

Kern County Commission On Aging

Stephanie Lynch, Chairperson

5357 Truxtun Avenue

Bakersfield, CA 93309

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"Making a difference in the lives of senior citizens."

**REGULAR COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING
MINUTES**

March 17, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

Taft Senior Center

500 Cascade Place, Bakersfield, CA 93268

and via Zoom

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Lynch called the meeting to order at 1:01 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 – Gloria Brown, Jane Decker, Sonia Dhillon, Anthony Estrada, Sherry Gomez, Barbara Goodlow, ***Kris Grasty, Anabel Hernandez, Norma Jackson, Julia Juarez-Ceja, Jan Lemucchi, Ellen Linder, *Stephanie Lynch, ****Jeremy Oliver (non-voting), Christie Ray, and **Judy Snyder

Virtually – Kevin Alvey, Susan Bodnar, Doris Duquette,

Excused Absences: Yolanda Prado

SECRETARY OLIVER CONFIRMED A QUORUM WAS PRESENT IN PERSON.

Honorary Commission Members Present:

None.

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Laura M. Juarez – Office Services Coordinator

GUESTS:

In Person: Jose Lopez, Juana Lopez, Mike Armendariz, Miguel Salazar, Katherine Morris, Paul Linder, Carolyn Aldredge, Ronald Starkey, Marvin Brown, Mary McCrackin, Rene Adamo

Virtually: Jessica Carillo, Chad Acker, Angel Galvez, Daisy Neri, Joseph Anderson, Catherine Vasquez, and Adriana Talamantez

CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

1. Angel Galvez, CEO of Bakersfield American Indian Health Project (BAIHP), shared that they received a \$5 million conditional award for a behavioral health bridge housing program, which will provide 52-bed, two-story, tiny housing, modular living complex for Native and non-Native children and their families, adults, and the aging population, especially those who are challenged with behavioral health and substance use. They will receive wrap-round care on-site 24-hour support services and supervision as well as integration with all the other services they offer. The project is in the final stages of architectural design and is expected to start construction soon. A groundbreaking or open house event will be organized once the project is completed, and all Commissioners will be invited.

Commissioner Comments :

None.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Motion made to approve November 19, 2024, Regular Commission on Aging meeting with one amendment to page 1.
Motion: Snyder; **Second:** Jackson; **Abstention:** Alvey, Goodlow, Linder; **Objection:** 0.
Motion carried.

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

DELANO SENIOR CENTER – Andres Villaseñor

Andres Villaseñor reported there are a lot of good things happening here. The congregate numbers have been steadily increasing. They've gone from 25 seniors in 2023 to 37, and 43 total this past year so about a 48% increase. They had 114 clients in 2023 for home-delivered meals, and in 2023, they had 114, and that increased to 224 this past year. Currently they're up to about 123 on Revolution Foods and the reason for that lower number is because they're currently on a waiting list. They are trying to add people according to medical priority for the month.

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Isaac Preston

Not in attendance.

VETERANS SERVICE – Jose Lopez

Jose Lopez reported that his office is receiving over 100 calls a day, indicating a high demand for their services. He is working on recruiting volunteers, especially in outlying areas, to serve as advocates or liaisons for veterans and dependents who may not be technologically savvy. These volunteers will help navigate veterans' benefits and assist with applications. Jose also mentioned that his office is fully staffed and excited about continuing to serve Kern County veterans and their families.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Sara Swerffager, SPHN

Sara Swerffager was not in attendance but provided the following report that was read by Chair Lynch:

Know You Numbers Events:

- Blanton Education Center, 315 E 18th St, Bakersfield, 93305, Wednesdays 2- 3pm through 3/26/2025
- David Head Community Building, 10300 San Diego St, Lamont, 93241, Tuesday 3-4pm, March 4th through April 15th
- Wonderful College Prep Academy, 2070 Veneto St, Delano, California 93215, Tuesday, 5-6pm, April 22nd through June 3rd

Vaccination Updates:

- COVID, Flu, and RSV vaccinations are still available and recommended if not up to date for 2024-2025 season

Public Health Education and Awareness Campaign Launch

Disease Fighters!

We highlight Tuberculosis disease fighters this month at Public Health.

<https://www.kernpublichealth.com/healthy-community/community/disease-fighters>

Mobile Health Clinic:

The following services are available on the mobile health clinic:

- Child and adult immunizations
- Tuberculosis testing
- Family planning services, including birth control
- Sexual health services
- Health screenings
- Narcan distribution and training
- Child Health Exams (12 – 18 years of age)

Appointments preferred, walk ins welcome. Call 661-321-3000 for appointments or questions.

