

Kern County Commission On Aging

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

September 21, 2020
Video Meeting via Zoom

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Prado called the meeting to order at 1:07 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, Devora Gonzalez, Barbara Goodlow, Kris Grasty; Loron Hodge, **Stephanie Lynch, Jan Lemucchi, Roland Maier, Sandy Morris, Linda Oswald, Roger Oswald, *Yolanda Prado, and ***Judy Snyder

Excused Absences: Doris Duquette, Aaron Flucker, Norma Jackson, and Sonia Lopez

A QUORUM WAS PRESENT

Honorary Commission Members Present:

None.

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Laura Juarez, Senior Office Services Specialist

Guests:

Brook Whitehead-Tolles, Josh Dhanens, Michelle Pearl-Krizo, Gayla Hughes, Catherine Vasquez, and Lourdes Garcia

AGENDA POSTING:

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

CORRESPONDENCE:

Lito Morillo reported the Marketing and Orientation Committee and the Senior Center Advisory Committee will be sending out letters to seniors that will provide them with valuable information and resources.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

None.

Commissioner Comments :

Chair Prado thanked Commissioner Lemucchi for always providing information from the California Senior Legislature, including the information on Cal Alerts, which provides alerts for any type of natural disasters and emergencies.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONERS

None.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes for the July 20, 2020 Regular Commission on Aging Meeting was reviewed and approved as prepared.
Motion/Second/Abstained/Opposed
(M/S/A/O) Lemucchi/R. Oswald/Barrett, Lynch, Bodnar/None - Motion carried.
- **APPROVAL OF 2021 SCHEDULE:** The schedule for the 2021 COA Regular meetings was reviewed and approved as prepared.
M/S/A/O – Lynch/Morris/None/None – Motion carried.

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Leslie Wallace

Not in attendance.

VETERANS SERVICE – Josh Dhanens

Josh Dhanens reported the office is still open to help veterans and their families if they need services. They can call the office at 661-868-7300 as clients are seen in the office by appointment only. It takes the VA approximately 2-3 months to process Aid & Attendance. Commissioner Morris shared information about resources for food and toiletries to senior veterans. If there are any veterans in need of these items, please call her at 661-703-8893. Donations for these items are being collected at the Bakersfield Association of Realtors office located at 2300 Bahamas Dr. in Bakersfield, Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. This is a community effort with CityServe, Aging and Adult Services, Stewards, Inc., Christmas for Seniors, and Bakersfield Realtors.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Michelle Pearl Krizo

Michelle Pearl Krizo gave a report on the current COVID statistics, which you can also view on the Public Health website @ https://kernpublichealth.com/covid-19_dashboard/. As of September 21, 2020, there are 31,572 confirmed COVID cases. In ages 0-17 there were 3,591 positive cases, ages 18-49 there were 19,617 positive cases, ages 50-64 there were 5,637 positive cases, and ages 65 and up there were 2,685 positive cases. The Governor has a 4-tier color-coded metric system of yellow, orange, red, and purple. Yellow indicates minimal COVID-19 spread, orange is moderate, red is substantial, and purple means there is widespread COVID-19. Kern County is currently in the purple tier, which is the most restrictive tier. Kern County has to keep the numbers low for 14 consecutive days in order to move from the purple to red tier. Public Health does not have the flu vaccine yet. Dignity Health Mercy & Memorial Hospitals is offering free drive-thru flu shots to adults at clinics beginning Saturday, September 26, 2020 at Mercy Hospital Southwest. Friday, October 2, 2020, from 11 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., at Dignity Health. The next flu shot drive thru will be Wednesday, September 30, 2020 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Memorial Hospital, and a third on Saturday, October 10, 2020 from 10 a.m. to noon at Mercy Hospital Downtown. The flu vaccine will not be administered to individuals with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, regardless of whether or not they are experiencing and showing symptoms. Only the individual receiving the vaccine should be in the vehicle and facemasks are required. Pharmacies are also offering flu vaccines. Seniors 65 years and older are encouraged to ask for the senior flu vaccine, which is stronger than the regular flu vaccine.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Lourdes Garcia

