

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**

March 25, 2024, at 1:00 p.m.

Kern River Valley Senior Center
6401 Lake Isabella Blvd., Lake Isabella, CA 93240
and via Zoom

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Lynch called the meeting to order at 1:12 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, Gloria Brown, Sonia Dhillon, Barbara Goodlow, Anabel Hernandez, Genel Hodges, Norma Jackson, Jan Lemucchi, Ellen Linder, *Stephanie Lynch ****Jeremy Oliver, Yolanda Prado, and **Judy Snyder

Virtually – Doris Duquette, Sherry Gomez, and Devora Martinez

Excused Absences: Susan Bodnar, ***Kris Grasty, Julie Juarez-Ceja, and Linda Oswald

SECRETARY OLIVER CONFIRMED A QUORUM WAS PRESENT IN PERSON.

Honorary Commission Members Present:

None

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

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

Virtually – Martin Reynoso, AAA Planner/Healthy Education Supervisor

GUESTS:

In Person - Michael Sides, "Alan" D. W. Hall, Esther L. Webb, Patrick Myhr, Jim Lawhon, Diane K. Holcombe, Leeann Siefker, Dennis Marineau, Karen Northcutt, Judy Hyatt, Johnny Brown, Christy Newbern, Marvin Brown, Rodolfo Nieto, Tamara Brabenec, Tifini (Star) Hall, and Catherine Vasquez

Virtually - Monica Fitzgerald, Leslie Devitt, Peggy Langels, Lourdes Garcia, and Hermandeep Dhaliwal

CORRESPONDENCE:

Jeremy Oliver reported 44 letters were mailed out to potential vendors for the Elder Abuse Prevention Conference.

Note: Chair Lynch allowed the Employers Training Resource report by Peggy Langels to be reported out of order at this time due to Peggy having to leave early to attend another meeting. Her full report can be found under "Employers Training Resource" under Service Provider Presentations.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

1. Martin Reynoso presented the Department's 2024-2028 Kern County Older Adult Needs Assessment. He thanked the Commissioner members and all those who participated in the focus groups and provided feedback. He also thanked Jeremy for providing him with guidance in completing the needs assessment. He gave a brief overview of the needs assessment process, and results. He answered questions asked by Commissioners and guests. He will discuss this further during the April COA Regular meeting.

Commissioner Comments :

1. Chair Lynch announced that Vice-Chair Snyder will be serving as the Parliamentarian in today's meeting on behalf of Parliamentarian Grasty, who has an excused absence.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** for January 22, 2024, Regular Commission on Aging meeting was approved as amended to correct typos on pages 3 & 8.
Motion: Lemucchi; **Second:** Prado; **Abstained:** Alvey, Martinez; **Opposed:** None.
Motion Carried.

LAKE ISABELLA SENIOR CENTER – Angela Domingos

Angela Domingos reported the Kern River Valley (KRV) Senior Center provides meals for Lake Isabella, Bodfish, Wofford Heights, Kernville, River Kern, South Lake, Mt. Mesa, Onyx, Weldon, and Canebrake. They are their 3rd largest production site in Kern County creating 250 meals daily. Currently, they have on average 35 senior congregates who mostly take their meals to-go. Seniors who stay for lunch can play board games and puzzles as well as watch the new

Smart TV that was installed in early February. Activities for the seniors here in Lake Isabella are as follows:

Hosted by Senior Center Inc. group:

- *Card Club every Monday, Thursday, and Friday at 11:00 am
- *Beginners' Line Dancing every Tuesday at 10:00am
- *Dance Fitness every Wednesday at 9:00am
- *Tai Chi every Wednesday from 5:30pm – 6:30 pm
- * Eagle Mountain Casino Bus Trip on Thursday, April 11th. Reservation is required.

By CAP-K:

- * Senior Food Box delivery the 1st Friday of each month from 8:30am – 10:30am at the Senior Center back parking lot.
- * Senior Food Box delivery the 2nd Monday of each month from 8:00am – 12 noon at Grace Chapel in Mt. mesa at the Senior Center back parking lot.

