

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**

January 25, 2021, 1:00 p.m.
Video Meeting via Zoom

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Prado called the meeting to order at 1:04 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, , Doris Duquette, Aaron Flucker, Devora Gonzalez, Barbara Goodlow, Kris Grasty; Loron Hodge, Norma Jackson, **Stephanie Lynch, Jan Lemucchi, Roland Maier, Linda Oswald, Roger Oswald, *Yolanda Prado, and ***Judy Snyder

Excused Absences: Susan Bodnar Gloria Brown, and Sandy Morris

A QUORUM WAS PRESENT

Honorary Commission Members Present:

Jon Johnston

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Laura Juarez, Senior Office Services Specialist

Guests:

Janelle Capra, Jens Blum, Kaye Davis, Josh Dhanens, Gayla Hughes, Catherine Vasquez, and Peggy Langels

AGENDA POSTING:

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

CORRESPONDENCE:

A letter was sent to Supervisor Phillip Peters congratulating him on his election to District 1 on the Kern County Board of Supervisors.

A letter was received from Christmas for Seniors thanking the COA Foundation for their \$500 donation to the program.

A card was received from Bakersfield Senior Center thanking the COA and Barbara Goodlow for their continued support and vision for our senior population.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

None.

Commissioner Comments :

Chair Prado shared information about scams and how scammers are trying to get seniors to pay for the COVID-19 vaccine. Lito Morillo shared that the vaccine itself is free; however, a provider can charge an "assessment" fee for the vaccine. This assessment is the Doctor's way to make sure you're able to get the vaccine prior to giving.

Commissioner Morris is looking at the possibility of expanding the Christmas for Seniors project to set up a thrift shop dedicated to seniors where people can submit donated items. There would be no charge to seniors for these items. Donations can include food, clothing, toiletries, cleaning supplies, etc. One of the biggest issues is finding a physical location for the thrift shop, along with other logistics required for operating a thrift shop.

Lito Morillo reported that due to shortage on Reception and Call Center staff, AASD has new temporary lobby hours. The lobby will be opened to the public from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, and will be closed during the lunch hour of 12-1 p.m. Staff will continue to work 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Chair Prado was saddened to report that AASD employee, Leanne Morgan, passed away. Ms. Morgan worked with the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP) for many years. She was very knowledgeable and enjoyed advocating for seniors. Information regarding funeral services will be shared as it becomes available.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONERS

Chair Prado welcomed Commissioner Felicia Mears and Janelle Capra, of Alzheimer's Disease Association of Kern County (ADAKC) to the meeting. Commissioner Mears was recently appointed by ADAKC to serve on the COA.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes for the November 16, 2020 Regular Commission on Aging meeting was approved with one correction to page 5.
Motion/Second/Abstained/Opposed
(M/S/A/O) Hodge/R. Oswald/None/None - Motion carried.
- **APPROVAL OF STANDING RULES** – Suggested changes to the Standing Rules of the COA Bylaws are as follows:
 1. Under the section discussing how often the COA will hold meetings, suggestion to add a note indicating if AASD is closed such as during a pandemic, the COA will not hold a meeting.
 2. Under “Vacancies,” instructions for California Senior Legislature (CSL) elections will be added.
 3. Under appointment of member to represent the COA on the In-Home Supportive Services Advisory Committee, an alternate person will be designated to attend the meeting if the appointed member is unable to attend.**A motion was made to approve items 1 and 2. Item 3 will be set aside for further discussion. (M/S/A/O) Grasy/Lynch/None/None - Motion carried.**

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Leslie Wallace

Leslie Wallace reported they are having issues with staffing due to exposures, as well as absences and illnesses to take care of family members. Their contracted vendors are also experiencing the same staffing issues so please bear with them if you are experiencing some changes as far as custodial services in some of the senior centers. They are currently not having any non-necessary reservations of buildings, which seems to be helping.

