

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**

November 18, 2024, at 1:00 p.m.

Ridgecrest Senior Center
125 S. Warner Street, Ridgecrest, CA 93555
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, Gloria Brown, Jane Decker, Sherry Gomez, Barbara Goodlow, ***Kris Grasty, Norma Jackson, Jan Lemucchi, Ellen Linder, *Stephanie Lynch, ****Jeremy Oliver (non-voting), Yolanda Prado, Christie Ray, **Judy Snyder

Virtually – Kevin Alvey, Doris Duquette, Anabel Hernandez, Julie Juarez-Ceja

Excused Absences: Sonia Dhillon, Anthony Estrada

SECRETARY OLIVER CONFIRMED A QUORUM WAS PRESENT IN PERSON.

Honorary Commission Members Present:

Dee Sutherland

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

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

GUESTS:

In Person: Rosie Holtrop, Jan Roberts, Joe Yawman, Liesen Liu, Odessa Newman-Staples, Joe Yaman, Letia TJ Bogan, Amy Chan, Paul VanderWerf, Cora Ruffner, William Ruffner, Donna Adams, Lee Henderson, Larry Jenkins, Leota Petersen, Lorenzo Flores, Elena Flores, Ken Beck

Virtually: Isaac Preston, Sara Swertfager, Chad Acker, Joseph Anderson, Peggy Langels

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. A letter was sent to COA Ex-Officio Director of General Services regarding appointing a representative to the Commission on Aging.
2. Letters to be sent COA Ex-Officio members thanking them for their representatives who attend and provide reports during the COA Regular meetings.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

None.

Commissioner Comments :

1. Commissioner Bodnar thanked Commissioner Lemucchi and Commissioner Bodnar for holding the MPA Focus Group meeting prior to this meeting, and for all Commissioners driving to Ridgecrest for this month's meeting.
2. Commissioner Jackson thanked the Ridgecrest Senior Nutrition staff for preparing the delicious lunch.
3. Parliamentarian Grasty announced that she will be retiring from the Commission on Aging when her term expires in June 2025 as she will be moving to another County.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Motion made to approve October 21, 2024, Regular Commission on Aging meeting as prepared.
Motion: Prado; **Second:** Brown; **Abstention:** Duquette, Grasty, Juarez-Ceja;
Objection: 0. **Motion carried.**

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

RIDGECREST SENIOR CENTER – Angela Domingos

Angela Domingos reported the Ridgecrest Senior Center is their smallest senior center if you go by the numbers. However, this center is run by Tracy Chrisman who has the biggest heart and is very passionate about caring for approximately 35-40 seniors who come in daily to participate and have lunch. She regularly decorates for the season or holiday and greets everyone personally who walks through the doors.

Although there have been big changes over the past year, such as the Senior, Inc Group disbanded and no longer volunteer at the center, and the Ridgecrest Regional hospital no longer goes in to do presentations for the seniors, Tracy continues to look for other opportunities for the seniors in Ridgecrest. Currently, there is a small band that continues to come to the center every 3rd Wednesday to play for the seniors. In addition to her work at the center, Tracy collaborates with the Cross-Cultural Exchange Club every October for Older Americans Month to provide more social interaction for the seniors. She also volunteers in conjunction with Nick and Carol Coy of the Ridgecrest Veterans Advisory Council (RVAC) for the annual Veterans Stand Down and Veterans Luncheon every November. She uses that time to reach out to more senior veterans who could benefit from being part of the senior center and enjoy a hot meal. There are currently 35 clients still receiving hot Meals on Wheels (MOW), and 25-30 receiving the frozen meals through Revolution Foods.

