

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

July 15, 2024, at 1:00 p.m.

East Niles Senior Center

6601 Niles Street, Bakersfield, CA 93306

and via Zoom

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Lynch called the meeting to order at 1:02 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, Norma Jackson, Ellen Linder, *Stephanie Lynch, and ****Jeremy Oliver (non-voting)

Virtually – None.

Excused Absences: Kevin Alvey, Genel Hodges, Julia Juarez-Ceja, Jan Lemucchi, and Yolanda Prado

SECRETARY OLIVER CONFIRMED A QUORUM WAS PRESENT IN PERSON.

Honorary Commission Members Present:

None.

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Andres Villasenor, Senior Nutrition Program Coordinator

Laura M. Juarez – Office Services Coordinator

GUESTS:

In Person: Gayla Hughes, Jane Decker, Christie Ray, Regina Mason, and Jose Lopez

Virtually: Hermandeep Dhaliwal

CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

None.

Commissioner Comments :

1. Commissioner Jackson thanked the East Niles Senior Center for the lovely lunch.
2. Vice-Chair Snyder thanked the speakers from Public Health for speaking today about Heat Exhaustion. She shared personal experiences in her home. It happens quickly so please be very cautious as we're heading back into another heatwave.
3. Chair Lynch reminded Commissioner to complete the Emergency Contact information and the Commissioner's Expectations form and give them to Laura when done.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Motion made to approve the June 17, 2024, Regular Commission on Aging meeting as prepared.
Motion: Grasty; **Second:** Gomez; **Abstention:** 0; **Objection:** 0. **Motion carried.**
- **APPROVAL OF HONORARY COMMISSIONER – LINDA OSWALD:** Motion was made to approve to appoint Linda Oswald as an Honorary Commissioner.
Motion: Grasty; **Second:** Brown; **Abstention:** 0; **Objection:** 0. **Motion carried.**
- **APPROVAL OF COA 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION:** Motion made to hold a 50th anniversary celebration for the Commissioner on Aging.
Motion: Grasty; **Second:** Duquette; **Abstention:** 0; **Objection:** 0. **Motion carried.**

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

RICHARD PRADO SENIOR CENTER – Andres Villaseñor

Andres Villaseñor thanked the Commission on Aging for coming out to the East Niles Senior Center this month. He shared this site has an average attendance of 30 seniors per day. It goes up to 40 on Tuesdays due to activities for that day. They play table games, pool, Gospel Music and singing/BINGO and Bunco on Tuesdays. They have exercise class on Wednesdays, Bible Study on Thursdays, and Crafts on Fridays.

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Karen McKenzie

Not in attendance.

VETERANS SERVICE – Jose Lopez

Jose Lopez reported they are staying busy, and their workload is getting heavier every day. They are up to around 90-100 clients every day. They are a small department and deal with turnover of staffing the same as other county departments. They just closed a recruitment and will be hiring three more people to help current staff with that heavy workload. Veteran's services are easily accessible via phone or email. If an in-person meeting is necessary, they can go to your home anywhere in the county. They continue to conduct County-wide outreach. If assistance is needed, you can call their office to schedule as most things can be handled online or over the phone. If they need to come in, they can call to schedule an appointment, or they can go out to the home of those clients who don't drive.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Sara Swerffager, SPHN

Sara Swerffager was not in attendance but prepared a report that was read by Chair Lynch:

Know You Numbers Events:

- California City - June 11th - July 23rd - California City Parks and Recreation – 10-11a.m.
- Delano - July 24th - September 4th Delano Civic Center – 1-2 p.m.
- East Bakersfield - August 27th - October 8th - Richard Prado East Bakersfield Senior Center – 10-11a.m.
- 2024 Campaign: A Healthier Kern - <https://kernpublichealth.com/healthierkern/> July Focus at Kern County Public Health – Obesity and Diabetes.
- Eat healthy - Certified Healthy is a restaurant initiative launched by Kern County Public Health in 2018. This program empowers YOU to choose restaurants in your area that offer nutritious foods. Learn more by visiting our website.
- Be more active.
- Lose Weight.