VETERANS SERVICE – Josh Dhanens

Josh Dhanens reported Veterans Services is still open and assisting clients. They have moved to a virtual platform. Veterans and their families can reach out to them via email at kernvets@kerncounty.com or by phone at 661-868-7300. They can also make accommodations to meet in the office if needed. The VA clinic in Bakersfield is offering COVID-19 vaccinations. Vaccines are being transported daily from Los Angeles due to no adequate storage available at the local clinic for the vaccines. For this reason, they are not accepting walk-ins. Veterans must call to be placed on the list and they will be called when the vaccine is available for them.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Michelle Pearl Krizo

Not in attendance.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Jens Blum

Jens Blum reported Volunteer Senior Outreach Program (VSOP) is an early intervention program that continues to provide support to seniors 65 years and older who are struggling with social isolation, staying home, etc. They are working in teams of two on a weekly rotation basis, working mainly from home. They are contacting clients via phone, Zoom, or in person visits for those clients are open to who in-home visits.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Gayla Hughes

Gayla Hughes reported all programs remain on hold. They are not processing any Medi-cal renewals right now, but they are processing new Medi-cal applications. Clients can continue to submit their Medi-cal renewals but they will not be processed at this time. Gayla can be reached at 661-868-8823.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Peggy Langels reported their offices have been shut down since the end of November. They are working remotely and by appointment only. EDD is completely out of the office since last summer. ETR is still there and currently working on their 4-year local and state plan for the different people they will be serving. They are tentatively scheduled to be back into the office February 1, 2021 on a rotation basis and hoping to get their resources back open. They have virtual trainings available. The Public Health Department has a huge recruitment for Per Diem COVID-19 Immunization Clinic Aide. This is will be for a full-time job until they close the Mass Vaccination Clinic (MVC). The pay is \$14/hour and they are looking to hire about 500 people. You can apply on the Kern County website. If you know of any adults 18 years and older looking for a job, have them register on CalJobs. They can also go to their website to view other recruitments at www.americasjobcenterofkern.com or they can call 661-325-4473.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez reported their Department is still open and continue to process Home Access inspections for ADA modifications. This program is for residents who are low-income and disabled and helps by building ramps, removing tubs, installing shower stalls, and other items that help make it easier and safer to get in and around the home. They also continue to process applications for the Home Improvement Loan for homeowners who need repairs to their homes. If you know anyone interested in either program, Catherine can be reached at 661-862-5062.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Jan Lemucchi

Jan Lemucchi reported they are still working remotely. Very few clients are coming into the office. All of their services and programs are available to everyone. They have seen an increase with their Assistive Technology (AT) program due to individuals wanting to learn more technological services because of the isolation. ILC and AASD are State recognized as an emerging State Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC). Any calls that come into either AASD or ILC can be serviced with a case manager using the "no wrong door" philosophy. We still have virtual ILC trainings and support groups available.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Lito Morillo

Lito Morillo reported the following:

Federal

President Biden is proposing a \$1.9 trillion stimulus package that would provide an additional \$1,400 to those that previously received the \$600 stimulus check. There is talk that it may

include college students, which the previous stimulus did not include since it excluded kids in your household over 17 years of age.

Here are some of the other big-ticket items in the plan:

- Increasing federal minimum wage to \$15
- Extending additional unemployment benefit of \$400 through September 2021 (currently set to expire March 2021).
- Extending the eviction and foreclosure moratoriums until end of September 2021
- \$350 billion in state and local government aid.
- \$20 billion toward a national vaccine program
- \$50 billion toward COVID testing
- \$170 billion for K-12 schools and institutions of higher learning
- Making the Child Tax Credit fully refundable for the year and increasing the credit to \$3,000 per child (\$3,600 for a child under 6)

State

Building on existing efforts to address aging in California, including the development of a 10-year Master Plan for Aging and the establishment of a Task Force on Alzheimer's Prevention and Preparedness, the Governor's budget proposes a range of initiatives and investments, including, developing new strategies with the federal government to leverage Medicare to provide additional long-term services and supports and appointing a Senior Advisor on Aging, Disability and Alzheimer's to advance cross-Cabinet initiatives and partnerships between government, the private sector, and philanthropy. The Budget includes a \$5 million General Fund placeholder for spring proposals to further implement the Master Plan for Aging.