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Karen McKenzie

Not in attendance and no report submitted.

VETERANS SERVICE – Jose Lopez

Jose Lopez was not in attendance but prepared a report that was read by Chair Lynch: Kern County Veterans Service Department regrets not being able to attend today's meeting. The Lake Isabella community is probably aware that their office at the Human Services building is no longer staffed. The reason is that their accreditation allows them to do the community's work via phone and on their behalf. If anyone needs any type of assistance related to veteran's benefits, please contact their office to start the process. If they identify the need to see a client in person, they will either make an appointment or schedule a home visit as needed. Otherwise, please call (661-868-7300) or email them (kervets@kerncounty.com) from the comfort of your home. Fun Fact: Last fiscal year, their department brought in \$16 million dollars in sustained cash benefits to Kern County residents.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Sara Swertfager

Sara Swertfager could not attend but submitted her report, read by Chair Lynch.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Vaccine - CDC recommends that adults 60 years and older may receive a single dose of RSV vaccine, based on discussions between the patient and health care provider. Providers recommending RSV vaccine should administer RSV vaccine as soon as supply becomes available. RSV vaccines are especially important for adults at high risk for severe RSV illness. The two vaccines are called Arexvy and Abrysvo. The person's health status and risk of severe RSV disease should be considered. The RSV vaccine is covered by Medicare Part D only (NOT Part B). RSV vaccines can be administered with other recommended vaccines.

Persons aged 60 years and older who are at highest risk for severe RSV disease and who might be most likely to benefit from vaccination include those with chronic medical conditions such as:

- Cardiopulmonary disease,
- Kidney disorders,
- Liver disorders,
- Neurologic or neuromuscular conditions,
- Hematologic disorders,
- Diabetes mellitus, and
- Moderate or severe immune compromise (either attributable to a medical condition or receipt of immunosuppressive medications or treatment);

as well as:

- Persons who are frail;
- persons of advanced age
- persons who reside in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities; and
- persons with other underlying conditions or factors that the provider determines might increase the risk for severe respiratory disease.

COVID Vaccine Update - CDC gave a new recommendation for adults ages 65 years and older to receive an additional updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine dose. The recommendation acknowledges the increased risk of severe disease from COVID-19 in older adults, along with the currently available data on vaccine effectiveness. Persons 65 and over can receive the additional dose of the COVID 2023-2024 formulation 4 months after the previous dose.

Know Your Number Program (KYN)- The 7-week program offers free health screenings and fitness and nutrition classes to areas in Kern County. Kern County Public Health will be starting their KYN 7-week Program on 3/27 in Lake Isabella at the Kern River Veteran's Building, 6405 Lake Isabella Blvd, Lake Isabella, CA 93240, from 10-11am.

Influenza (Flu) vaccine – The Flu vaccine is still recommended through May if you have not already received it for this season, which started in September 2023.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Lourdes Garcia

Lourdes Garcia attended virtually and reported Kern Behavioral Health is getting ready to make changes as prop 1 passes, we won't know more until after April so more to come on that. They are also preparing for "May is Mental Health Month", even though it's still away there will be various community events to provide our community information and education on mental health so she will share the calendar as soon as it is out. They continue to provide outreach and encourage individuals to seek mental health services so if you or anyone you know is in need please reach out to their Access and Assessment center to get started.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Gayla Hughes

Gayla Hughes was not in attendance but shared a handout flyer from California Department of Health Care Services that reads as follows:

Medi-Cal will no longer count your assets!