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Isaac Preston

Isaac Preston attended virtually and reported the following:

PARK PROJECTS:

- **Uffert (Tank) Park** – \$909,500 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
 - Proposed repairs include fencing, light pole, playground safety surfacing, riprap, park turf, picnic table, monument pea gravel, and creek embankment.
 - Contractor: Remedial Transportation Services – \$643,862
 - Contract Award: August 2024
 - Anticipated Construction Completion: December 2024

- **Riverside Park** - \$2,212,200 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
 - Proposed repairs include walkways, picnic tables, benches, basketball court, exercise equipment, playground equipment, BBQs, irrigation system, park turf, and water and electrical utilities.
 - Contractor: DL Brown Construction – \$1,474,268
 - Contract Award: August 2024
 - Anticipated Construction Completion: December 2024

- **Camp Okihi** – \$625,000 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
 - Proposed improvements include a new potable water line.
 - Contractor: RLH Fire Protection – \$1,798,000
 - Contract Award: August 2024
 - Anticipated Construction Completion: April 2025

- **Petroglyph Park**– \$200,000 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
 - Proposed improvements include new shade sail canopies over existing benches near the play area and over the swing set.
 - Contractor: Pacific Tide Construction – \$178,170
 - Contract Award: September 2024
 - Anticipated Construction Completion: February 2025

- **LeRoy Jackson Park** – \$800,000 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
 - Proposed improvements include a new shaded play structure, pour-in-place safety surfacing, accessible walkways, and parking.
 - Contractor: JCJ Chavez Construction, Inc. – \$816,569
 - Contract Award: September 2024
 - Anticipated Construction Completion: March 2025

- **Riverside Park Embankment** – \$ 4,277,800 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
 - Proposed repairs include river embankment, riprap, jetties, and beaches.
 - Anticipate Board approval of Plans and Specs – December 2024
 - Anticipated Construction Start – March 2025
 - Anticipated Construction Completion – December 2025

LIBRARY PROJECTS:

- **Southwest Library** – \$800,089 Building Forward Grant Program (BF)
 - Proposed improvements include the replacement of flooring, bookshelves, circulations desk, and acoustic ceiling tiles and lighting upgrades.
 - Construction underway. The library is currently closed.
 - Anticipated Construction Completion and Library Reopening: January 2025

- **Kern River Valley Library** – \$470,541 Building Forward Grant Program (BF)
 - Proposed improvements include anchoring of bookshelves, replacement of flooring, installation of a security system, and repair to exterior soffit.
 - Contract Award: October 2024
 - Anticipated Construction Completion: March 2025

- **Ridgecrest Library** – \$1,058,522 Building Forward Grant Program (BF)
 - Proposed improvements include the replacement of the door and window glass, installation of a security system, lighting and HVAC updates, and concrete repair.
 - Contract Award Anticipated: May 2025
 - Anticipated Construction Completion: December 2025

OTHER FACILITY PROJECTS:

- **M Street Navigation Center Facility Improvements** – \$1,077,702 Community Development/Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act
 - Proposed improvements include demolition and construction of shower and laundry facilities including ADA accessible paths of travel.
 - Low Bidder: Vortex Construction - \$639,562
 - Contract Award: September 2024
 - Anticipated Construction Completion: July 2025

VETERANS SERVICE – Jose Lopez

Not in attendance.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Sara Swerffager, SPHN

Sara Swerffager attended virtually and reported the following:

Know You Numbers Events:

- We have completed our KYN events for 2024. Look for upcoming events in 2025.

Vaccination Updates:

- Flu vaccine – still recommended to get single dose of Influenza vaccine if you haven't already done so.
- COVID 19 vaccine – In addition to previously recommended 2024-2025 vaccination:
 - ACIP recommends a second dose* of 2024-2025 COVID-19 for adults ages 65 years and older
- ACIP recommends a pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) for all PCV-naïve adults aged ≥50 years

Valley Fever Cases are on the Rise:

Valley fever (also called coccidioidomycosis or "cocci") is a disease caused by a fungus that grows in the soil and dirt in some areas of California and the southwestern United States. People and animals can get sick when they breathe in dust that contains the Valley fever fungus. This fungus usually infects the lungs and can cause respiratory symptoms including cough, fever, chest pain, and tiredness.

