

Kern County Commission On Aging

Yolanda Prado, Chairperson
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**REGULAR COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING
MINUTES**

June 15, 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, Sandy Morris, Linda Oswald, Roger Oswald, *Yolanda Prado, and ***Judy Snyder

Excused Absences: Aaron Flucker

A QUORUM WAS PRESENT

Honorary Commission Members Present:

None.

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Melissa Gibson-Enciso, Volunteer Senior Outreach Program (VSOP)
Laura Juarez, Senior Office Services Specialist
Martin Reynoso, Administrative Coordinator

Guests:

Jens Blum, Lourdes Garcia, Josh Dhanens, Jasmine Rubio, Josephs Morris, and Catherine Vasquez

AGENDA POSTING:

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

CORRESPONDENCE:

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

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

None.

Commissioner Comments :

Commissioner Snyder thanked the Commission for the Get Well card she received.

Commissioner Morris thanked the Commission for the Sympathy card she received. She also thanked Lito Morillo and Jeremy Oliver for their help with the senior homebound food program through CityServe.

Commissioner Brown thanked Lito and AASD staff who drove to Cal City to drop off meal boxes for seniors. She added that it is nice to know people still care about seniors. She also thanked the Commission for the birthday card she received.

Martin Reynoso, of AASD, discussed the four-year Area Plan for 2020-2024. He also thanked the survey committee for their help with gathering information for the Area Plan.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONERS

None.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes for the May 18, 2020 Regular Commission on Aging Meeting were approved as prepared.
Motion/Second/Abstained/Opposed
(M/S/A/O) Hodge/R. Oswald/None/None - Motion carried.
- **APPROVAL OF AREA PLAN for 2020-2024** – The Area Plan for 2020-2024 was reviewed and approved with emendations to pages 11, 18, 31, 33, 61, 67, and 68.
(M/S/A/O) Grasty/Lynch/None/None – Motion carried
- **HONORARY COMMISSIONER:** A motion was made to make Jon Johnston an Honorary Commissioner.
(M/S/A/O) Snyder/Brown/None/None – Motion carried.

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Leslie Wallace

Leslie Wallace reported General Services activated the Cooling Centers, while juggling to maintain COVID-19 testing sites.

VETERANS SERVICE – Josh Dhanens

Josh Dhanens reported the Veterans Department is still operational by appointment only. They are trying to change how they assist their clients via technology, snail mail, and telephone. They are still there and available to help clients, their spouses, and children.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Michelle Pearl Krizo

Michelle Pearl Krizo reported on COVID-19. Of the 40,000 people tested, 36,000 were negative results, or 96%, with 3,367 (8%) tested positive. Of those 3,367 who tested positive, 98% of them have fully recovered, with 2% hospitalized, and 2% have died. Half of those who died were from the nursing home. On June 12, 2020, about 75% of Kern County has reopened. They are expecting hospitalizations to peak in July and November, which is concerning if we reach capacity in our hospitals. They also expect to see a sharp increase in February 2021 to hospitalization rate of 679, which means all 10 hospitals will be working at capacity. There is a site at the Fairgrounds to increase capacity if needed. What is a concern is the capacity of 78 Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds in this community. They are expecting to see a surge of 294 beds needed in ICU, with a peak surging in early 2021 to 431 ICU beds needed. Public Health is asking everyone to practice safe hygiene and social distancing, as well as, wearing a mask whenever you are out in public. If you are sick, stay home. Do not risk the health of others by going out. Symptoms of Coronavirus, which may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus, are fever, chills, cough, headache, loss of smell and taste, sore throat, nausea, congestion, confused, inability to stay awake, blue in lips or face, vomiting, diarrhea, difficulty breathing, and chest pressure. There are multiple testing sites throughout the County. You can stay up to date on COVID-19 news by visiting the Kern County Public Health COVID-19 Dashboard at https://kernpublichealth.com/covid-19_dashboard/.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Lourdes Garcia

Lourdes Garcia reported they are still working remotely. The Mary K. Shell building was recently remodeled to make it more welcoming to individuals seeking services. Two recovery stations are opening up for those under the influence to sober up and get linked to services. These will not be walk-in clinics; however, if they are picked up by police, MET, or staff, they will be admitted.

Jens Blum reported the Voluntary Senior Outreach Program (VSOP) provided information regarding VSOP services. They are continuing to receive referrals and are open to receiving new referrals. They are trying to reach out to individuals in need and encourage everyone to refer or provide the information to seniors in need. To make a VSOP referral, contact Lourdes Garcia at 661-868-5021.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Valerie Rangel

Valerie Rangel reported renewals are on hold until August 31, 2020. If clients do receive a renewal packet, they are encouraged to return it with any required verifications. Cal-Fresh recipients have been receiving an emergency allotment for the months of March, April and May for their usual allotment and up to the maximum \$192. This allotment will automatically appear on their benefits card. The allotment for June has been approved and will become available on July 12th. In June they began processing the CalFresh recertification so you may hear clients saying they received a semi-annual report in the mail, and it does need to

be returned. The Department has limited their office hours until 1 p.m. and only allowing emergency situations into the lobby, which would be those who have no access to a phone, or those who are experiencing homelessness. They have been putting as many individuals on the phones in the Call Center as possible to reduce wait time. They are doing as best as possible to handle client issues over the phone.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Not in attendance.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez reported they are still accepting applications for their Home Access Grant and Home Improvement Loan. The Home Access grant is available to make getting in and around the home more accessible by installing walk-in showers, grab bars, handicap accessible toilet, ramps, etc. This loan is available at no cost to low-income home owners, or renters, with home owner's consent. The Home Improvement Loan is used to fix or replace existing issues with the home such as painting, roof, plumbing, electrical, etc. This deferred payment loan is available to low-income home owners with 0% interest. A lien is placed on the home and the loan will be repaid when the owner no longer lives in the home, or whenever the home is sold. If you know anyone interested in either of these programs, please contact Catherine directly at 661-862-5062.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Harvey Clowers