A new California law will stop counting assets such as bank accounts, cars, and money to qualify for Medi-Cal starting January 1, 2024. Income and income from property such as income from rental property, interest payments from trusts, and dividends from stocks are still counted. The law also applies to Medicare Savings Programs. If you applied and were denied for Medi-Cal or a Medicare Savings Program because of your assets in December 2023, your county will decide if you qualify for Medi-Cal in 2024 under the new law. They will mail you a letter with their decision in January or February. If you applied and were denied for Medi-Cal or a Medicare Savings Program because of assets between June 1 and November 30, 2023, you can reapply in one of these ways starting January 1, 2024:

- **Online:** Apply online through the BenefitsCal website at <https://benefitscal.com/>.
- **By mail:** Print and mail the application to your local county office. Find your county's address and phone number in the list that came with this letter. You can also ask your county to mail you a paper application.
- **In person or by phone:** Go to or call your local county office. You can find your local county office at <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/COL>.

Questions?

If you have questions or need help, call your local county office. For general questions about Medi-Cal, call the free Medi-Cal Helpline at **1-800-541-5555**.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Peggy Langels reported Employers' Training Resource has suspended all training until at least July 1st due to budget constraints. They are currently only offering their four-day "Fire Up Your Job Search" class. You would need current job skills and the ability to utilize a computer and type for the class. If anyone is interested in this class, it is being held at their Olive Dr. office and their Lake Isabella office. You must be enrolled in their program to participate. In the Kern River Valley, their America's Job Center affiliate office is located at 5540 Lake Isabella Blvd., Ste. E-3 in the center between Rite Aid and Vons. If you are looking for full-time employment, they have an open Resource Room that can be utilized for Job Search and other job-related reasons only. You can also make inquiries regarding training, but as noted before, training will not resume until after July 1st. SER Jobs For Progress – Paid Work Training for persons 55 years or older is in the America's Job Center at 1600 E. Belle Terrace. Call Deborah at (661) 635-2792 to schedule an appointment. You can visit their America's Job Center of Kern website: <https://www.americasjobcenterofkern.com> to locate current job opportunities, virtual workshops, and Metrix Learning, which has 7000+ courses and trainings that the public can utilize, as well as information on the expungement process and other subjects. Job Squad Live is at 9:00 am every Thursday where jobs are announced live on the America's Job Center of Kern Facebook page. They have a free HR Hotline that is available for businesses that may have HR questions. The phone number is (888) 201-5817.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez reported on their two available grants:

Home Access Grant - provides accessible improvements (widen doorways, ramp with handrails, accessible toilet, grab bars, or replace tub with accessible shower) for low income permanently disabled persons. Tenant and owner-occupied property are eligible if the owner of the property agrees to the work. An inspection will be completed to determine specific needs and all work is bid to licensed and insured contractors.

Home Improvement Loan - provides repairs to the air conditioner, heater, roof, electrical, plumbing, flooring, windows, insulation, and painting. Available to low-income owner-occupied single-family residence. There must be sufficient equity to secure a first or second mortgage. The loan is a zero interest, deferred payment loan payable in full when the owner no longer occupies the property.

For more information or an application, call Kandi Mosqueda (661) 862-5024.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Hermandeep Dhawali

Hermandeep Dhawali attended virtually and shared that their organization supports individuals with disabilities and/or aging adults with information, services, and resources. They offer the community various services such as Advocacy, peer counseling, housing assistance, transportation assistance, information/referral, and independent living skills. Additionally, they organize monthly "Independent Living" (IL) Skills classes and informal peer support classes that are a great way to participate in social activities among individuals who are aging and/or have a disability. They recently had an IL Skills class on the 13th and the focus was Basic American Sign Language, and their next one on the 27th at 2 pm, and its focus will be Assistive Technology, computer/phone/tablet tips and tricks. All their programs and services promote self-sufficiency and inclusion for people with disabilities in Kern County. Their goal is to empower people to live fulfilling lives and participate fully in their community.