Prevention Tips:

- Avoid dusty/dirty areas (Valley Fever is endemic to Kern County (Central Valley))

- Stay inside with windows closed on windy days
- Keep car windows up with recirculating air, especially on windy days
- Consider avoiding activities that involve dirt and stirring of soil, such as gardening/digging
- Cover dirt around home with plants, ground cover, grass
- Avoid dusty areas including construction sites
- Consider wearing a mask if you anticipate encountering dust or dirt

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Coccidioidomycosis.aspx>

Mobile Health Clinic:

- 11/19/2024, 9:30 a.m.- 3:00 p.m., McFarland Mouser Center, 100 2nd St., **McFarland**, 933250
- 11/20/2024, 10:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., Ridgecrest Library, 131 E. Las Flores Ave., **Ridgecrest**, 93555
- 11/21/2024, 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Arredondo Multi-Service Center, 1505 Owens St., **Bakersfield**, 93305
- 11/25/2024, 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Delano Public Health Clinic, 455 Lexington St., **Delano**, 93215
- 11/26/2024, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Rosamond Library, 3611 Rosamond Blvd., **Rosamond**, 93560
- 11/27/2024, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Lamont Library, 8304 Segreue Rd., Lamont, 93241
- 12/02/2024, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Blanton Education Center, 300 E. Truxtun Ave., **Bakersfield**, 93305
- 12/03/2024, 9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., Grow Academy Shafter, 471 W. Los Angeles Ave., **Shafter**, 93263
- 12/04/2024, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., California City Library, 9507 California City Blvd., **California City**, 93505
- 12/05/2024, 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Shafter Department of Human Services, 115 N. Central Valley Hwy., **Shafter**, 93263
- 12/09/2024, 10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., Mojave Department of Human Services, 2340 Highway 58, **Mojave**, 93501

*KC Public Health launched a new website. Please visit kernpublichealth.com to explore.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Chad Acker

Chad Acker appeared virtually and shared that this is his first time attending a COA meeting as the representative. He reported they are moving forward with the Care Court program. Due to the holidays the County is starting to pick up again.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Gayla Hughes

Not in attendance.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Peggy Langels attended virtually and reported the following:

The Ridgecrest ETR office is located at 540 Perdew Ave., Ste. B2 and the phone number is (760) 384-5995. The supervisor is David Santiago, and the other staff is Chassity Davis. The Resource Room is open to the public for job search activities, and they also provide typing tests by appointment. You can also complete the pre-application and paperwork for their Vocational Training Programs. David stays up to date on what is going on in the Ridgecrest area.

They have several new grants, the largest of which is the state Displaced Oil and Gas Worker Grant. This is an 11 million grant that runs through 3/31/2027 and is to assist laid off oil and gas workers with finding new employment or entering a training program that will hopefully replace their current wage rates. They will be striving to assist 755 participants by 3/31/2027.

They held their Local Workforce Plan Forum on October 13th, and their Regional Workforce Plan Forum, "The Changing Landscape of Jobs and the Economy", will be held on December 5th, at 9:00 a.m. on TEAMS. The link can be accessed from the America's Job Center of California (AJCC) website or the ETR website. Everyone is encouraged to attend and ask questions.

Orientations for training services are both in person and virtual. In person orientations are held on Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. at the southeast AJCC and Virtual Orientations are held on Thursday at 9:30 a.m. (flyer was distributed).

Job Squad is held every Thursday at 9:00 a.m. on Facebook Live. They also announce jobs on Kern Radio on Mondays at 8:45 a.m., on Telemundo on Tuesday Evening news between 6:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m., and on KBAK TV on Wednesday mornings at 6:45 a.m. and 7:15 a.m.

There are many workshops being held on a weekly basis through the AJCC partners; Mock Interviews, The Expungement Process, Veteran's Job Club Workshop, State Employment Workshops, and CalJOBS Virtual Workshops.

ETR has updated its website, and it has a lot of information. It is located at <https://www.employertrainingresource.com/>.

Service Employment Redevelopment (SER) Jobs in the southeast Office is still not taking any applications at this time.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez attended in person and reported the following on two of their 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 will be bid on to licensed and insured contractors.

Home Improvement Loan provides repairs to the air conditioner, heater, roof, electrical, plumbing, flooring, windows, insulation, and painting. This program 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

Not in attendance.

