

Kern County Commission On Aging

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

February 22, 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:

Susan Bodnar, Gloria Brown, Doris Duquette, Aaron Flucker, Devora Gonzalez, Barbara Goodlow, Kris Grasty, Loron Hodge, Jan Lemucchi, **Stephanie Lynch, Roland Maier, Linda Oswald, Roger Oswald, *Yolanda Prado, and ***Judy Snyder

Excused Absences: Chris Barrett, Norma Jackson, Felicia Mears, and Sandy Morris

A QUORUM WAS PRESENT

Honorary Commission Members Present:

None

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Laura Juarez, Senior Office Services Specialist
Michele Timmerman, Program Coordinator

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 the Department Directors of the COA Ex-officio members, thanking them for their designee's active participation during COA meetings.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

Laura Juarez thanked the Commission for the lovely plant and well wishes she received on her promotion.

Commissioner Comments:

Commissioner Grasty expressed words of appreciation on behalf of the COA to Laura Juarez for her help with virtual meetings.

Chair Prado thanked Commissioner Grasty, Commissioner L. Oswald, and Laura Juarez for their work preparing the Glossary of Acronyms.

Chair Prado reported Desiree Ingalls, of Rasmussen Senior Center, shared that Mike Bradley, of AARP is preparing taxes free of charge. You can call him at 661-302-1875 to make an appointment to drop off your documents, he will complete them, and you pick them up when they're ready. Commissioner Bodnar shared that they are also doing the same with AARP in Ridgecrest and surrounding areas with safe drop off and pick up a week later when ready. Please call AARP at 760-446-9199 to schedule an appointment.

Chair Prado shared the information sent by Commissioner Lemucchi that AARP is having a virtual Workshop Wednesday, February 24, 2021 about downsizing and decluttering.

Chair Prado shared that Justice in Aging reported the credit cards individuals are receiving for the stimulus might be reloadable if another stimulus is given so you may want to hold onto your stimulus credit card.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONERS:

None.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes for the January 25, 2021 Regular Commission on Aging meeting was approved with one correction to page 10.
Motion/Second/Abstained/Opposed
(M/S/A/O) S. Lynch/J. Snyder/G. Brown/None - Motion carried.

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Leslie Wallace

Not in attendance.

VETERANS SERVICE – Josh Dhanens

Josh Dhanens reported the VA clinic in Bakersfield is offering COVID-19 vaccinations to veterans 65 years and older or anyone who has underlying health conditions that make them a high risk. Call (310) 268-4900 to schedule an appointment at the local VA clinic.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Michelle Pearl Krizo

Michelle Pearl-Krizo reported there is a new website <https://myturn.ca.gov> to schedule an appointment to receive your first COVID-19 vaccination, or by calling the “My Turn” Hotline 1-833-422-4255 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. If you are in need of your second dose and you haven’t heard back for a second dose appointment, call Kern County Public Health Department at 661-321-3000. We are now in Phase 1b for persons eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccines. Phase 1b includes first responders (firefighters, police, Correction Officers), food and agriculture workers (farm workers), U.S. postal workers, grocery workers, transit workers, and teachers (in education sector, including childcare workers), persons 65 years and older, or persons 16 to 64 years old with medical conditions that increase the risk for severe COVID-19 disease (i.e. heart disease, cancer, diabetes, etc.). In Kern County, 73,000 doses of the vaccine have been given, which is only 8% immunized. Kern County has a limited supply of vaccines so if you are eligible and still need the vaccine; call the “My Turn” Hotline to schedule your appointment. Once you received both doses of the vaccine, your antibodies are at its highest after 14 days. It is unknown if you will still have anti-body protection after 90 days so everyone is encouraged to continue wearing face masks, wash hands, and practice social distancing. If you’ve had both doses of the vaccine and it’s been 14 days since you had the second dose and you have no symptoms of disease and it’s been under 90 days since you had your second dose, if you become exposed to a case, you don’t have to quarantine but you have to keep watching out for symptoms. If you have symptoms, call your health provider immediately. The COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations is going down in Kern County.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Lourdes Garcia

Lourdes Garcia reported there’s been a few changes in their Department. Bill Walker retired so they have a new Director now, Stacy Kuwahara. Some programs have had some changes due to budget issues and cuts. They are concerned about the Volunteer Senior Outreach Program (VSOP). They haven’t received many referrals for VSOP and are concerned that seniors who need help are not getting it because they are not going out or seeing their doctors. Suicide is on the rise so if you see any red flags, you are encouraged to reach out to them. A flyer of their program will be sent to Laura to distribute to the Commissioners.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Gayla Hughes

Gayla Hughes reported Medi-Cal renewals continue to be on hold during this pandemic. If someone needs assistance and cannot apply online. Gayla thanked the COA for the letter written to the Director on behalf of her and Valerie Rangel.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Not in attendance.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez reported their Department is still conducting their inspections for the Home Access and the Home Improvement loan program. If anyone is in need of a wheelchair ramp or walk-in shower, they can refer their clients to her. They are also still taking applications for home improvement loans. Anyone who is needing help with plumbing, electric, painting or roof, they can give Catherine a call at 661-862-5062.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Jan Lemucchi

Jan Lemucchi reported they are still working remotely with very limited in-office appointments. All trainings and support services are still 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 which is more than likely to pass sometime in March. The package that would provide an additional \$1,400 stimulus check to those that previously received \$600.

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 expected to expire March 2021). This is \$400 on top of whatever unemployment is offered by each state.
- 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.

State

Governor moving forward with his proposal to send \$600 checks to taxpayers and people without Social Security numbers who received the California Earned Income Tax Credit, which is available to households earning less than \$30,000 annually. It is not certain whether this will be \$600 per individual household member or for the household in general. This is part of the Governor's January Budget Proposal. Budget process goes through May and more concrete information will be available by May.

