

Kern County Commission On Aging

Yolanda Prado, Chairperson
5357 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93309
(661) 868-1052; (661) 868-1001 FAX



**REGULAR COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING
MINUTES**

May 18, 2020

Video Meeting via Zoom

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Prado called the meeting to order at 1:06 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, Barbara Goodlow, Devora Gonzalez, Kris Grasty; Loron Hodge, Norma Jackson, Jan Lemucchi, Sonia Lopez, **Stephanie Lynch, Roland Maier, Linda Oswald, Roger Oswald, *Yolanda Prado, and *** Judy Snyder

Excused Absences: Aaron Flucker and Sandy Morris

A QUORUM WAS PRESENT

Honorary Commission Members Present:

None.

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Jeremy Oliver, Program Manager
Laura Juarez, Senior Office Services Specialist

Guests:

Peggy Langels, Jens Blum, and Lourdes Garcia

AGENDA POSTING:

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

CORRESPONDENCE:

Lito Morillo reported cards the Commission on Aging sent to AASD staff and senior center nutrition staff thanking them for their work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

Jeremy Oliver reported CityServe received 567 calls for their senior donations program, of which 305 were seniors, and 40 were shuttered through other high risk conditions. This was made possible through a donation they received in the amount of \$2,100 from Steward's Inc. CityServe partnered with Christmas for Seniors and Realtors to help with the distribution of these meals. Christmas for Seniors donated shopping bags for the meals. This program was available to seniors who were isolated due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commissioner Comments :

Commissioner Brown reported she sent a letter to the AP Press and to the Mojave News thanking the California City Meals on Wheels volunteers continued to volunteer as usual throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The letter was printed in the AP Press. Special thanks given to their President, Mike Edmiston, who was there volunteering every day to hand out meals to the seniors.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONERS

None.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes for the February 24, 2020 Regular Commission on Aging Meeting were approved as prepared.
Motion/Second/Abstained/Opposed
(M/S/A/O) Lynch/Grasty/None/None - Motion carried.
- **APPROVAL OF HONORARY COMMISSIONER:** A motion was made to make Linda Fuller an Honorary Commissioner.
(M/S/A/O) Lynch/Lemucchi/None/None – Motion carried.

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Leslie Wallace

Not in attendance.

VETERANS SERVICE – Josh Dhanens

Not in attendance.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Michelle Pearl Krizo

Not in attendance.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Lourdes Garcia

Jens Blum reported the Voluntary Senior Outreach Program (VSOP) has gone through a lot of changes and challenges since the Behavioral Health and Recovery Services transitioned to working from home March 16th.

Lourdes Garcia reported they are continuing to make contact with clients. A lot of seniors have disability issues and can't be on the phone for a long period of time, or they don't like to handle business on the phone. There's been a barrier of not having technical support. Though Aging and Adult Services and Christmas for Seniors has been helpful, things still have been challenging with clients being forced to stay home. This has created a lot of frustration from our clients.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Valerie Rangel

Not in attendance.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Peggy Langels reported all offices are closed since March 13, 2020. Most staff are working from home. Getting lap tops for staff to work from home has been a challenge. Their plan to get Admin staff back working in the office wasn't approved by the County so they will work on getting that approved. They will be checking temperatures before entrance, they will have personal protective equipment (PPE) for all staff, and will try to open up when they get all staff back in the office. DHS is not coming into the centers, and EDD only has 2 staff making calls. The Delano office is open via appointment only. A lot of staff are taking time off for leave because of child care issues. The Lake Isabella office may not open for several months and will be handling business virtually for a while. Job Developers are working diligently from home. Jobs are being posted. A lot of essential companies are looking for people to work. For all the job opportunity listings, check America's Job Center's website @ <http://www.americasjobcenterofkern.com/>. The Homeless Center is looking for on-call workers in case someone doesn't show up they will have back up workers. Their Marketing team is posting online trainings on their YouTube channel.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Not in attendance.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Harvey Clowers

Not in attendance.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Lito Morillo

Lito Morillo reported the following:

Lito Morillo thanked the Commissioners and guests for joining today's meeting via Zoom.