ReadyKern:

ReadyKern is a state-of-the-art emergency notification system that alerts residents & businesses about natural disasters and other crises. The new emergency notification system enables Kern County to provide essential information quickly in a variety of situations, such as earthquakes, severe weather, fires, floods, or evacuation of buildings or neighborhoods. Sends messages via home phone, cell phone, business phone, or email address. To sign up for alerts: <https://member.everbridge.net/453003085613244/new>.

Protect Yourself from Mosquitoes and Mosquito-Borne Diseases this Summer:

A press release was made June 28th about protecting yourself from mosquitoes and mosquito-borne diseases this Summer and can be found here on their website: <https://kernpublichealth.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Mosquito2024.pdf>. You can also learn more on their interactive webpage <https://kernpublichealth.com/west-nile-virus/>.

Real Emergency Only – 911:

Only Call 911 in a Real Emergency – A press conference was held with Public Health, EMS, Ambulance, and Fire Department on June 25th. Our emergency medical services response system continues to be impacted as Kern County experiences high volumes of 911 calls. The community can help support our local emergency medical services system and hospital

teams by only calling 911 for life-threatening illnesses and emergencies. Here's the link to their YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/SmQazQQ3CHU>.

Mobile Health Clinic:

- McFarland Mouser Center, Tuesday, July 16, 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m., 100 2nd St., McFarland.
- Ridgecrest Library- Wednesday, July 17, 10:30-2pm, 131 E Las Flores Ave., Ridgecrest.
- Arredondo Multi-Service Center, Thursday, July 18, 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., 1505 Owens St., Bakersfield.
- Rosamond Library, Tuesday, July 23, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., 3611 Rosamond Blvd., Rosamond.
- Lamont Library, Wednesday, July 24, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., 8304 Segreue Rd., Lamont.
- Riverview Park, Thursday, July 25, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., 401 Willow Dr., Bakersfield.
- Delano Public Health Clinic, July 29, 9:30 a.m. – 3 p.m., 455 Lexington St., Delano.
- Cerro Coso Community College - Thursday, August 1, 10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., 3000 College Heights Blvd., Ridgecrest.
- Wasco Library Monday, August 5, 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., 1102 7th St., Wasco.
- Taft Department of Human Services - Tuesday, August 6, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., 119 N 10th St., Taft.
- The Dream Center - Wednesday, August 7, 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., 1801 19th St., Bakersfield.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Regina Mason

Regina Mason reported July is National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month and their department has had a few seminars aimed at helping reduce the stigma for mental health especially for minorities. They continue to do outreach, and they will be at the ADA Conference coming up. She asked that you please keep them advised of any other opportunities to get out there into the community. The Senior Outreach Program is up and running and will continue to conduct outreach and education as they work to serve seniors in need. They have a new flyer, and it will be sent out to everyone as soon as they get it finalized.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Gayla Hughes

Gayla Hughes reported about getting help paying for Medicare. There is a program that will help cover some of your Medicare costs. The program is for people who pay for Medicare Part A and is also for those who are eligible for Medicare Part A but have not signed up because of the cost. Part A Covers hospital and skilled nursing facility stays, rehab after the hospital, and more. Part B covers appointments with specialists, medical supplies, and more. The Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program may pay for your Medicare Part A premium, your Medicare Part B Premium, and your Medicare deductibles, copayments, and coinsurance. You can apply online through Benefits Cal at <https://benefitscal.com/> or fill out an application form and mail it to your local county office. You can find the application form here: <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/MSPCal>. If you were previously denied resource due to assets, you should reapply because as of January 2024, they no longer count property towards your limits for eligibility.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Not in attendance.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez reported on two grants available through their department, the Home Access Grant, and the Home Improvement Loan.

Home Access Grant:

The 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:

The Home Improvement Loan provides repairs to the air conditioner, heater, roof, electrical, plumbing, flooring, windows, insulation, and painting. It is 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 reported the following:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) conference will be held Friday, July 26th at the Doubletree Hotel from 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Tickets are still available. They are expecting this year to be the biggest event they have ever held. If anyone is interested in attending, sponsoring, or would like further info., they can call him at 661-325-1063. He shared stats for their agency for the month of June:

- Total 87 intakes received by ILCKC.
- 55% of these intakes were assigned to a case worker in-house.
- 53% were of intakes were for AT (Assistive Technology).
- 14% were PSPS (Public Safety Power Shutoff Program, assist with PGE and SCE).
- 12% were for housing.
- 10% were for IHSS (In Home Supportive Services).
- 7% were for home modifications with our Transitions program.
- 5% were for job seeking assistance.
- 2% was for American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting services.