Harvey Clowers reported staff are working from home. They have been creative in how to help consumers. They have classes via Zoom, and still keeping up with clients via telephone regarding recertification for housing and other needs they have. For information about services provided by ILC, call 661-325-1063.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Lito Morillo

Lito Morillo reported the following:

State

The budget lawmakers will pass today reflects an agreement the Senate and Assembly reached earlier this month, which largely rejects Newsom's plan to cut \$14 billion from schools and safety net programs unless the federal government sends aid by July 1, 2020. Instead, the Legislature's plan assumes the Federal Government will send money by October 1, 2020, and if they don't, limits cuts to \$7 billion by drawing on reserves.

The Senate/Assembly have rejected the Governor's cuts to eliminate Adult Day Health Care (ADHC)/Community-Based Adult Services (CBAS), and Multipurpose Seniors Services Program (MSSP). It also rejects the 7% In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) cut in IHSS hours, and the \$8.5 million cut in senior nutrition.

County

The County is dealing with a huge shortfall as a result of oil and overall downturn in the economy. All County Departments must make a 7% general fund cut as part of its spend down budget submission. Realignment funding will also decrease because of COVID.

AASD participated in a food drive in Arvin in May 2020. In June 2020, the Department also provided boxes of food for a food drive held in Cal City.

The County is contracting with CAPK for \$2 million to provide boxes of food to seniors throughout the County who are aged 65+. The funding is through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act CARES Act.

AASD is working with Pacifica on a pilot program to get tablets to a few residents to help bridge the digital divide.

We are also working with Advance Care Wellness on Fall Prevention Program. AASD got a grant for \$140,000 to develop this program in an effort to reduce falls amongst seniors in our community. We are trying to identify a vendor to do in-home assessments as part of this fall prevention program that we are trying to get up and running.

We are nearing the establishment of Kern's Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) which we are collaborating with Independent Living Center (ILC) on. We received a grant for \$180,000 a year. ADRC will be a one stop shop for individuals with disabilities and older adults.

The County is partnering with Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK) to provide food boxes to seniors 65+ via home delivery. They went before the Board of Supervisors Tuesday, June 16, 2020 for approval.

The Board of Supervisors approved appointing Georgianna Armstrong, who is the Emergency Operations Center's Chief for Kern County, to serve as the direct liaison between County, their COVID-19 task force, and the nursing facilities, specifically Kingston. Everything is centered on reopening the county.

There is no timeline of when senior centers will reopen especially since the Governor's Stay at Home orders are still in effect. We understand there's a delicate balance between socializing and behavioral health and we will continue to monitor guidelines.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

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

No report.

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

No report.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – S. Morris, R. Maier

Commissioner Morris reported there were no recent appointments, reappointments, or expired terms. 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 sent reappointment letters on June 11, 2020. There are two vacancies, one for CLS Assemblymember, which will not be filled at this time, and one vacancy in District 1. There was one new application received from Julio Casillas.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – A. Flucker, S. Lynch

No report.

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

Chair Prado reported the committee met June 3, 2020 via Zoom to discuss today's meeting agenda, among other items already discussed in this meeting.

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

No report.

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

Commissioner Gonzalez reported since March, they have not been allowed to have any in-person visits. The Ombudsman has continued with visits via Zoom. Some facilities have a setup with an empty room and glass window where they can communicate via telephone. This is on a case by case basis when it is safe to do so. It was expected that a second wave of COVID-19 would appear in October 2020; however, with everything opening back up and other events currently occurring, the second wave is expected sometime around July 2020. We are trying to prepare for the worst at this moment. Assisted Living is likely to have the first visits but there is no set date at this time to when that will happen. Not all facilities staff and residents have been tested for COVID-19 yet. If a resident ends up going to the hospital, it doesn't mean they will stay at the hospital. If there is no room to bring the resident back to the facility, then they will have to stay at the hospital. It all depends on the availability the facilities have for quarantine. One of the biggest assistance they have been providing is evictions. Quite a few facilities are issuing eviction notices to residents for different reasons. They have been assisting those residents via phone or mail. The State has also authorized for them to do verbal consents. They have a new Volunteer Coordinator. They will start a recruitment for new certified Ombudsman volunteers to come on board. They have switched to an online platform and have completed 9 modules online for Ombudsman training. We are also having regular meetings with facility staff who want to attend. Phase 1 of their goal is to get at least one landline in each room of all facilities. Phase 2 is getting all residents with how to use technology equipment. They are looking into working with ILC to provide technology training in the facilities.

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

No report.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

No report.

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 –

Laura Juarez sent an email to those who are due for Ethics Training this year. 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 signed 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.

Chair Prado gave kudos to Valley Caregiver Resource Center for their television commercials.

Commissioner Morris announced St. John Manor is recruiting for a new Senior Management. The recruitment is posted on Indeed.

NEXT MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, July 8, 2020 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, July 20, 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 3:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lito Morillo
Secretary