Federal

The Federal Government issued two stimulus packages, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The nutrition program received an additional \$478 thousand from the FFCRA package. Kern County will receive \$1.4 million from the CARES Act, of which \$800 thousand is going to senior nutrition, the other is going to Valley Caregivers Resource Center, Ridgecrest Hospital, Ombudsman, and Information and Referral. There is strong talk about a third stimulus package to help with Older American's Act related funded programs, as well as help with budget shortfalls. There are no other news about this third stimulus package.

State

The Governor's May Revise was released. In June, the State budget will be passed. The State budget itself is looking very grim with an estimated \$54 billion deficit, which will cause some pretty significant cuts in Kern County's budget all around. AASD's two main funding programs, the 1991 realignment, and 2011 realignment will likely be affected by this deficit. This year, AASD is working on closing our budget deficit of \$350 thousand, and next year's will be \$500 thousand, as a result of COVID and economic downturn.

County

AASD Director and Managers are meeting frequently trying to figure out how to plug the hole internally in terms of potential layoffs, program reductions, all the while still dealing with this pandemic.

Due to the upfront cost for the "Great Plates Delivered" program for seniors, we are unable to participate. We also asked several City Managers if they could participate and they were not interested. We also were informed that we could not use federal funds (like CARES Act) for this program. Therefore, the County as a whole will not be participating in the "Great Plates Delivered" program.

We have been able to feed every senior that has come our way and will continue to feed them throughout this pandemic. Jeremy and staff have gone out to purchase groceries for about 27 clients who are low income or who couldn't leave their own homes to shop for groceries and we continue to get additional requests. These clients are paying for their own groceries. There was also a food drive in Arvin where we were able to distribute 3,500 meals. We will continue to meet the needs as best as we can. At some point, the money we're receiving now will have to be reallocated to provide our core services going forward. It is unknown how much longer we will be able to continue to provide meals and grocery shopping after June.

AASD staff have returned to work today on a staggered basis to facilitate the social distancing requirements the State is wanting us to adhere to. Staff with odd number cubicles show up on odd number days, and even cubicle numbers show up on even calendar days. We have also asked staff to wear masks while in the building, with the exception of when they're in their own cubicle. We also have thermometers for self-checking their temperature. We are asking staff to not show up to work if they are not feeling well. We have sanitizing wipes, hand sanitizers, and disinfectant spray bottle stations by every entrance and strategically throughout the building. We will be opening up to the public by appointment

only on June 1st. We have also placed plexiglass in the interview rooms, as well as installing video cameras for video conference interviews to reduce the client contact. We will have security guards to also help control the traffic inside the building ensuring social distancing. Each Department has a different re-entry plan.

Senior centers are still closed and will remain closed for the foreseeable future, at least through June and possibly longer since the Governor's stay at home order is still in effect for seniors.

The Elder Abuse Prevention Conference previously scheduled for June 2020 has been cancelled.

We are looking at having online training available for our Fall Prevention program, as well as other trainings on exercise, healthy eating, etc. This was planned prior to COVID-19 at the senior centers. There is a strong digital divide with seniors in our community whether it be due to no internet or Wi-Fi, or not knowing how to get online with their phone. Commissioner Lemucchi reported seniors can call Independent Living Center (ILC) at 661-325-1063 Assisted Technology department to assist them with using technical devices such as cellphones, lap tops, etc.

Chris Barrett reported Valley Caregiver Resource Center really appreciates AASD for considering their program for any extra funding for their programs especially since they've lost the increase in funding through the State.

A donation of 100 VISA gift cards in the amount of \$50 each was donated by a renewable energy company, S-POWER, to help seniors in the east kern area. Lito thanked Chris Barrett and Susan Bodnar for their help with identifying those seniors in need. These gift cards can be used on anything they need help with such as groceries, medication, bills, etc.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

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

No report.

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

Jan Lemucchi reported CSL won't likely have their annual session until 2021. Chair Prado thanked Commissioner Lemucchi for continuing to send information to the Commissioners. This year's theme for the Older American's Act is "Engaged at every age."