Lourdes Garcia reported there has been an increase in referrals in the Volunteer Senior Outreach Program (VSOP) and Behavioral Health programs. In VSOP alone, they received 10 referrals within 2 weeks which quite a lot more than usual. Due to budget cuts, they are losing some of their sites. West Kern VSOP site is currently on hold, and they are looking at possibly cutting Tehachapi and Lake Isabella, as well as the site in Indian Wells. They will likely be deciding on the potential closures in October 2020. It is Suicide Prevention and Recovery month and the Department has hosted a few events. On September 24, 2020 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at their Westchester building, 2001 28th Street, Bakersfield, they will be giving away goody bags with information on how to get services. On September 29, 2020, from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. they will be having a Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) community forum. She encourages your clients to attend to advocate for this program, as it is necessary for when considering allocating funds to the MHSA program.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Gayla Hughes

Gayla Hughes reported they are still processing Medi-Cal application as soon as they get receive them so they can get them approved as soon as possible. The State currently has a hold harmless on all of the renewals. Please advise seniors to return their renewals as soon as they receive them. DHS decided to place a hold on processing the renewals until the pandemic and State of Emergency is released because they don't want to take any negative actions to stop anyone's coverages during the pandemic. Medi-Cal should not be discontinued for anyone at this time unless they either request it, if a senior is moving from Medi-Cal into Long-Term Care, or if someone is changing from Medi-Cal to Social Security Aid. If anyone's Medi-Cal was discontinued from March 2020 forward, they should call DHS and request a re-evaluation on their Medi-Cal case.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Not in attendance.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez reported everything is still going as usual with their programs, while taking extra safety precautions wearing masks and practicing social distance as much as possible. With the Home Access grant, they are currently focusing on installing ramps since that is exterior work. She will meet with the clients to determine their comfort level with indoor inspections during the pandemic. If the client approves indoor assessments and work, they will move forward with installing grab bars, walk-in showers, etc. The Home Improvement program is for homeowners who need to fix or replace existing items such as plumbing, roof, electrical, etc. They are working hard to keep the programs going by spending the available funds and providing the assistance that is needed in the community.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Harvey Clowers

Harvey Clowers reported they are staying busy at ILC and are moving forward with their Independent Living Skilled classes. A new schedule of classes will be coming out for October, November, and December and it will be distributed via email and social media. Harvey is now working in the CARES program division of their center. They have a new employee, Shannon Castro, who is working with him in the CARES program and learning how to work with the different electronic devices.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Lito Morillo

Lito Morillo reported the following:

AASD is struggling with staffing issues due to COVID, especially in our senior nutrition program. IHSS Social Workers are teleworking and the SIP team is trying to answer as many calls from providers as possible. We are only seeing clients by appointment only, which you can call to make or set up on line.

Kern County is in the most restrictive tier. In order to move to the next least restrictive tier, the County has to increase the number of COVID test it does. As a result, the County is encouraging all 8,000+ County employees to get tested between now and 12/31/20. If a County employee gets 6 COVID tests completed by 12/31/20, they will receive 8 hours of vacation. There are free testing sites available. Visit Kern County's website to find the testing locations. <https://www.kerncounty.com/government/covid-19-testing-sites/covid-19-testing-sites-english>

AASD is starting a new project with the Kern County Library. As part of our Meals on Wheels (MOW) program, we will be delivering books to MOW clients who are older adults that are unable to leave their home.

AASD is also focused on the Digital Divide and getting older adults familiar with various technological devices and internet to obtain information and services. AASD will be piloting a project in Kern for Older Adults who are low-income, isolated, and living alone. This project will include loaning them iPads, providing training, and establishing virtual communities (senior centers) called PODs. Thanks given to Alex Alva for his help with getting approval of the new positions that will allow us to hire Program Technicians who will help with this project.

We estimate to start this program in October 2020, and anticipate beginning the trainings in mid to late November 2020. We have limited resources so the individuals with the most need (low-income & isolated) will be the first to receive the one-on-one or small group trainings. Later, training will be available to the masses on a scheduled basis via online classes posted on the AASD web page. Trainings will be posted on a cycle so that if a training was missed on a particular day, they will have the opportunity to view the training on the next cycle. Commissioner Snyder addressed concerns regarding security and suggested a few members of COA getting together to create a tip sheet to help seniors avoid scams and fraud.