He also provided a report for the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) which ILC partners with Aging and Adult Services. They received 914 intakes:

- 79% of the calls were for In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS).
- 4.5% were for food/nutrition.

In addition, they also received 603 Adult Protective Services (APS) reports, and 192 calls for Medicare counseling.

VICTIM WITNESS PROGRAM – Leslie Devitt

Not in attendance but she shared prior to the meeting that there was nothing new to report at this time.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Jeremy Oliver

Jeremy Oliver reported the following:

FEDERAL

No updates on the Federal level currently.

STATE

The Governor and Legislature signed the budget for the coming year. At this time, we are informed that many of the proposed cuts were softened or rejected for this fiscal year. Although the budget did not eliminate the funding for the IHSS backup provider program, it did reduce the budget by \$3 million for the 2024-2025 budget year. We will see some delays in implementation of other programs such as the Food Assistance program for undocumented Californians 50+ years and reduces funding for Older Adults Behavioral Health media campaign. There is a one-time shift in funding of \$4.25 million to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program from Licensing and Certification Program. The Medi-Cal Share of Cost Reform implementation was not included in the final budget.

DEPARTMENT

The Department continues to work on the budget with Board of Supervisors hearings coming up during this month and finalization of the budget in August.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program contract ended with Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance (GBLA) effective June 30, 2024. As a result, the State has routed phone lines to be answered by Tulare County Ombudsman office and the department has hired Devora Martinez as an extra help Human Services Program Director to oversee the program until the outcome of the Request for Proposal Process (RFP). As Ms. Martinez was appointed on the Commission by GBLA she is no longer a Commissioner, and if the program remains under the department, the director will report out on any updates to the Ombudsman program. Should the program be awarded to a new vendor, they may appoint a new Commissioner to the Commission. GBLA may appoint a new Commissioner to represent them regarding the legal services they are contracted to perform.

The IHSS program is working on establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Medi-Cal managed care plans per the state requirements. There are three plans in Kern County, Kern Health Systems, Blue Cross and Kaiser. The resulting MOU is likely to increase workloads as there are requirements for increased collaboration, data sharing and meetings between the plans.

The APS program continues to see increases in referrals in part due to the excessive heat, fires, power and water outages in various parts of the county.

The Nutrition programs continue to expand frozen meal delivery throughout the county. Currently, this has not impacted congregate dining, or clients already served by the department for home delivery. Some staff have sought positions with the new vendor, Revolution Foods, to deliver frozen meals. Delano City congregate and home delivery will transition to a new vendor. The Delano Union School District will be providing services to residents in Delano in the coming months as we transition the program. This may have impacts to staffing in that area.

Cooling Centers are open as of June 1, based on temperature thresholds of 105 in the valley areas, 108 in the desert areas, and 95 degrees in the Frazier Park areas. Due to the extreme heatwave, we have seen an uptick in number of persons using the cooling centers.

Expansion of the office space continues as we are beginning to move staff into the new space. We are awaiting cubicle build outs before full migration occurs.

OPERATING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

BYLAWS COMMITTEE – S. Bodnar; K. Grasty

No report.

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

No report.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – K. Grasty; S. Gomez:

Commissioner Gomez reported the following:

Recently Reappointed:

None.

New Appointments:

None.

Resignations:

None.

Expired Terms:

1. Gloria Brown – her term expired 06/17/2024. Laura sent a letter to District 2 for reappointment.
2. Sherry Gomez – her term expired 06/17/2024. Laura sent a letter to District 3 for reappointment.

Appointments Soon to Expire:

1. Anabel Hernandez – her term expires 08/18/2024. Laura will send a letter for reappointment as the date nears.

Other:

1. Devora Martinez – Term ended based on change in program.

Vacancies:

1. District 1 – for term expired 06/17/2024 (replacing Debra Teofilo).
2. District 4 - for term expired 06/17/2024 (replacing Linda Oswald). Appointment in process for Christie Ray. It is on the Board of Supervisors agenda for appointment on July 16th.
3. Around the Clock Care, for term expiring 08/07/2025 (replacing Sandy Morris). Appointment in process for Jane Decker.
4. Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance – for term expiring 11/08/2025.

