Commissioner Comments :**

1. Commissioner Jackson reported that she met with her appointer, Jeremy Oliver, on October 19<sup>th</sup>, and discussed the COA expectations, including ethics training, Commissioner committees, attendance, and participation at events. Another meeting will be scheduled for 2024.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** for October 16, 2023, Regular Commission on Aging meetings were tabled to the January meeting to allow time for necessary revisions under the CLS Operating Committee report.

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

**Grasty/Lemucchi/None/None - Motion carried.**

## **ROSAMOND SENIOR CENTER – Andres Villaseñor**

Andres Villaseñor reported the Hummel Hall Senior Center feeds 55 home-based clients and 96 congregate clients per day. They deliver to two congregate sites outside Rosamond (Tehachapi and California City). They have a staff of 5 individuals and one volunteer. Hummel Hall has had its share of ups and downs in the past year and had to close not too long ago, having to move operations to California City. This translated to longer shifts for all staff. Without their hard work none of this would be possible. Thankfully the staff was able to resume services from Hummel Hall recently. Currently, no activities are scheduled for the center. The nonprofit that was based there has since disbanded. They provided potlucks and activities to help with attendance retention. While our department is mainly tasked with the meal service side of things, they have offered free coffee to clients, boardgames, and are working on installing a flat screen tv for seniors to use.

### **GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Karen McKenzie**

Karen McKenzie was not in attendance but sent a report for Chair Lynch to share on her behalf. She asked that everyone please remember all Veterans and Senior groups need to complete their Advanced Reservation application for 2024 events in the buildings.

### **VETERANS SERVICE – Jose Lopez**

Not in attendance. Vice-Chair Snyder shared that she read a Facebook post on the Kern County Veterans Services page that effective November 14<sup>th</sup>, accredited representative Ulyses Rodriguez will be at the local VA Clinic on Westwind regularly stationed there Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. to assist with all VA benefits needs.

### **PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Public Health Nurse**

Not in attendance.

### **KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Lourdes Garica**

Lourdes Garcia attended virtually and reported Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services is still in search of a new Director. The Department is participating in the Kern County Canned Food Drive for Gleaner's. They continue to do outreach to offer services to those who need mental health assistance. If you know of anyone who can benefit from their services, please send them her way.

### **DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Gayla Hughes**

Gayla Hughes was not in attendance but sent a report for Chair Lynch to share on her behalf. The Governor signed Assembly Bill 133 into law on 7/27/2023. This law included a 2-phased approach to eliminating the asset test used to determine eligibility for our Non-MAGI MC Programs, which include coverage for our Aged and Disabled Population.

- Phase 1 – implemented on 7/1/2022, increased the asset limits to \$130,000 per individual and \$65,000 for each additional household member (up to 10).
- Phase 2 – effective 1/1/2024, will eliminate the asset test entirely for these programs, including Long Term Care and Medicare Savings Programs.

Important Reminders: There are no changes to the income-counting rules and counties are to determine ongoing eligibility for 1/2024 and forward for individuals who were denied in the month of December 2023 due to excess assets. Individuals denied for exceeding the asset limits in the 6 months prior to implementation will be sent an outreach letter, informing them of the new rules and encouraging them to reapply.

### **EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels**

Not in attendance.

### **PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez**

Catherine Vasquez reported they still have funding for their Home Access Grant program that is used to make modifications to the home for those who are disabled. Modifications include grab bars, handrails, walk-in showers, and other items to make the home more accessible to move in and around the house safely. They also have the Home Improvement Loan for homeowners to repair or replace existing items like electrical, roof, paint, etc. There is no interest or payment on the loan. If you have questions or for an application, please call

her office at 661-862-5062. Parliamentarian Grasty thanked Catherine for being here in person and commended her for being the most faithful Ex-Officio member of the COA.