Proposed investments targeting top priorities identified in the Master Plan for Aging include:

- Establishing an Office of Medicare Innovation and Integration to lead innovative models for dual eligibles and Medicare only individuals. The Administration intends to submit a proposal in the spring for state operations to establish a new Office of Medicare Innovation and Integration that will explore strategies and models to strengthen and expand low- and middle-income Californian's access to high-quality services and supports, while developing new partnerships with the federal government.
- \$250 million one-time General Fund for the Department of Social Services to acquire and rehabilitate Adult Residential Facilities (ARF) and Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFE) with a specific focus on preserving and expanding housing for low-income seniors who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. (See also Housing and Homelessness).
- \$7.5 million in 2021-22, half-year funding of \$5 million in 2022-23 to delay the suspension of and expand Aging and Disability Resources Connections (ADRCs), or "No Wrong Door," networks to serve the entire state. The Governor's Proposed 2021-22 Budget includes \$7.5 million in 2021-22 and half-year \$5 million in 2022-23 for the statewide expansion of the State's Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) program,

subject to suspension on December 31, 2022 based on available General Fund resources in the 2022 Budget Process. If not suspended, resources are proposed to continue at an ongoing full-year funding level of \$10 million. The ADRC program, also known as “No Wrong Door,” which was a key recommendation of both the Master Plan for Aging Stakeholder Advisory Committee and the Task Force on Alzheimer’s. The ADRC program is the State’s only coordinated “one stop” telephone and on-line access which enables a single point of entry for older adults and people with disabilities, regardless of age, income, or disability, to navigate their local systems of long-term services and supports. ADRC programs provide warm hand-off information and referral/assistance services, person-centered options counseling, short-term service coordination during times of crisis, and transition services from hospitals to home and from skilled nursing facilities back into the community. There are currently six designated and 10 emerging ADRC programs in the state and this funding will enable the establishment of ADRC programs throughout the State.

- \$5.3 million one-time General Fund in 2021-22 to extend the IHSS back-up provider system and back-up provider wage differential to avoid disruptions to caregiving until December 2021.
- The proposed budget delays the restoration of the seven percent reduction in IHSS hours for recipients for 18 months, and includes \$449.8 million GF in 2021-22 and assumes another \$242.6 million in 2022-23 to reflect this. The reduction was originally scheduled to go into effect in 2020-21 per the 2019 Budget Act agreement, but was delayed as part of the 2020 Budget Act agreement. The seven percent reduction is now proposed to go into effect in December 2022, and will be lifted if the Administration determines at the time that there is sufficient revenue.
- The proposed budget includes \$40.4 million (\$16 million GF in services funding and \$1.2 million (\$624,000 GF) in administration funding in 2020-21 for the expansion of paid sick leave up to an additional 80 hours as enacted under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.
- \$3 million one-time General Fund for the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development to grow and diversify the pipeline for the geriatric medicine workforce. The Budget includes \$3 million one-time General Fund for the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development to grow and diversify the pipeline for the geriatric medicine workforce, as the increasing and diversifying numbers of older adults living longer lives require developing a larger and more diverse pool of health care workers with experience in geriatric medicine.
- The 2020 Budget Act included \$17.5 million General Fund for the Older Americans Act (OAA) Senior Nutrition program (SNP) that was originally set to suspend on 12/31/21. The suspension date of this funding is proposed to be extended until 12/31/22, which will enable local Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to expend the full \$17.5 million in 2021-22. The OAA SNP provides both home-delivered meals and congregate meals at community and senior centers, nutrition education, and nutrition-risk screening to individuals aged 60 or older.

The total baseline funding for OAA SNP is [\$117.8 million (\$26.1 million GF)]. The baseline funding for OAA SNP was able to provide 19,325,463 meals to 222,448 unduplicated participants in 2019-20. With additional federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds, the AAAs were able to provide an additional 2,825,981 meals to older adults in 2019-20.