VICTIM WITNESS PROGRAM – Leslie Devitt

Leslie Devitt attended virtually and reported the following:

- Kern County District Attorney's Office Victim Services Unit & Family Justice Center Services for Victims of Violent Crimes such as:
 - Homicide
 - Assault
 - Sexual Assault
 - Robbery
 - Human Trafficking
 - Domestic Violence
 - Elder Abuse
 - Hit & Run
 - DUI
 - Arson
- Services Include but not limited to:
 - Case Status
 - Court Accompaniment
 - Assistance with California Victims of Crime Compensation
 - Criminal Justice System Orientation
 - Victim Impact Statements
 - Referrals for other services
 - Restitution assistance
- Locations:
 - Metro VSU & Family Justice Center
 - 1300 18th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301
 - 661-868-5950 – Family Justice Center
 - 661-868-5960 – Victim Services Unit
 - South Kern Family Justice Center
 - 12022 Main Street, Lamont, CA 93241
 - 661-868-5820

- North Kern Victim Services Unit
 - 455 Lexington Street, Delano, CA
 - 661-721-3840

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Jeremy Oliver

Jeremy Oliver reported the following:

FEDERAL

The Federal budget is due December 20th as result of the previous stopgap measures passed. All are awaiting what the outcomes will be for the new term. Many are watching closely as the new Administration moves in and changes in the House and Senate materialize.

STATE

No current news from the State as new legislation is proposed.

DEPARTMENT

The Department continues undergoing an audit of programs under the California Department of Aging (CDA). The audit looks at all areas of the CDA funded programs around ensuring we are adhering to policies and procedures. Interviews will be conducted and will include an interview with our Commission Chair in December. This is occurring at the same time as a fiscal audit is ongoing.

The Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP) is in full swing as we try to keep up with requests for the open enrollment period. Open enrollment period ends December 7, 2024, unless you are dually enrolled in Medi-Cal in which changes can occur throughout the year.

The In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program continues to maintain requirements per State mandates. The Department continues to explore the budget to retain staffing needed to keep up with an increase in referrals. We continue to explore the Maintenance of Understanding (MOU) with Managed Care Plans as required by the State. The State has mandated that the plans have MOU's with IHSS, but not that IHSS must meet a specific timeframe.

The Adult Protective Services (APS) program continues to meet mandates and sees increased referrals. The Home Safe funding is also becoming low and unsure if the State will continue to provide funding beyond the current allocations.

The Long-Term Care (LTC) Ombudsman program continues to seek staff and will support the LTC Committee and continue to collaborate to address any concerns or inquiries related to long-term care facilities. The program has been struggling to acquire additional staff, mostly due to finding qualified staff.

Nutrition programs continue to explore opportunities with our partners Delano Union School District, North of the River (NOR), Bakersfield Senior Center, and Revolution Foods. Tehachapi, Rosamond and California City have transitioned to fully Revolution foods for home delivered meals.

OPERATING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

BYLAWS COMMITTEE – S. Bodnar; K. Grasty

Chair Lynch asked that all Commissioners review the Bylaws and provide revisions to Parliamentarian Grasty, Commissioner Bodner, or Commissioner Lemucchi.

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

Commissioner Lemucchi and Vice Chair Snyder are working with State legislators on 10 State proposals and 1 Federal proposal for California Senior Legislature.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – K. Grasty; S. Gomez:

Commissioner Gomez reported the following:

Recently Reappointed:

None.

New Appointments:

1. Anthony Estrada, Esq., - Appointed by Greater Bakersfield Legal Asst. His term expires 11/08/2026.

Resignations:

None.

Expired Terms:

1. Gloria Brown – Term expired 06/17/2024, representing District 2. Letter sent to District 2 requesting reappointment. Awaiting reappointment when vacant Supervisor position is filled. Commissioner can continue serving until then.

Appointments Soon to Expire:

None.

Vacancies:

1. District 1 – for term expiring 06/17/2026.
2. District 1 - for term expired 08/06/2024 (replacing Genel Hodges).

New Applications Received:

None.