Upcoming Dates and Locations:

- Mojave Department of Human Services, 03/17/2025, 10:00 AM - 2:30 PM 2340 Highway 58, Mojave, California 93501
- Shafter Department of Human Services, 03/18/2025, 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM 115 N Central Valley Hwy, Shafter, California 93263
- Grow Academy Shafter, 03/19/2025, 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM, 471 W Los Angeles Ave, Shafter, California 93263
- Rexland Acres Park, 03/20/2025, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM, 355 E Fairview Rd, Bakersfield, California 93307
- Grow Academy Arvin, 03/24/2025 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM, 901 Nectarine Ct, Arvin, California 93203
- Ridgecrest Library, 03/25/2025 10:30 AM - 2:00 PM, 131 E Las Flores Ave, Ridgecrest, California 93555
- Lamont Library, 03/26/2025 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM 8304 Segre Rd, Lamont, California 93241
- Riverview Park, 03/27/2025 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM, 401 Willow Dr, Bakersfield, California 93308
- McFarland Mouser Center, 04/01/2025 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM, 100 2nd St, McFarland, California 93250
- California City Library, 04/02/2025 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM, 9507 California City Blvd, California City, California 93505
- Taft Albertsons, 04/03/2025 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM, 1044 Kern St., Taft, California 93268
- Wasco Library, 04/07/2025 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM 1102 7th St, Wasco, California 93280
- Boron Library, 04/08/2025 10:30 AM - 2:00 PM, 26967 Twenty Mule Team Rd, Boron, California 93516

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Chad Acker

Chad Acker shared an update regarding the Care Package program through their housing team. Clients connected to KernBHRS who are experiencing homelessness or struggling with basic needs can access these care packages. This program has been reinstated and provides clothing, hygiene products, and other essential items to support clients transitioning from homelessness or those facing challenges in obtaining basic necessities.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Daisy Neri

Daisy Neri shared information about the change in Medicare enrollment for the QMB Program for those individuals who receive SSI/SSP.

There is a lot happening at the federal level related to the Medicare Program, including the release of a final rule that went over multiple different aspects of improvements to the Medicare Program. Over the next couple of years, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) is going to be working to implement some of the areas that were included in the

Final Rule.

On October 10, 2023, Governor Newsom signed Senate Bill (SB) 311. The bill requires the DHCS to enter into a Medicare Part A buy-in agreement with CMS for qualified Medicare beneficiaries through a state plan amendment no later than January 1, 2025.

Most of these changes will not have a significant impact on county operations; however, there are some changes that will require work on the county side. DHCS has been working on:

- How CA will begin the process of buying in a person Medicare Part A premium. This work will be done at the DHCS level, and no impact on counties is anticipated.
- The requirement for individuals who are on SSI to automatically be enrolled in the QMB program when California becomes a Part A buy-in state. DHCS will move forward with placing the QMB aid code for SSI individuals. Currently, counties approve QMB eligibility for SSI individuals through CalSAWS. Effective January 1, 2025, counties are no longer required to approve, or case manage QMB for SSI individuals only. DHCS will work with counties in the upcoming months to determine the best approach for ending QMB-only records at the county level (CalSAWS).
- Updating some of the MSP NOAs will ensure all updates are complete and implemented by January 1, 2025.

An outreach letter was mailed on 1/5/2023 to individuals who are SSI/SSP recipients who are not currently enrolled in the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary program, which includes a total of 2,406 individuals in Kern County who should expect to receive a letter.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Not in attendance.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez attended in person and reported the following on two of their grants:

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.

The 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) – Jessica Carrillo

Jessica Carrillo reported that the Independent Living Center of Kern County is working on implementing a home modification grant through the Housing Authority of Kern County. There are currently 20 consumers on the waitlist to receive funding from this grant.

ILCKC continues to see fluctuating calls for ADRC services, and ILCKC continues to offer case management to all ADRC consumers.

The ILCKC is still looking for sponsors and vendors for our upcoming ADA conference on July 24, 2025.

VICTIM WITNESS PROGRAM – Kayla Pinkston

Kayla Pinkston attended virtually and shared information about their Kern County Victim Services Unit (VSU) & Family Justice Centers:

- Victim Services Unit located at 1300 18th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301
 - Phone number 661-868-5960
 - District Attorney Advocates can assist all victims of crime through the criminal justice process
 - Court accompaniment
 - Case Updates
 - California Victims of Crime Compensation application assistance
 - Prosecution & Law Enforcement Accompaniment
 - Victim Impact Statements and Restitution
- Family Justice Center also located at 1300 18th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301
 - Phone number: 661-868-5950
 - Walk ins– 8am to 4pm
 - Assists Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking
 - Partners on site include:
 - Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance (GBLA)
 - Open Door Network
 - Kern County Department of Human Services
 - Kern County Child Support (kiosk)
 - Partners off-site include
 - BHRS
 - Women's Center High Desert
- South Family Justice Center - 12022 Main St, Lamont CA 93241
 - Phone number: Lamont- 661-868-5820

Both programs have access to language lines and intakes can be taken over the phone for those who are not able to come into our facilities for initial services. If anyone has questions, they can call the Program Coordinator Adriana Cuadras Talamantez 661-868-5956 or Program Supervisor Kayla Pinkston 661-868-5955.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Jeremy Oliver

Jeremy Oliver reported the following:

FEDERAL

The Senate passed a Continuing Resolution (CR) funding the government for six months until the end of the fiscal year, September 30. The final CR, which passed the House Tuesday along party lines, is not a "clean" CR where every spending item remains frozen at the prior year's level. The bill increases some programs and cuts others and leaves out the directive language that further spells out congressional intent for a portion of the spending.