VICTIM WITNESS PROGRAM – Leslie Devitt

Leslie Devitt attended virtually and shared that the Kern County DA's Office of Victim Services no longer has an Elder Grant. She will continue to provide services for Elder Victims as well as other victims of crimes. Victim's Rights Week is April 21st – April 27th, 2024. The 10th Annual Victim's Rights March is scheduled for Thursday, April 25, 2024, with the Resource Fair beginning at 1:30 pm, and the event & march @ 4:00 pm at 1415 Truxtun Avenue at the large courthouse.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Jeremy Oliver

Jeremy Oliver reported the following:

FEDERAL

President Biden released his budget outlining the Administration's policy priorities for fiscal year 2025. The President's Budget would increase the Social Security Administration's (SSA's)

funding by 9% from the 2023 level to improve SSA customer service and make benefits more accessible to those in need.

The President's Budget recognizes the rising rate of homelessness among older adults and proposes to create a \$3 billion grant program to help communities provide targeted support for older adults in unstable housing situations and for those currently experiencing homelessness. The funding can be used for short- or longer-term cash assistance to cover rental arrears or other housing costs to prevent eviction, emergency home modification or emergency relocations, and to help older adults cover unexpected financial burdens such as a health emergency.

Additionally, the budget proposes to align Medicare Savings Programs and Part D Low-Income Subsidy (LIS) eligibility methodologies; allow retroactive coverage of Part B premiums for Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB) applicants, as is currently available for other Medicare Savings Programs; and authorize Tribal Health Programs to pay Medicare Part B premiums directly on behalf of their members.

It renews the Biden Administration's call for Congress to invest \$150 billion to improve and expand Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) and support the people who provide care. The Budget includes additional investments in the direct care workforce, family caregivers, and other home-based supports to help older adults and people with disabilities live at home and stay connected to their communities.

STATE

We are closely monitoring a couple of legislative bills that have direct impacts on the State's Area Agencies on Aging. Assembly Bill 2636 authored by Member Bains, has additional support by the Area Agency on Aging Association as it seeks to modernize existing language. Senate Bill 1249 authored by Roth, is supported by the California Department of Aging, and seeks to modernize the Mello-Granlund Older Californians Act too. Each are trying to match changes made to the Federal Older Americans Act but have some differences in focus one seems to focus on area remapping and the other programs.

We await additional clarification on the State deficit as there still is some discrepancy on what the Governor and the Legislative Analyst office (LAO) believe is the actual state deficit. LAO currently estimates the deficit at 72 billion.

DEPARTMENT

We will be seeing our Fall Prevention Program wrapping up as funding has concluded for the program. We will be watching to see if additional funding will become available.

The IHSS program continues to seek additional staff to keep up with the rising caseloads and referral growth and negotiations continue with the United Domestic Workers regarding IHSS provider wages.

The APS program continues to see growth in referrals and this year's elder abuse conference will be on June 13th, at Doubletree. The Conservation program is likely to see some impacts from the Care Court process being initiated in the coming months. SB 43, which is the

expansion of the Grave Disability definition is being discussed to try to build needed infrastructure to make the bill viable regarding the substance abuse population.

The department hopes to have additional space in May which is much needed due to the ongoing growth of cases and staff.

OPERATING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

BYLAWS COMMITTEE – S. Bodnar; K. Grasty

No report.

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

Commissioner Lemucchi reported Senior Rally Day will be held virtually on May 8, 2024, at 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Commissioner Snyder reported she has one more internal activity with the Legislative committee. They are having their annual training, and a lot of good proposals are being developed.

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

Chair Lynch shared the following report:

- Recently Reappointed:
None.
- New Appointments:
None.
- Resignations:
None.
- Expired Terms:
None.
- Appointments Soon to Expire:
None.
- 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 March 2024.

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

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 March 6, 2024, and the results of the meeting were already discussed or will be discussed in today's meeting. She also shared that we are missing information on the COA Member Listing. If you haven't signed and turned in your COA Expectations form, Emergency form, or other necessary information, please do so and give it to Laura.

IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (IHSS) ADVISORY – Anabel Hernandez

Commissioner Hernandez reported the committee met March 21st and they did have a quorum, so they were able to get a lot of business done. These meetings are open to the public and she encouraged everyone to attend. Meetings are held the third Thursday of every other month at 1:30 p.m. in person or hopefully by Zoom in the near future. They need to do more outreach to get more consumers to join the Advisory Committee. In the meeting, Michele Gomez, Program Director for IHSS, reported they received 832 new applications last month alone. They are struggling with case management as the caseloads are still 150 cases per Social Worker. They talked about the proposals that the State Legislative Bills impact would be passing the cost of background checks for applicants onto IHSS. If passed, this could put a financial strain on the Department. Another proposal that could cause complications is allowing undocumented caregivers to take care of their loved one's while being paid by the state.

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

Commissioner Martinez reported they scheduled two facility visits for the month of March, Arvin Poste Acute (formerly Windsor Arvin), and Height Street. Next month they will be visiting The Orchards (formerly Bakersfield Life House). Commissioner Hernandez reported she joined Commissioner Martinez on the walk-through at Height Street and the facility was clean and they've come a long way since the change in ownership. They were very welcoming.

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

Commissioner Prado reported the committee will be meeting on March 27th at AASD and via Zoom for those who aren't able to attend in person. Commissioner Hodges will be attending a health fair on April 6, 2024, in Kern River Valley so she will be representing the COA there. She will pick up brochures and jar openers.

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

No report.

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

Commissioner Goodlow reported on March 13, 2024, she met with Andy, Gregory, and Rosa at the Delano Senior Center. They had 15 seniors in attendance for Zumba class. They have an active program and approximately 50 people who attend congregate meals but could be more depending on the time of the year. A lot of seniors can't go to the center because they babysit their grandchildren. She shared information about ReadyKern and explained the purpose of the program. Those in attendance were very responsive to it. Commissioner Goodlow met with Sr. Nutrition Site Coordinator, Stephanie, as she visited the Shafter Senior

Center. They are doing well. They have approximately 80-100 congregate seniors. They have the same issue as Delano seniors, could be more in attendance, depending on the time of year. They had a food calendar posted on the bulletin board. Their activities are created by the Recreation Department. While there, a representative from Alzheimer's program was there teaching about emergency and survival methods during disasters. There were approximately 40 people attending the class. They had giveaways and talked about warning signs of Alzheimer's disease. The seniors were very attentive in the class. She also visited the Tehachapi Senior Center and passed out ReadyKern pamphlets. They have a diabetes program, dance, and 3-4 planned events for April and summer. They also have a garden where high school students go once each month to take care of the garden, and the seniors really enjoy that. The Bakersfield Senior Center celebrated Black History Month in February. There isn't much going on in March, but they continue to have their regular dance, diabetes, and exercise classes. They are still working on getting funding for their new building.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

Commissioner Duquette reported she sent out birthday cards and will continue to send cards as needed.

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

No report. They will be meeting next in May 2024.

TRANSPORTATION – J. Juarez-Ceja; J. Lemucchi

No report.

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

Commissioner Brown shared that there was one senior nutrition volunteer recognized in Lake Isabella and they will continue to recognize volunteers as they visit each senior center throughout the year.

INFORMATION ITEMS –

- **KernReady DeafLink (AHAS)** – We continue to get the word out about this program. Digital Divide program will help as needed.
- **Elder Abuse Prevention Conference** – June 13, 2024, at DoubleTree – Registration is open \$55/person early registration, \$65 after 5/21 through deadline. We have room for 13 vendors.
- **Centenarian Recognition Program** – they have not received any requests since February. Continue to get the word out. It was suggested to send flyers to Kern County Honor Flight and all Veterans Posts.
- **Platos y Platicas** – Commissioner Prado shared they are having this event again this year on April 16, 2024, at the Richard Prado Senior Center. BPD officers and 9-1-1 staff will come in to talk with seniors.

NEXT MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, April 3, 2024 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, April 15, 2024 1:00 p.m. Rasmussen Senior Center 115 E. Roberts Ln., 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 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Oliver
Secretary

JO/lj