

Kern County Commission On Aging

Kris Grasty, Chairperson
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REGULAR COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES

February 26, 2018

Ben Austin Greenfield Senior Center
1751 McKee Road
Bakersfield, CA 93307

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Grasty 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

Commission Members Present:

Chris Barrett, Susan Bodnar, Gloria Brown, Doris Duquette, Aaron Flucker, Devora Gonzalez, Barbara Goodlow, **Kris Grasty, Loron Hodge, Norma Jackson, Antoinette Johnston, Jon Johnston, Stephanie Lynch, Linda Oswald, Yolanda Prado, and Judy Snyder

Excused Absences: Linda Fuller, Sandy Morris, and Marti Overfield

A QUORUM WAS PRESENT

Honorary Commission Members Present:

Roger Oswald

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Michele Gomez, Program Director
Luanne Jones, Senior Nutrition Program Coordinator
Laura Juarez, Senior Office Services Specialist

Guests:

Harvey Clowers, Peggy Langels, Adrianna Kessler, James Allison, Lourdes Garcia, Leslie Wallace, Matt Smith, Elva Arevalo, Catherine Vasquez, Jose Luiz Gonzalez, Lavern Andress, and Connie Pitkin

AGENDA & MINUTES

POSTING:

Lito Morillo confirmed the agenda had been posted per provisions of the Brown Act.

CORRESPONDENCE:

There was no correspondence.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONERS

None.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST

Public Comments:

None.

Commissioner Comments :

Commissioner Jackson thanked Luanne and the senior nutrition staff for the great lunch that was prepared.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes for the January 22, 2018 Regular Commission on Aging Meeting were approved as prepared.

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

Flucker/Goodlow/Lynch/None - Motion carried.

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

SENIOR CENTER REPORT – Luanne Jones

Luanne Jones reported meals are transported to the Ben Austin Senior Center from the Richard Prado Senior Center. To help save on mileage and time, there are four drivers in the southwest area that are on a rotation to stop at the Ben Austin Senior Center to pick up their afternoon meals. The Ben Austin Senior Centers is an active center thanks to the help of Connie Pitkin who plans a lot of activities for the seniors. The head cook, Carvin Thurman, is retiring from the County and his last day will be March 30, 2018. They are working on hiring a replacement soon to train with Carvin before he leaves. General Services will be replacing the roof and rain gutters at the Ben Austin Greenfield senior center by June 30, 2018 with block grant funding. The senior center will not need to be closed during construction. There are about 480 meals delivered out of the Richard Prado Senior Center. There is currently a wait list of approximately 60 people, with the majority in the southwest area. Delivery routes are being restructured to move some of the afternoon deliveries in the Laurelglen area to another afternoon route, which will open up 10 spots, decreasing the wait list to 50. Luanne announced this is her last Commission on Aging meeting she will be able to attend as she will be retiring in July of 2018, and this is the last meeting at one of the senior centers that she coordinates.

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION- Leslie Wallace

Leslie Wallace reported when Parks and Recreation Department joined with General Services there were some issues with the custodians, so they looked into outsourcing more buildings. They are also looking into outsourcing as a means of backfilling some of their positions that they're unable to hire for to take on the load from some of their custodians. There are approximately 50 buildings outsourced to other cleaning services. Supervising Building Service Worker, Matt Smith, is responsible for the oversight of contracts with Varsity Cleaning Services and Building Maintenance Services. If there are any issues or work orders with either of the facilities, contact Matt directly. They are also working on a repaving project beginning next week across the East Bakersfield Veterans Hall that may affect the parking for the Richard Prado Senior Center congregates.

VETERANS SERVICE – Richard Taylor

Not in attendance.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Meseret Springer

Not in attendance.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Lourdes Garcia

Lourdes Garcia reported she works in the Wellness, Independence, and Senior Enrichment (WISE) team, which is their specialty mental health services for seniors in the community. If there are any seniors struggling with depression, anxiety, mood swings, etc., please refer them to the WISE program. They also have a Volunteer Senior Outreach Program (VSOP) which targets isolated seniors in our community who may need some encouragement. The goal of this program is to be an early intervention and help seniors sustain their independence and link them to resources. There are volunteers who go out to visit with seniors and provide socialization. If you know of anyone interested in volunteering, or in need of these services, please refer them to VSOP. Mental Health First Aid classes are being offered to the general public to provide basic information about how to deal with people with different diagnosis.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Adrianna Kessler