- Supportive Services and Family Caregiving (\$61.5 million - \$296 thousand GF) Older Americans Act Titles III and VII fund services to enable individuals to access the support necessary for them to remain independent in their communities, continue in their caregiving role, and/or receive long-term care services appropriate to their needs. These programs provide services in the community to adults 60 years of age or older and their family caregivers.
- Information and Assistance and HICAP (\$13.6 million - \$41,000 GF) provides free, confidential one-on-one counseling, education, and assistance to individuals and their families on Medicare, Long-Term Care insurance, and other health insurance related issues, and planning ahead for Long-Term Care needs. HICAP also provides legal assistance or legal referrals in dealing with Medicare or Long-Term Care insurance related needs. In 2019-20, the program served 63,255 older adults.
- The MSSP Multipurpose Senior Services (\$23.6 million - \$21.8 million GF) provides both social and health care coordination services to assist frail individuals aged 65 or older to remain in their own homes and communities. The MSSP serves approximately 11,370 participants a year in 9,232 slots across 38 sites.
- Long-term Care Ombudsman (\$17.4 million - \$9.2 million GF) serves as advocates for residents of long-term care facilities, the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman and the local Ombudsman representatives seek resolution of residential facility complaints with the goal of ensuring residents' rights, dignity, quality of care, and quality of life. Statewide, approximately 723 state-certified Ombudsman volunteers and paid local Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program staff identify, investigate, and resolve complaints and concerns in over 1,200 skilled nursing facilities and approximately 7,300 residential care facilities for the elderly.
- Falls Prevention (\$5 million GF from FY 19-20, re-appropriation until 6/30/22). The Dignity at Home Fall Prevention Program was established in FY 2019-2020 with a one-time \$5 million GF appropriation to provide grants to the local AAAs for information and education on injury prevention; referrals to related resources and services; and home environmental assessments and assessments of individual injury prevention needs, including instructions on behavioral, physical and environmental aspects of injury prevention. The program originally had a sunset date of 9/30/21. The funds are proposed to be reappropriated until 6/30/2022.

Alzheimer's

The Governor's proposal to address Alzheimer's emphasizes communities of color and women, who are disproportionately susceptible to the disease and the primary providers of caregiving. The budget proposes a number of investments to be administered by the Department of Public Health, including:

- \$5 million one-time General Fund for a public education campaign on brain health;
- \$4 million one-time General Fund for new training and certification for caregivers;
- \$2 million one-time General Fund for expanded training in standards of care for health care providers;
- \$2 million one-time General Fund for grants to communities to become dementia-friendly;
- \$4 million one-time General Fund for research to strengthen California's leadership on disparities and equity in Alzheimer's.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

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

No report.

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

Commissioner Lemucchi reported Senior Rally Day is scheduled for May 2021 to coincide with Older Americans Month and will be held via a virtual setting. They are working on the genre, workshops, and all the other particulars that go into planning the event. The California Collaborative for Long Term Care Services and Support (CCLTCSS) holds monthly meetings. The CSL was asked to be on the CCLTCSS Executive Board. The Joint Rules Committee (JRC) staff, Chair John Pointer, and Janice Bailey, have been busy planning the Senior Rally Day so Commissioner Lemucchi was asked to attend some of the CCLTCSS monthly meetings in their absence. She will continue to share any information pertaining to seniors and Kern County with the COA.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – S. Morris, R. Maier

Commissioner Maier reported there are no reappointments. Commissioner Felicia Mears was appointed by ADAKC. Her term expires 01/01/2023. There are no expired terms. Commissioner Jackson's term will expire 02/01/2021. Laura will send a letter to AASD for reappointment. There are two vacancies, 1 for CSL Senior Assemblymember, which will not be filled at this time, and District 1. No new applications were received.

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 on January 6, 2021 and discussed the agenda for today's meeting, Standing Orders, and creating a glossary of acronyms. They also discussed sending a letter to the Ex-officio Department Heads thanking them for designating representatives who attend and give reports at the monthly COA meetings. They will begin working on the annual Commissioner Highlights that will be sent to the Board of Supervisors.