This concludes the Commissioner Appointment Report for November 2024.

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

Chair Lynch reported the committee is working on Employee Recognition and will get everything done and distributed to Aging and Adult Services staff sometime in December.

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

Chair Lynch reported the Exec. Committee met November 6, 2024, and the results of that meeting are on this meeting's agenda. They also discussed updates on the revisions of the COA Handbook and Bylaws.

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

No report.

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

Commissioner Hernandez reported she sent the "updated Bylaws" to the committee for the LTC committees' objectives for 2025. They had a quick visit to Kern River Transitional and not much has changed at the facility since the last visit. She will send a checklist for the committee to use when they go out to the facilities. She will share the checklist with the full Commission.

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

Commissioner Prado reported that the committee is focusing on the COA's 50th Anniversary celebration. The Committee will conduct an orientation for the new Commissioner after the holidays.

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

No report. Nominations will take place in the coming months.

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

Commissioner Goodlow reported the Bakersfield Senior Center had a Fall Festival in October. They had a Thanksgiving celebration last week and will have a Christmas celebration on December 6th from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. They will have a meeting via Zoom as they have three new committee members to decide who will report on all senior centers.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – **D. Duquette**

Commissioner Duquette will send two birthday cards for December.

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

Commissioner Gomez reported the quarterly meeting was held on November 14 via Zoom. There were two presentations. The first was entitled "Creating a Master Plan for Aging," which was a recap of the steps the Inland Coalition on Aging (ICA) navigated to produce a proposed Master Plan for Aging. In many ways it echoed steps Kern took to produce its Master Plan, i.e. focus groups, buy in from stakeholders, etc. Because the ICA includes Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, producing a Master Plan for Aging required cooperation of a larger group of diverse Senior populations, stakeholders and government agencies across county lines. Of particular interest was the social media developed on the ICA website, LinkedIn, YouTube and LINK as well as printed and digital materials to create awareness of the Master Plan.

The second presentation was entitled "Improving Accessibility throughout California." The presenter was April Dawson Rawlings, Executive Director, California Commission on Disability Access. This commission's focus is improving businesses' physical and online access by the disabled. The commission provides:

- Small Business Education and Outreach
- Technical Materials and Trainings
- Listening Forums and Webinars
- Disability Access Litigation Data Tracking
- Annual Report to State Legislature
-

Ms. Dawson Rawlings explained that there are Certified Access Specialists (CASp) who are individuals certified by the Division of the State Architect as specialists in state and federal construction related accessibility standards. Businesses can benefit from using a CASp if there are accessibility issues.

TRANSPORTATION – J. Juarez-Ceja; J. Lemucchi

Commissioner Lemucchi reported that she and Commissioner Juarez-Ceja will attend the Kern Council of Government (COG) Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee meeting in January.

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 –

- **Centenarian Recognition Program Parliamentarian** – Parliamentarian Grasty reported that they will continue to recognize Centenarians through the Recognition program.
- **MPA Focus Group Update** – Vice Chair Snyder reported that they had a meeting with the seniors in Ridgecrest prior to this meeting. They seemed to share common concerns as the other seniors. This is the last focus group planned for 2024. She thanked the Commissioners who volunteered in all these focus groups. Total they held 12 focus groups in 9 months.
- **50th COA Anniversary Celebration** – Vice Chair Snyder reported they have a very active, engaged committee. The COA's 50th anniversary celebration will be held December 12th from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Rasmussen Senior Center. Invitations were mailed last week, and RSVPs are coming in. They will have a quick meeting with the committee immediately after this meeting.
- **Native American Heritage Month Celebration** - Commissioner Prado reported that she attended the Native American Heritage Month celebration sponsored by the Bakersfield American Indian Health Project on November 2, 2024, at the Bakersfield Marriot. There was a lot of information, and they recognized the Commission on Aging Foundation as a donor and shared the COA's Mission Statement with all in attendance.

NEXT MEETINGS:

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, January 8, 2025 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, January 27, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. (due to County holiday on 1/20) Bakersfield Senior Center 530 4th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93304 (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 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Oliver
Secretary

JO/lj