Adrianna Kessler reported their Department reduced their office hours from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. during the 2017 Winter Recess and had staff volunteer to come in to work. The District offices were not open but they did have signs posted with numbers to call for emergencies. They do plan to use this same plan for the 2018 Winter Recess so they can continue to provide services for clients. They have seen an increase in their Cal-Fresh and Medi-Cal cases due to open enrollment. Their partnership with Aging and Adult Services has been working very well. They have been able to retain clients who normally would be discontinued for not turning in paperwork or providing income-related information by going to their home and reaching out to them for the requested information. Adrianna announced she has moved over to another position in her Department so this will be her last time attending the COA meetings.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) - Peggy Langels

Peggy Langels reported there is still a lot of training programs. Their Job Squad program is every Wednesday at 10 a.m. If you know anyone who is looking for work, please refer them to ETR. They recently opened a youth center at the Kern County Library on the 2nd floor. There are several grants they are working with right now. One is the Deaf and Hard of Hearing grant which is a pilot program that allows for 31 new clients and they are currently up to 16 clients. They attend a soft skills training and go into work experience and then work to get them placed. Another grant is with Behavioral Health working with adults. Two staff will be at the Stockdale office. There is also a program with Behavioral Health working with the youth out at the Dream Center. They still have workshops available for soft skills, interviewing and resume, technology, and others. You can see all the programs offered by visiting their website at www.americasjobcenterofkern.com

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES - Catherine Vasquez / Jose Gonzalez

Catherine Vasquez introduced a new employee, Elva Arevalo, who is assisting with the Home Access Grant program, and the Home Improvement Loan program. She also introduced Jose Gonzalez, who is the new Fair Housing Coordinator. Catherine shared information about the Home Access Grant program, which is for low income, permanently disabled individuals who can apply to put in a handicapped ramp, take out a bathtub and install a handicap shower, and install grab bars. The Home Improvement Loan program is for homeowners to apply for help with making existing repairs to the home such as electrical, plumbing, paint, and roof. This is a 0% interest loan up to \$10,000 and no monthly payments are required. There is a lien placed on the mortgage and the loan will be paid back when the home is sold or when the owners no longer live in the home.

Jose Gonzalez shared information about Fair Housing, which is where one can go if they are having tenant/landlord issues, such as the landlord raising the rent, or terminating residency. Fair Housing is working with Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistant and the Bakersfield Association of Realtors to put together to A Fair Housing Conference that will be held April 11, 2018, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Hodel's in Bakersfield. This free event is open to the public, and lunch will be provided. This year is the 50th anniversary of Fair Housing that Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1968.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Harvey Clowers

Harvey Clowers reported ILC will soon be expanding their building so that they will have sufficient space to hold more classes for individuals to learn about independent living skills. The California Community Transition (CCT) program is doing good. They just transitioned someone out of the Ridgecrest facility into their own home. Two more individuals will be transitioned in March. The Older Individuals Who Are Blind and Visually Impaired (OIB) program is going good. Staff are willing to come out to senior centers to hold classes to teach them how to use computers, and how to make their cell phones more accessible. The Assistive Technology (AT) department has wheelchairs and walkers available for individuals who can't afford them or whose insurance doesn't cover them. If someone needs their wheelchair replaced, new batteries, or tires, they can contact ILC directly and we will provide one for them. ILC is a non-profit organization so the services are free. Qualifications are based on disability, and not on income. If you know of anyone wanting to donate a walker or chair, please let them know.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Lito Morillo

Lito Morillo reported new Medicare cards will be issued April 1, 2018. These new cards will have a unique identifier and will no longer have individual Social Security numbers on them. The old Medicare cards will be accepted until April 1, 2019 to allow time for everyone to receive their card. These new Medicare cards will be mailed throughout the month of April (maybe sooner) and you can destroy your old card as soon as you receive your new card. It's important to keep your Medicare Advantage Plan medical cards (HMO/PPO). Keep in mind there could be scams associated with your new card, so never provide your personal or Medicare card information over the phone to especially incoming callers.

Congress passed their 2-year budget. They are still working on the details as they don't have all of the allocations worked out. Another Continuing Resolution was issued and it's good until March 22, 2018. Federal funding will continue for all of our programs until at least March 22, 2018 as a result of the Continuing Resolution. Some of the highlighted proposed eliminations are the Community Service Block Grants (CSBG), Social Services Block Grants (SSBG), Low Income Heat Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Senior Employment Resources (SER-jobs) program, which helps retrain seniors 55 and older to get back into the work force, and the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP). Again, these are all proposed eliminations.