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

Commissioner Snyder reported the IHSS Advisory Committee met January 21, 2021. Michele Gomez appeared on behalf of Lito Morillo and provided the Director's and IHSS report. The Department is working on getting all recipients and providers signed up for the electronic time sheets. They are in the process of sending letters to those who are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. There are three vacancies for this committee. If you know anyone interested in volunteering, they can apply online at:

www.kerncounty.com/government/board-of-supervisors/boards-commissions-and-committees. The next meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2021.

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

Commissioner Gonzalez reported they continue to visit facilities and they have seen an increase in requests for Advance Healthcare Directives witnessing in nursing homes. Ombudsman staff are considered first responders so the local Public Health has reached out to them and ensured that all of the Ombudsman representatives will have a scheduling for the COVID-19 vaccination. Fifteen out of 19 nursing homes have already started receiving vaccinations in December. The additional four nursing homes will be starting soon so they'll then be at 100% of facilities having received at least the first dose. They are vaccinating about 25% of residents at a time so CVS and Walgreens Pharmacies will be making multiple visits to complete the vaccinations. As far as Assisted Living Facilities/Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (RCFE), they are required to register for the vaccination. There are approximately 125 Assisted Living Facilities/RCFE's, and it should be soon for the pharmacies to go out to start administering vaccines to those small, six-bed homes. Visitations vary depending on the outbreak in facilities. Regardless of the outbreak, hospice, families, and other agencies are able to visit patients if they are in hospice. There was a great issue of facilities not allowing hospice staff into the nursing homes, but that has since been rectified. We have a project that began last summer called "Cards to Warm Hearts Project." This program has expanded to Ridgecrest, Delano, and Arvin. Multiple clubs throughout Kern County are donating their time to write individual cards to each resident in nursing homes, with the resident's permission. They have already received 100's of cards. Residents are enjoying receiving cards and some are even corresponding with the club members.

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

The System of Systems brochures were updated and laminated. Five hundred bags with the System of Systems, a doorknob hanger about scams, and other relevant information/resources for seniors, were sent out to the Bakersfield area MOW clients. The committee is working with Senior Nutrition Coordinators on the final numbers for the outlying areas and will get bags for those areas sent out as soon as possible.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE – G. Brown; N. Jackson

No report.

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

Commissioner Goodlow reported the Bakersfield Senior Center continues to be open and serve meals to the seniors. Lilli Parker is working on getting COVID-19 vaccinations for the Black community, and for those who attend the Bakersfield Senior Center.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

Commissioner Duquette continues to send out cards for birthdays, illness, or condolences.

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

No report.

TRANSPORTATION – Y. Prado

Chair Prado reported the committee met December 9, 2020. TRIP still has 4 out of 16 contracted projects. The 24th Street project and the Belle Terrace project are 90% completed. The Belle Terrace project is scheduled to open in January 2021. The bridges on Stockdale and Real Road still has quite a ways to go and isn't expected to be completed until 2022. The City of Arvin now has three electric buses. They can go 120-140 miles after fully charged for 2-3 hours. Maintenance expenses for having these electric buses has gone down 65%. They are hoping to have all electric fleets by 2025. Passengers have provided feedback that the bus rides are smooth and quiet. The Low Barrier Homeless Shelter has 150 beds available but they currently only opened 50-60 beds. They have not had any COVID-19 cases there as of December 2020. They are also looking for volunteers and are seeking donations for clothing. If you're interested in helping out the Homeless Shelter, please contact Lori at 661-336-5263 ext. 4503.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – G. Brown; R. Maier

No report.

INFORMATION ITEMS –

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.

Letter to Kern County Board of Supervisors - Commissioner Grasty read a letter that the COA sent to the Kern County Board of Supervisors commending Lito Morillo for his exemplary performance as the Director of Kern County AASD. He continues to show himself to be an excellent leader of the agency and addresses the many and various needs of our Kern County disabled adults and seniors. He provides thorough reports every COA meeting. Throughout this pandemic, he has continued to demonstrate strong leadership in this crisis. He has expressed to this Commission that no senior will go hungry. COA believes our community is a better place for our seniors and disabled adults due to his leadership and commitment to serve.

NEXT MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, February 3, 2021 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, February 22, 2021 (Due to holiday 2/15/21) 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 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lito Morillo
Secretary