### **INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Hermandeep Dhawali**

Hermandeep Dhawali attended virtually and reported information on a semi-new funding through the Community Living Fund by the Department of Rehabilitation. This funding is available for the Transition program, for those wanting to be moved from skilled nursing to community-based setting or want to live independently, and for the Diversion program, which is to prevent an individual from going into a skilled nursing facility. This funding can be used for food, rent, furnishing, restroom accommodation, grab bars, shower accommodation, ramp, steps leading to the door, and anything to accommodate an individual to live as independently as possible. Their office number is 661-325-1063 and their email address is ILCofKernCounty.org.

### **VICTIM WITNESS PROGRAM – Leslie Devitt**

Leslie Devitt attended virtually and reported there's six weeks left in the fourth quarter, and they continue to see a rise in stolen vehicles, mostly early 2000's Chevy trucks, Tahoe, Yukon & Suburban vehicles. Family violence continues to be number one with Mother/Son or Grandma/Grandson being the top tier for family violence. We're seeing workplace violence with older people working longer. There were no homicides for this quarter and hope that remains the same. Their current Elder Grant that Leslie works under expires 12/31/2023, and they just submitted for a new elder grant beginning 01/01/2024 through 12/31/2024. It is a competitive grant, and all 58 counties are eligible. In the past five years it has been more of a renewal process, but now it is competitive and more work that they must do. She and Adult Protective Services Program Manager, Colleen Philley, gave a breakaway session at the state conference in Sacramento, and presented on everything they do with the Dependent Elder Abuse Review (D.E.A.R.), including the D.E.A.R. newsletter. There was positive feedback with how great Victim and Witness and APS work together as a multidisciplinary team throughout Kern County.

## **STAFF PRESENTATIONS**

### **AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-**

#### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Jeremy Oliver**

Jeremy Oliver reported the following:

#### **FEDERAL**

House passed a stop-gap spending bill that will keep funding in place until January 19<sup>th</sup> for portions of the government such as veterans affairs, transportation, housing and energy department and the rest of the government would be funded until February 2, 2024. Bill must pass the senate and obtain signature of the president, but there are no current anticipated delays based on the status.

#### **STATE**

The Governor signed many legislative bills, AB 1228 sets the minimum wage for fast food workers to \$20 /hour starting April 1, 2024, additionally, SB 525 will see health care workers' wages gradually rise to \$25 /hour. Neither directly impact the wages for IHSS providers but

can lead to future impacts. There are still discussions regarding whether the State will seek to assume collective bargaining for IHSS. Currently the bargaining of wages rests with the individual counties.

Medi-Cal asset limits will be removed from Medi-Cal eligibility so all cases will no longer be means tested but will look at income to establish eligibility.

## **DEPARTMENT**

It is the open enrollment period for Medicare recipients, and they can make changes to their Medicare plans until December 7, 2023. Our Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP) is assisting people with understanding their options at no costs to the clients. Those who have both Medi-Cal and Medicare can make additional changes within the year.

We continue to promote our Digital Divide program and want to encourage referrals to our department to assist seniors with understanding and navigating their digital devices. The program can meet with individuals in their homes and can assist them with obtaining digital devices to improve their access to services.

We received a Community Assessment Survey for Older adults (CASOA) conducted by Polco, and results revealed the top three concerns for seniors in our community are Housing, Information on available older adult services, and tied for third were Finances, and Physical Health. This information will be used in our upcoming training pieces and will become available to all in the coming months.

The In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program continues to seek additional staff to keep up with the rising caseloads and referral growth. Additionally, the IHSS program is in talks with Managed Care Plans to establish a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure clients have access to all Medi-Cal services of need. The Adult Protective Services (APS) program continues to see increases in referrals and continues to receive training from the State on APS needs. As a reminder, the department will be closed for the upcoming holidays, and this includes the Winter Recess which all county departments will be closed starting December 22 and reopening on January 2, 2024. Some programs continue to operate 24/7 such as APS and Conservatorship programs.

## **OPERATING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

### **BYLAWS COMMITTEE – S. Bodnar; K. Grasty**

No report.