We are still dealing with the IHSS Maintenance of Effort (MOE). It is affecting every County across the State in terms of how it's paying for its MOE. The State is shifting a lot of the IHSS cost to the Counties. Kern County's MOE for FY 17-18 was \$9.995 million. Because there's cost inflators built in automatically, the MOE to the County will continue to increase to pay for share of the cost of the IHSS program. In FY 18-19, the MOE will go up to \$11 million, and in FY 19-20, the MOE will go up to \$12.8 million. In FY 20-21, our MOE is \$14.1 million. This isn't just an IHSS program issue, it's a county across the board problem because the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) or Social Service agency will more than likely not have the additional funding to offset the increased costs of the IHSS program.

Negotiations are still going on with the County and United Domestic Workers (UDW) regarding IHSS providers. Minimum wage increased to \$11.00 on January 1, 2018. IHSS provider wages also increased to \$11 and will continue to increase \$1 each year up to \$15/hour by the year 2022. The minimum wage increases will not impact the County's funding since this is a State negotiated wage. However, this is also built into the cost inflators in the MOE, so the County is still paying a share of the increases. This minimum wage increase will cause compaction issues and that will need to be addressed, if not this year, then for sure next year, possibly by January 1, 2019 when minimum wage goes up to \$12/hour.

A copy of the Riverside County's Foundation on Aging newsletter was shared with the Commission to show how Riverside's website allows people to donate to the Foundation.

IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES REPORT (IHSS) – Michele Gomez

Michele Gomez shared information about the Federal Law Change in 2016 regarding IHSS care providers who live with their clients. IHSS providers who live in the same home as the recipient of those services cannot claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) on their tax returns because no State and Federal taxes are withheld; therefore, nothing was withheld for a refund. The live-in provider or client cannot opt out of not having State and Federal taxes withheld. However, if they/or the client moves out, they can report this to the State so taxes will be withheld.

Paid sick leave for the providers begins July 1, 2018. A provider can accrue 8 hours of sick leave. The Department is working with the State to come up with a backup provider list. The sick leave accrual is fiscal year to fiscal year (July 1-June 30). The provider must work 100 hours in order to accrue the 8 hours of sick leave. The sick leave accrual will go up to 16 hours a year by 2020. Sick leave accruals will not carry over to the next fiscal year and can only be used within the fiscal year for which it was earned. If a provider quits, they will not receive a reimbursement for the unused sick hours. However, if the provider returns in less than one year, their sick hours will be reinstated. There is no vacation paid leave. Providers can use their sick leave hours for Dr. appointments for themselves, and for their children.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

BY-LAWS COMMITTEE – L. Oswald, K. Grasty

Parliamentarian L. Oswald reported the committee reviewed and is going through the process of updating the current COA By-Laws. There were some changes added to the California Senior Legislature (CSL) elections that will require that the draft By-Laws be edited again when we receive the updated elections procedures from CSL. We're hoping to have the draft By-Laws mailed with the March agenda packets so everyone will have time to review them and be ready to vote on them before sending it to County Counsel for their review.

CALIFORNIA SENIOR LEGISLATURE (CSL) – N. Jackson, M. Overfield

Commissioner Jackson thanked Mr. Addison, who is a guest at today's COA meeting, for giving her a great idea for a proposal that she will submit to CSL regarding issues our veterans face.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – L. Fuller; Y. Prado

Chair Grasty reported Commissioner J. Johnston's term will expire May 4, 2018, Commissioner Fuller's term will expire June 17, 2018. Commissioner Brown's term will expire June 17, 2018, Commissioner Hodge's term will expire June 17, 2018, and Commissioner L. Oswald's term will expire June 17, 2018. There are no recent appointments or reappointments, neither are there any expired terms. We have not received any new applications. There is one vacancy with Supervisorial District 4. Laura Juarez will send letters for reappointments.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – A. Flucker; M. Overfield

No report.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – K. Grasty, A. Flucker, N. Jackson, J. Johnston, S. Lynch, L. Oswald, Chair Grasty reported all Commissioners received letters regarding Ethics Training that is required every two years. Laura Juarez provided instructions on how to take the Ethics Training Class online. Vice-Chair Prado reported the committee met February 1, 2018 and discussed the Office of Emergency (OES) Shelter Operation Plan and it appeared to be very thorough and no suggestions for change. Also discussed was the changes with the CSL Elections, and the upcoming “Spring Alive” Senior Resource Fair that will be held April 21, 2018 at St. John Missionary Baptist Church.

IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (IHSS) ADVISORY – A. Flucker
No report.

LONG TERM CARE – C. Barrett; D. Duquette; D. Gonzalez; L. Fuller; N. Jackson
Commissioner Gonzalez provided an update on the Tehachapi Hospital. There is no clear plan as this moment and they are still deciding if the six residents should be relocated. A meeting is scheduled in two weeks with the family of the residents. She should know more within the next couple of months.

Commissioner Barrett reported the committee visited two small homes. One home that has only one person in the home, but the caretaker is ok with that. There were some issues with the home that had been addressed with her. The second home has five people in the home. The caretaker is older and can't hear very well, and their management has some concerns to fix, especially with their disaster preparedness plan.

MARKETING & ORIENTATION COMMITTEE – Y. Prado, D. Duquette, S. Lynch; S. Morris, M. Overfield,
No report.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE - G. Brown; J. Johnston
Commissioner Brown reported the CSL elections are in process. Anyone interested running for office, please contact Laura Juarez.

SENIOR CENTER ADVISORY – A. Flucker, K. Grasty; J. Johnston; Y. Prado
Commissioner Goodlow reported the Bakersfield Senior Center (BSC) had several activities for Black History Month. They had a successful fashion show, and had a special meal prepared. New chairs and tables were purchased for the dining room with a grant they received. For the month of January, BSC received 1,225 requests for meals and 1,405 meals were served. BSC is preparing for their car show fundraiser on April 14, 2018. They are waving booth fees for non-profit organizations, so long as they do not sell food similar to what BSC will be selling.

Commissioner Hodge reported he visited the Rasmussen, E. Niles, and Greenacres senior centers. Last month he announced the E. Niles Sr. Center was in need of more volunteers. Chair Grasty, Commissioner Jackson, and Commissioner Hodge met with the E. Niles senior center on February 14, 2018, and they decided to make an appeal to the residents in the Hillcrest Mobile Home Park. Commissioner Hodge has a contact there and will look into getting a date when they can meet to ask if they'd be willing to donate a little time to the E.

Niles Sr. Center. The Rasmussen Sr. Center is a very active center with two live bands. On January 30, 2018, he was asked by Tony Lee on KNZR radio to give an interview regarding his work as a chaplain, the Commission on Aging, and the Aging and Adult Services Department. The interview went well and as soon as he receives a copy of the interview, he will share it with the Commission.

Commissioner Snyder reported she also visited the Rasmussen senior center and they are celebrating National March for Meals, specifically focusing on the week of March 19, 2018. They are looking for volunteers to help serve meals or go on a ride-along with the Meals on Wheels drivers.

Luanne Jones reported the County will also be participating in the National March for Meals. Letters were sent to the County Board of Supervisors, Bakersfield Mayor, and other representatives asking if they're like to go on a ride-along with a Meals on Wheels driver to any of the senior centers throughout the county.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – N. Jackson

Commissioner Jackson reported she sent a few birthday cards in February and one in March.

THE AREA AGENCY ON AGING COUNSEL OF CALIFORNIA (TAAC) – M. Overfield

No report.

TRANSPORTATION – Y. Prado; L. Fuller

No report.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – M. Overfield; G. Brown

No report.

INFORMATION ITEMS -

California Senior Legislature elections was discussed during the Nomination Committee report.

Commissioner T. Johnston reported next month's COA regular meeting will be at the Shafter senior center and they're excited to have the Commissioners visit the center. They started an exercise program at the Shafter building.

A flyer was prepared for the "Spring Alive" Resource Fair will be held at St. John's Missionary Baptist Church.

Chair Grasty reminded everyone to use "Smile Amazon" when making purchases through Amazon, and select "Kern County Commission on Aging" as their organization of choice. A percentage of proceeds will go to the COA Foundation.

The annual Elder Abuse Prevention Conference will be tentatively scheduled for June 14, 2018 at Hodel's.

Commissioner Brown and Commissioner Duquette asked to be excused from the March 19, 2018 COA Regular meeting as they both will be out of the country.

NEXT MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, March 1, 2018 1:30 pm Aging and Adult Services Golden Generation Room 5353 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA	Monday, March 19, 2018 1:00 p.m. Shafter Senior Center 505 Sunset Avenue Shafter, CA 93263

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 2:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lito Morillo
Secretary