New Applications Received:

1. Suzann Gray – Application was sent by the Clerk of the Board.

This concludes the Commissioner Appointment report for July 2024.

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

No report.

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

Chair Lynch reported the Exec. Committee met July 3rd and discussed today's agenda and many topics already discussed or will be discussed during Operating Committee Reports. The committee also welcomed Commissioner Bodnar to the Executive Committee. Parliamentarian Grasty reported that Laura is working on updating the COA Handbook and should have it completed and ready for review at the September COA Regular meeting. The Chairs of each Operating Committee need to write an updated description and duties of the committees they chair and send them to Laura.

IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (IHSS) ADVISORY – A. Hernandez

No report.

LONG TERM CARE – S. Dhillon; D. Duquette; A. Hernandez; N. Jackson

No report.

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

Vice-Chair Snyder reported they have two new Commissioners coming up so orientation will need to be scheduled in the fall after they come on board. They will also have work to do with the upcoming 50th COA anniversary. Chair Lynch shared that because of marketing at various events, we added two new Commissioners.

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

No report.

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

Commissioner Goodlow reported the Bakersfield Senior Center (BSC) has a grand groundbreaking ceremony on July 25th at 9 a.m. and will be for the Fourth Street Senior Center Apartment building. It is adjacent to the BSC, and it will feature four 1-bedroom garden style apartments. All units will be energy efficient and will have a refrigerator, dishwasher, stove, and microwave. It will also have an onsite laundry room and a dog run. Seven of these one-bedroom units will be affordable to senior households of 50% EMI or below, with remaining units for households at 20% EMI or below. On July 26th, the BSC will have "Jazz Under the Stars". BSC is also offering classes on Bridging the Digital Divide and the first class was held on July 12th and the next class will be on July 26th. They plan to have these classes every month.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

Commissioner Duquette reported birthday cards were sent. One was late due to her being out of the country.

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

No report. The next meeting is scheduled for August 22nd.

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

No report.

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

Commissioner Brown reported they will continue to recognize senior nutrition volunteers as they visit each senior center.

INFORMATION ITEMS –

- **Senior Day at the Kern County Fair** – Scheduled for Friday, September 20, 2024. No other details available at this time.
- **Centenarian Recognition Program** Parliamentarian Grasty reported referrals have been slow, but she did receive one this weekend, a lady turning 104 years old. Senator Shannon Groves office will be preparing a certificate and hoping to receive some from Supervisor Couch and Supervisor Flores. Chair Lynch will take 104 balloons

and the certificate(s). Also, would like to wish an early happy birthday to Jeremy Oliver.

- **MPA Focus Group Update** – Vice-Chair Snyder reported they have had some very successful focus groups. She and Commissioner Goodlow attended BSC on June 20th, and most of the interest that came out was Medicare supplement and just representation of information and quality of information integrity. As a result, we're able to tap into AASD and ask if HICAP could go out and speak at the BSC. On July 8th, she and Chair Lynch attended the 60+ Club focus group at CSUB. They had a lot of interesting things come up and it was coming from a different perspective than what they've been hearing at some of the senior centers. They had some good comments. The topics of isolation and communication seem to be concerns as well as the inconsistencies of services throughout the county. They will be addressing that when they finally put all the information together. It was well attended with 28 people, both men and women. On July 11th, they were supposed to go to Kern River Valley (KRV) but that had to cancel for health reasons. A lot of seniors are not aware of 2-1-1, or even just asking the right questions to get the proper services. They will be discussing with KernCOG and a few other entities that this transportation crisis does exist for seniors. They already have focus groups scheduled for September 16th in Shafter before the COA meeting, October 21st in Tehachapi before the COA meeting, and November 18th in Ridgecrest, again, prior to the COA meeting. Other focus group meetings will be scheduled for Ben Austin, Bakersfield American Indian Health Project, KRV, and other senior populations that would be of interest.

NEXT MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, September 4, 2024 (Dark in August) 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, September 16, 2024 1:00 p.m. (Dark in August) Shafter Senior Center 505 Sunset Avenue, Shafter, CA 93263 (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 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Oliver
Secretary

JO/lj