### **CALIFORNIA SENIOR LEGISLATURE (CSL) – J. Lemucchi; J. Snyder**

Commissioner Snyder reported that she attended her first meeting in Sacramento. It was a three-day trip. There was a great turnout. She was overwhelmed with the expertise, commitment, and generosity of sharing of information with the other members. Over the course of the month, she was asked to be vice-chair on the Assembly's new Housing and Transportation committee. She was contacted by Helen Lopez, the Legislative Committee Chair, to become a team member on the Assembly, working with two seasoned

Assemblymembers attending virtual and in-person meetings with Legislatures. Kudos given to Commissioner Lemucchi for all the work she has been doing on her own for the last 4-5 years on CSL representing Kern County. She has been working very hard on two Bills that will be moving forward. Commissioner Lemucchi shared the Assembly and Senate members have 10 proposals that will be working on with State Legislatures and one Federal. They are identified below:

AP-2: Hospitals: Patient Discharge Summary

SP-6: Ralph M Brown Act: Teleconferencing

AP-8: Hospice Standards

AP-7: Confidential Marriage

SP-8: Personal Needs Allowance

AP-1: Grandparents: Caregivers Support

SP-3: Healthcare for Older Adults and People with Disabilities

SP-10: Skilled Nursing Facilities: End-of-Life Privacy

AP-5: Automated External Defibrillators

SP-9: End of Life Advance Directive

The proposal she submitted last year on the tax credit for wildfires was not passed by CSL for 2024, but they are going to move forward with submitting again this year and hope it will be picked up. The current goal for her and Vice-Chair Snyder to do is to meet with the local District Representatives.

#### **COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – S. Gomez; K. Grasty; L. Oswald**

Commissioner Oswald reported the following:

#### **Recently Reappointed:**

1. Doris Duquette – reappointed by District 2. Her term expires 09/29/2025.
2. Devora Gonzalez reappointed by GBLA. Her new term expires 11/08/2025.

#### **New Appointments:**

None.

#### **Resignations:**

None.

Expired Terms:

None.

Appointments Soon to Expire:

1. Barbara Goodlow – term expires 12/08/2023. A letter was sent to Bakersfield Senior Center 11/17/2023 requesting her reappointment.

Vacancies:

1. District 1 – for term expiring 06/17/2024 (replacing Debra Teofilo).
2. Around the Clock Care, for term expiring 08/07/2025 (replacing Sandy Morris).

New Applications Received:

None.

This concludes the Commissioner Appointment Report for November 2023.

**EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – G. Hodges; S. Lynch; E. Linder**

Commissioner Linder reported the committee met and decided to purchase pens that read, “Be proud of the work you do and the difference you make. KC Commission on Aging”. These pens come in four different colors. Volunteers will be needed to help put them together, along with candy canes and tags, so that they can be distributed to AASD staff next month.

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

Chair Lynch reported the Exec. Committee met and the results of the meeting were discussed here today. They also discussed the COA Holiday Luncheon, which will be held December 12<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 a.m. at Casa Munoz. RSVP and submit payment to Parliamentarian Grasty. The COA Orientation binder is in the process of being reviewed to see what is needed in it and what can be removed or posted on the COA website. The Master Plan on Aging will be discussed at the January 2024 COA Executive meeting and discuss how to reach seniors to inform them about AASD services. There are some Commissioners who have yet to sign up to serve on a committee, and some committees have vacancies that need to be filled. If you are interested in serving on a committee, please let the Chair know.

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

Vice-Chair Snyder reported the committee met November 16<sup>th</sup> and welcomed new committee member, Sonia Dhillon, who is a private industry representative. Commissioner Hernandez also attended as a guest. The IHSS Program Manager, Michele Gomez, provided a very positive report once again for the department. Their caseloads are at 12,915, and they are processing anywhere from 830-920 applications per month over the last three months, hitting all their goals required by the State regarding processing new applications, assessments, and addressing the most fragile clients. They have six new staff, and the Social Workers are averaging between 246-298 caseloads per Social Worker. Her new staff are at about 200 cases each, which is a remarkable load to carry for every one of those Social Workers, and she applauds the work of all AASD staff.