The California Department of Aging (CDA) is working on a project with T Mobile that will allow AASD to purchase 2 types of tablets at a discounted rate for older adults. CDA is also working with Google to receive a donation of 50 Google Home devices to Kern County.

Kern was awarded \$15 million for the HomeKey project, which allows County to renovate hotels, motels, vacant apartment buildings to convert them into interim or permanent long-term housing.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

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

Commissioner L. Oswald reported they are working on standing orders and information about California Senior Legislature, IHSS Advisory Committee representation, and the COA regular meeting schedule during a pandemic or natural disaster or if AASD is closed.

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

Commissioner Lemucchi reported the annual general session that is typically held in November is cancelled for this year. They have been meeting virtually with other committees.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – S. Morris, R. Maier

Commissioner Maier reported there are no new appointments or reappointments. Aaron Flucker's term expired August 18, 2020. Laura sent a reappointment letter to Supervisor Perez's office for reappointment. There are two vacancies, 1 for CSL Senior Assemblymember, which will not be filled at this time, and District 1, replacing Jon Johnston. New applications were received from Magaly Ortega and Veronica Gonzales Olguin.

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 September 2, 2020 via Zoom to discuss today's meeting agenda. The employee appreciation for August was cancelled. This matter is postponed for discussion at the end of the year. The Senior Resource Fair is also cancelled.

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

Commissioner Snyder reported the committee met September 17, 2020. She was welcomed as the new representative for the COA. Her term expires June 30, 2021. There are some vacancies on the committee, and several applications have been received. AASD has a new website. Lito added AASD now has a Facebook and Instagram page. This will help us get information out to the community. The next IHSS Advisory Committee meeting will be November 19, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. via Zoom.

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

Commissioner Gonzalez reported COVID-19 cases have gone down and are being stabilized in Long-Term Care facilities. Kern County Public Health has been incredible with providing great support to not only the Ombudsman Program, but also in ensuring residents in Kern County facilities stay safe and infection control prevention is in place. There are still big concerns with flu season coming and are preparing for that. There has been big changes with visitations. A new rule for indoor visitation is that there has to be no new onset of COVID cases within the last 14 weeks, and the facility cannot be experiencing any COVID outbreaks. Though it is encouraged, there is no requirement for visitors to take a COVID test. Visitors must be screened and wear a facemask in order to visit with patients, and visits will be limited. There are some compassionate care visits allowed for certain residents who meet certain criteria. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman program has resumed visit; however, they must adhere to State guidelines before they can enter a facility. They are in the process of working with seeing how they are going to manage their program because their volunteers are older adults themselves who are at a higher risk and no longer interested in going back into the facilities. "Cards to Warm Hearts" is a new program where different clubs will send personalized messages on cards to residents. They are also working on a project called "Unbefriended Family Finding Project" where staff help residents find family of the residents. Commissioner Lemucchi shared there is another program called "Students for Friendly Remote Visits". Students in this program will make personal one-on-one calls or video conferences via Zoom to have simple conversations with residents.

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

Chair Prado reported the committee is meeting within a few weeks to find a method to reach out to individuals at home.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE – G. Brown; N. Jackson

No report.

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

Commissioner Goodlow reported she discussed with Commissioner Grasty about creating a survey for the senior centers coordinators and seniors to find out if they are equipped to watch the COA regular meetings via Zoom. Will provide a report at the next COA meeting. The Bakersfield Senior Center is still providing lunch via pick up only.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

No report.

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

No report.

TRANSPORTATION – Y. Prado

Chair Prado reported the committee met September 9, 2020 to discuss “unmet needs”. These specific hearings must be held, recorded, and ultimately voted on so they can pass along the information to the State for funding purposes. The committee will meet again October 2, 2020 for voting.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – G. Brown; R. Maier

No report.

INFORMATION ITEMS –

2021 Executive Committee Meetings - The Executive Committee approved their meeting schedule for 2021.

Smile Amazon - 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, October 7, 2020 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, October 19, 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 2:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lito Morillo
Secretary