CDA has established an agreement with AT&T, which will allow AAAs to get iPad's, data plans, and technical support at a reduced price. As part of this agreement CDA used some of their CARES funding and will be allocating iPad's with data plan to each AAA in CA. There are 6,000 iPad's slated for the entire state, and Kern will likely receive under 100 iPad's. Lito advised Lourdes that their population would be one we would definitely like to look at as they are isolated seniors. This is part of the Digital Divide practice both state and County are working hard on to bridge that Divide amongst our seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Eddy Herrera, resigned, so we are looking at another employee to continue with the Digital Divide project.

County

Aging and Adult Services as well as Independent Living Center is working together to develop a model related to transportation for all individuals needing help to get to and from fairgrounds for a COVID vaccination. The County received a \$10,000 donation from a local couple with the purpose of paying for this resource.

The County is ramping up its vaccination efforts of all County residents. Currently vaccinations at the Fairgrounds is happening Wednesday through Saturday and they are looking at expanding to Monday through Saturday. This will be predicated on the vaccine supply.

The call center previously operated by Public Health is no longer operational. The County is now using a state system called "My Turn". The website to make appointments for a vaccination at the Fairgrounds is myturn.ca.gov. This system is required and is online. For those that don't have online access they can call (1-833-422-4255)

Aging and Adult Services is exploring the feasibility of using frozen meals as part of our senior nutrition program, both for congregate and home delivery. Mom's Meals is one of various vendors the department has been in contact with for information. Kern is one of the few remaining counties that offers a hot meal. This pandemic has taught us that we need to make due with resources we have but nevertheless we have increased the number of people we are serving. The department needs to look at how best to manage our resources when they get more finite and we have more to serve because of the pandemic. It will be hard when the pandemic ends, as we cannot tell everyone we placed into the program that they are no longer eligible. The thought of frozen meals will be a large part of a plan to continue to provide meals to these individuals.

The recent CDA Audit has concluded and it turned out very well. There were a couple of findings and they were minor. Thanks to Chair Prado, and Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Phillip Peters for participating in the audit with the CDA auditors.

Today will be Laura's last COA meeting as her last day with Aging and Adult Services is February 26th. Thanks was expressed for all Laura's hard work. Michele Timmerman will be filling in to work with the Commission.

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 4, 2021 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It will be held virtually and online registration will be available soon. Senior Rally

Day will be held in collaboration with the California Collaborative for Long Term Care Services and Support (CCLTCSS). Lito reported there is a conference scheduled on April 22, 2021 between ILC of California and all the AAA centered on Assisted Technology. As soon as the workshops are scheduled, a flyer will be developed and distributed. Cost is \$50 per person. Let Lito know if you are interested in attending this conference.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – S. Morris, R. Maier

Commissioner Maier reported the Director of Aging and Adult Services reappointed Commissioner Norma Jackson. Her new term expires 02/01/2023. There are no new or expired terms. Commissioner Barrett's term will expire 04/24/2021. A letter will be sent to Valley Caregiver Resource Center for reappointment as the term date nears. 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 February 3, 2021 and discussed the agenda for today's meeting, along with items already discussed in previous reports.

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

Commissioner Snyder reported the March 18, 2021 IHSS Advisory Committee has been cancelled. The next meeting will be held May 20, 2021.

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

Commissioner Gonzalez thanked the COA for her birthday card. The cases in the nursing homes are declining each week so they don't have to test as frequently as they do as Ombudsman. The majority of Skilled Nursing Facilities in Kern County are already in their third and fourth clinic, which means they're finishing up residents second vaccinations or first vaccinations for new residents. Visitations vary depending on the current outbreak in facilities; however, all long-term care facilities must allow at least outside visitation. They are starting a new family council in nursing homes with hopes this will assist many residents in nursing homes with the family involvement. They are starting a new training for Ombudsmen in April 2021.

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

Chair Prado reported we now have all the numbers we need to get The System of Systems brochures duplicated and distributed. We need about 1,200 more. We have plenty of bags that will be filled with fliers and other resources. When we finish these, we would have distributed bags of information to 1,700 seniors in Kern County. As of now, there is not a Systems of Systems available for California City, but they will work on getting one created.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE - G. Brown; N. Jackson

No report.

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

Commissioner Goodlow reported the Bakersfield Senior Center (BSC) continues to serve lunch to the seniors. BSC served 1,466 meals to seniors in the month of January.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

Commissioner Duquette sent out 4 birthday cards in February, a card was sent to Laura congratulating her on her new position, and she will be sending a couple of birthday cards in March. Commissioner Grasty thanked the Commissioner for her birthday card.

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

No report.

TRANSPORTATION – Y. Prado

Chair Prado reported the committee met February 10, 2021 and discussed unmet needs in transportation in Kern County. The next meeting is May 12, 2021.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – G. Brown; R. Maier

No report.

INFORMATION ITEMS –

Glossary of Acronyms – A hard copy of the Glossary of Acronyms was mailed to Commissioners to add to section E of their handbooks. The Glossary will be updated as necessary.

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.

Commissioner Lemucchi thanked Leslie Devitt, of the District Attorney’s office, for the packet of information she received. Leslie shared that she has fliers on senior financial abuse and other resources for seniors, along with the DEAR Newsletter. She will share the information with AASD for distribution to the Commission. Leslie can be reached at 661-868-1109 or via email at ldevitt@kernda.org.

Commissioner R. Oswald shared he has an iPad to donate to Digital Divide program.

NEXT MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, March 3, 2021 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Michele Timmerman at 661-868-1054.	Monday, March 15, 2021 1:00 p.m. Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Michele Timmerman at 661-868-1054.

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 2:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lito Morillo
Secretary