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – S. Morris, R. Maier

Lito reported Devora Gonzalez was recently reappointed by GBLA. Her new term expires 11/08/2021. Doris Duquette was reappointment by District 2. Her new term expires 09/29/2021. Barbara Goodlow was reappointed by Bakersfield Senior Center. Her new term expires 12/08/2021. There are no new appointments. Jon Johnston's term expired on 05/04/2020. He asked to resign. Appointments soon to expire are Commissioner Maier (06/17/20), Commissioner Brown (06/17/20), Commissioner Hodge (06/17/20), and Commissioner L. Oswald (06/17/20). Laura Juarez will submit reappointment

letters as their term dates near. There is currently one vacancy for CLS Assemblymember, that existing term will end October 21, 2022. No new applications were received.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – A. Flucker, S. Lynch

The COA Foundation gave 3 gift cards in the amount of \$100 each to purchase donuts for the senior nutrition workers in the Bakersfield and outlying areas. Commissioner Grasty reported thank you cards were also sent to all staff.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – B. Goodlow, K. Grasty, J. Lemucchi, S. Lynch, L. Oswald, Y. Prado, J. Snyder

Commissioner Lynch reported the committee met May 6, 2020 to discuss today's agenda.

IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (IHSS) ADVISORY – J. Snyder

Commissioner Snyder reported the meeting scheduled for May 21, 2020 was cancelled.

LONG TERM CARE – C. Barrett, S. Bodnar, D. Duquette, D. Gonzalez, L. Fuller, N. Jackson, R. Oswald

Commissioner Gonzalez reported there are many changes happening on a daily basis. They are working remotely and still have access to residents in long-term care in Kern County. They are facing challenges with connecting with residents because they do not have electronic devices. They are scheduling monthly meeting monthly with all activities coordinators to provide them with information to share. They are seeking donations for lap tops and cell phones to distribute to residents. Isolation is a big issue right now for a lot of these residents. Skilled Nursing Facilities are still on lockdown. Visitors are not allowed. Only Public Health is visiting only on a basis of emergency, and they determine what is and isn't an emergency. Testing kits are going into all residential homes. Staff will be tested on a regular basis. We are also having care plan meetings via Zoom. They do have an intake line running as regular business hours, as well as their 24-hour crisis line.

MARKETING & ORIENTATION COMMITTEE – Y. Prado, D. Duquette, S. Lopez, S. Lynch, S. Morris, J. Snyder

No report.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE – G. Brown; N. Jackson

No report.

SENIOR CENTER ADVISORY – A. Flucker, B. Goodlow, L. Hodge

Commissioner Grasty reported all senior centers are still closed to congregate meals.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

Chair Prado reported she mailed a sympathy card to Commissioner Morris.

THE AREA AGENCY ON AGING COUNSEL OF CALIFORNIA (TACC) – L. Oswald, R. Oswald

No report.

TRANSPORTATION – Y. Prado

No report.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – G. Brown; R. Maier

No report.

INFORMATION ITEMS –

The Senior Resource Fair was postponed to October 24, 2020, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at the Rasmussen Senior Center. If we can't bring the seniors together in October, we will need to put our heads together to figure how to get the resource information to the seniors.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely the CLS will not have an annual session in November 2020. They will not be filling any CSL vacancies therefore applications for CSL Assemblymember are not being accepted until further notice from the Joint Rules Committee Chair, John Pointer.

The next in-person training is scheduled for August 19, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. in the Board Chambers. You can also take the 2 hour training online at www.ca-ilg.org/ab1234compliance. Please be sure to give a copy of your certificate to Laura Juarez.

As a reminder, please continue to use "Smile Amazon" when making purchases through Amazon, and select "Kern County Commission on Aging" as your charity organization of choice. A small percentage of proceeds will go to the COA Foundation. Be sure to click "Support Kern County Commission on Aging" each time you log in.

NEXT MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, June 3, 2020 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, June 15, 2020 1:00 p.m. Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 2:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lito Morillo
Secretary