**LONG TERM CARE – A. Hernandez; S. Bodnar; D. Duquette; D. Martinez; N. Jackson**

Commissioner Bodnar reported the committee met November 17<sup>th</sup> via Zoom. She will continue to serve on the committee. Commissioner Hernandez shared that it was her first meeting on this committee and looks forward to learning more about the committee.

**MARKETING & ORIENTATION COMMITTEE – Y. Prado; D. Duquette; G. Hodges; S. Lynch; J. Snyder**

The Committee will work on marketing AASD services. Orientation has been set for November 29<sup>th</sup> for the two newest Commissioners (Hodges & Dhillon).

**NOMINATION COMMITTEE – K. Alvey; G. Brown; B. Goodlow; N. Jackson**

No report.

**SENIOR CENTER ADVISORY – B. Goodlow; A. Hernandez; G. Hodges**

Commissioner Goodlow reported the Bakersfield Senior Center (BSC) held a car show and she thanked the COA for their donation and gave thanks to the Commissioners who were there to represent the COA. They gave away lots of prizes and sold a lot of tickets. Everything went very well. With the addition of Commissioner Hernandez and Commissioner Hodges on the committee, they will split up the senior centers for them to visit.

**SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette**

Commissioner Duquette reported she is going on a trip for two weeks so if you have an upcoming birthday, you will likely get your birthday card early.

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

Commissioner Gomez shared the TACC meeting was held November 2<sup>nd</sup> via Zoom. They had two presentations, the first from "The Gateway-In Project", who talked about bridging the Healthcare Workforce gap. This grant is to train 2,700 people to be licensed as CNA or CHAA's to work specifically with older adults. They offer free training in Tulare County and will give stipends for gas and other miscellaneous expenses. Upon completion of their course, they will receive incentives of up to \$1,500 if they remain in the field. They plan to begin training in Bakersfield very soon. They had a report from the Housing and Homeless Division of California State, and they talked about the community care expansion program which is aimed at reducing the shortage of facilities that serve older adults on SSI and SSP. The remainder of the meeting was a discussion on how TACC can be more relevant and known to other agencies and groups. Registration for one representative from each PSA will be covered for the C4A conference in 2024. The next meeting will be held via Zoom in March 2024.

**TRANSPORTATION – J. Juarez-Ceja; J. Lemucchi**

No report.

**VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – G. Brown; E. Linder; L. Oswald**

Commissioner Brown reported they will continue to acknowledge the senior nutrition volunteers as they visit senior centers throughout the year.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS –**

- Parliamentarian Grasty shared that the Centenarian Recognition Program continues to receive requests. Commissioner Duquette reached out to Rosewood. Channel 17 is still recognizing Centenarians on their morning sunrise between 6:30 a.m. to 7 a.m. and will be posted on their YouTube channel a week later. We are still looking for Centenarians so please continue to share about the program everywhere you go.
- Chair Lynch shared information about the Area Plan Update group. It was a very good meeting and if you have the chance to participate, please do so. You will learn so much.
- Generic business cards were printed and distributed to Commissioners. If you prefer to have cards with your personal information, please contact Laura.

## **NEXT MEETINGS**

| <b>EXECUTIVE MEETING</b>                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>REGULAR MEETING</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Wednesday, January 10, 2024</b><br><b>1:30 pm Via Zoom</b><br><b>(moved to 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday)</b><br><b>If interested in attending via Zoom, please</b><br><b>contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.</b> | <b>Monday, January 22, 2024</b><br><b>(4<sup>th</sup> Monday due to holiday)</b><br><b>1:00 p.m.</b><br><b>Wasco Senior Center</b><br><b>1280 Poplar Street, Wasco, CA 93280</b><br><b>(COA Ex-Officio Members and the public may attend</b><br><b>in person or via Zoom. Please contact Laura Juarez at</b><br><b>661-868-1052 for the link to join)</b> |

**ADJOURNMENT -** The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Oliver  
Secretary

JO/lj