STATE

We continue to monitor proposed bills for any impacts to county programs. Additionally, watching closely changes to state budget and tax revenues.

DEPARTMENT

The Department is beginning the process of our budget development for the coming year and will submit a preliminary budget to the County Administrative Office by April 18, 2025. All departments are required to submit budget plans with up to a 3% step down in the event of financial shortfalls occurring. The county has shared that revenues are not keeping up with current cost projections.

Adult Protective Services is planning for the Annual Elder Abuse Conference. We are aiming for June 12th for this year's event, and we are exploring venues to maximize cost savings but still ensure a pleasurable experience for our attendees. In addition, the Department is preparing for May Older Americans Month tentatively scheduled for May 3, 2025 at Aging & Adult Services 5357 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield.

The In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program continues to maintain requirements per state mandates though overall seeing a decline in ability to keep up with the increases in referrals.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman program is continuing to recruit volunteers for the program.

OPERATING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

BYLAWS COMMITTEE – S. Bodnar; K. Grasty; J. Decker

Commissioner Grasty reported that she and Commissioner Decker have been working on some revisions, and they've sent them to Commissioner Bodnar, who's part of their committee, and they're about ready to submit a draft hopefully next month.

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

Commissioner Lemucchi reminded everyone that Senior Rally Day is May 6th. That's an online virtual conference where they'll be discussing State bills that are in support of helping older adults improve their quality of life.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – K. Grasty; S. Gomez:

Commissioner Gomez reported the following:

Recently Reappointed:

None.

New Appointments:

None.

Resignations:

None.

Expired Terms:

1. Julie Juarez-Ceja – for term expired 01/01/2025. I received a response from Tamara Baker, Executive Director of ADAKC. This will be on the agenda for their Board meeting on March 18th. If approved, she will move forward with the reappointment.

Appointments Soon to Expire:

1. Kevin Alvey – for term expiring 04/24/2025.

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:

1. Beth Harrison-Jenkins – The Committee has been unsuccessful in reaching Beth by phone. A letter outlining Commissioner duties and responsibilities was sent to Beth on March 3, 2025. No reply has been received to date.

This concludes the Commissioner Appointment Report for March 2025.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – 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 a week later than usual on March 12, 2025. They are really trying to get the COA Bylaws completed and thanks to the Bylaws Committee for reducing the pages of the Bylaws from 23 to 11 pages. The handbook will

likely increase in size due to the policies and procedures being removed from the Bylaws and added to the handbook.

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

No report.

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

Commissioner Hernandez reported that the committee visited Brookdale's Skilled Nursing Facility, building C this morning. They met with their Administrator and Social Services Coordinator, and they walked them around. They have 60 beds on the long-term care side, and 60 beds on the skilled nursing facility side. They're almost at capacity. The facility is clean. They have all their Ombudsman posters listed in the correct areas and they were very well organized. The food menu and list of activities calendars were posted. They just had their senior prom, and they got to meet the king and the queen who were in the dining hall. It was a very good visit and they're to schedule to visit buildings A and B, which are the assisted living facilities.

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

No report.

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

Commissioner Brown reported there is an Officer election coming up. Please send your nominations for Chair, Vice-Chair, and Parliamentarian to the Nomination Committee. A slate will be presented during the May meeting, and voting will take place in June.

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

Commissioner Goodlow reported contacted the Rosamund Center and talked to Lulu who said that everything was going great and, on average, they have about 34 meals a day. California City Senior Center is averaging about 25 to 30 meals a day. Tehachapi is averaging about 65 meals, and they were doing a good job. She tried to contact Wasco again because the lady that was at the meeting gave her a number to call, and she did call Mr. Medina in Wasco and he said that he would call me back or he would give her contact information to whomever was supposed to get it, but she never heard from him since. The Bakersfield Senior Center had their St. Patrick's Day celebration today. They are having an opportunity drawing and they have a big basket that they're raffling. The Bakersfield Senior Center will be using the Bakersfield Community House on R Street in Bakersfield while they build their new building.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

Chair Lynch reported they had one birthday in March so she will send a card when it is time to send it.

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

No report.

TRANSPORTATION – J. Juarez-Ceja; J. Lemucchi

No report.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – G. Brown; E. Linder

Commissioner Brown reported they will continue to recognize the senior nutrition volunteers at each senior center as they meet at each site.

INFORMATION ITEMS –

- **Centenarian Recognition Program Parliamentarian** – Parliamentarian Grasty reported the program is going strong and it's been a busy month. They had four Centenarians, one was 100 years old, and the last one was 103 years old. They received referrals from family, which is nice because they are finding out about the program. Continue sending referrals to the committee.

NEXT MEETINGS:

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, April 2, 2025 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, April 21, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. Rosamond Senior Center 2500 “20th” St. W, Rosamond, CA 93560 (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 2:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Oliver
Secretary

JO/lj