

Kern County Commission On Aging

Yolanda Prado, Chairperson
5357 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93309
(661) 868-1054; (661) 868-1001 FAX



**REGULAR COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING
MINUTES**

March 15, 2021, 1:00 p.m.
Video Meeting via Zoom

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Prado called the meeting to order at 1:05 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, Norma Jackson, Jan Lemucchi, **Stephanie Lynch, Roland Maier, Sandy Morris, Linda Oswald, Roger Oswald, *Yolanda Prado, and ***Judy Snyder

Excused Absences: Chris Barrett, Felicia Mears

A QUORUM WAS PRESENT

Honorary Commission Members Present:

Linda Fuller

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Michele Timmerman, Program Coordinator

Guests:

Janelle Capra, Leslie Devitt, Josh Dhanens, Lourdes Garcia, Gayla Hughes, Catherine Vasquez, Michelle Pearl-Krizo, Brooke Whitehead-Tolles

AGENDA POSTING:

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

CORRESPONDENCE:

A letter was received from Honor Flight Kern County, thanking the Commission on Aging Foundation for their donation in the amount of \$500.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

Janelle Capra shared that ADAKC had a fundraiser with KGET to collect digital devices, with a goal to stay connected with clients and caregivers in 2020-21. As the devices are refurbished she would like to make them available to the coalition for AASD, if needed. They are providing the device (tablets, iPads, phones) along with an information sheet on how to access Zoom, as well as some of their virtual programming.

Lito thanked Janelle and said there is always times where iPads are needed for clients who have internet available, but do not have a device.

Commissioner R. Oswald shared that he has an iPad and an older iPhone to donate but he has not brought them in because he does not know how to clear the data from the devices. Lito asked that he contact him directly to coordinate a time to meet to get the devices cleared.

Chair Prado expressed her congratulations to Janelle for a really good event and thanked her for her generosity.

Commissioner Comments:

Chair Prado shared there are vaccines available in many areas for those who need one. She also shared that the CSL newsletter provided by Commissioner Lemucchi includes a lot of good information regarding legislative bills and the Master Plan on Aging.

All Commissioner's should have received copies of the updated bylaws, standing rules, and member listing. Please contact Michele Timmerman if you did not receive them. There is also additional stimulus coming.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONERS

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes for the February 22, 2021, Regular Commission on Aging meeting were approved with three corrections to page 2.

Motion/Second/Abstained/Opposed

(M/S/A/O) Grasty/Duquette/Jackson, Morris/None - Motion carried.

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Leslie Wallace

Not in attendance.

VETERANS SERVICE – Josh Dhanens

Josh Dhanens reported that the new VA Clinic is moving along. The clinic will have a Telehealth Department dedicated to conducting telehealth in the outlying areas to make sure the clinic is covering Veterans throughout the Kern County. The current clinic has limited telehealth capabilities.

The company who will likely receive the bid from the VA has completed permitting through the City Council, so at the end of next month the VA should formalize the bid and can then move forward. Construction will take a couple of years to complete.

Commissioner Gonzalez asked who is assigned to handle cases in Long Term Care. Josh said he will find out who the contact is make sure she gets in touch with them.

Commissioner Morris asked if the office on Golden State is open. Josh said that they are open by appointment only in the office, but not to walk-ins. Nearly all services can be provided virtually, either by phone calls or email.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Michelle Pearl Krizo

Michelle Krizo reported that as of today the county has a little over 100,000 cases of COVID and have had approximately 1,000 deaths, so 1% of all county cases have died. About 95,000-98,000 cases have recovered, so we are headed in the right direction.

Effective today, individuals aged 16 to 64 with underlying conditions that cause severe disease are eligible for vaccination. The severe health conditions include: cancer (current with weakened immune system); chronic kidney disease (stage 4 or above); chronic pulmonary disease; oxygen dependent; down syndrome; solid organ transplant leading to a weakened immune system (i.e. heart, kidney); pregnancy; sickle cell disease; heart conditions (failure, coronary artery disease, cardio myopathies); severe obesity; type 2 diabetes with a hemoglobin A1c greater than 7.5%; individuals with developmental or other severe disability or illness, if the individual is likely to develop severe life threatening illness or death from COVID infection; if acquiring COVID will limit an individual's ability to receive ongoing care or services vital to their well-being and survival or providing adequate and timely care will be particularly challenging as a result of the individuals disability. To protect confidentiality, verification documentation of the diagnosis or type of disability is not required but instead anyone meeting the eligibility requirements will be asked to sign a self-attestation that they meet the criteria for high risk medical conditions or disability. Individuals who live or work in a congregate residential setting (incarceration, detention facilities, homeless shelter, behavioral health facilities) will be eligible for vaccination. This includes people experiencing homelessness who may transition into a congregate living facility on short notice. Public transit workers, including airport workers for commercial airlines will be eligible for vaccination. If you want to make a vaccination appointment visit myturn.ca.gov, call 833-422-4255 or visit kernpublichealth.com to view the interactive map that includes more than 100 vaccination sites with instructions on how to schedule appointments. Eventually My Turn will become the only way to schedule vaccine appointments statewide. Los Angeles and San Diego Counties have moved to the red zone. Kern County is currently in the purple zone and is hoping to move to the red zone, where we must remain for 14 days to permanently stay in the red zone.

Lourdes Garcia asked if someone who has had COVID and gets the vaccine can still test positive. Michelle advised they could if they contracted COVID before they were fully

protected by a vaccine. Individuals are not fully protected until 14 days after receiving the second vaccine dose. Individuals who develop symptoms even after receiving the vaccine should get tested. After that time, social distancing and masking are still recommended, but your chances are better. There is no third dose yet. The Pfizer vaccines are administered 3 weeks apart, and the Moderna vaccines are administered 28 days apart. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine coming will be one dose.

A vaccine is currently not available to children under the age of 16. Pfizer and Johnson and Johnson vaccines can only be administered to individuals 16 years and older. The Moderna vaccine can only be administered to individuals 18 years and older.

Commissioner Grasty and Chair Prado wished Michelle good luck in her upcoming retirement. Michelle advised she will contact Michele Timmerman with new contact information.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Lourdes Garcia

Lourdes Garcia reported their department is working toward moving into their phase 2 of welcome back to work now that more staff have been vaccinated. Receiving the vaccine is not an obligation and it will not be disclosed who has received it. Staff will still need to use PPE but they are looking at having 50% of staff return.

The Volunteer Senior Outreach Program (VSOP) continues to reach out to the community to offer services. Their Spring picnic will not take place this year; instead they are putting together baskets for the seniors with crafts and food items to entertain them and remind them they are still thinking about them. There will be about 30 baskets distributed. Commissioner Morris advised she might also be able to help with some items.

Commissioner Snyder thanked Lourdes for sending information related to crisis numbers for seniors, which she requested during the last meeting. The information made a difference in somebody's life within a week of receiving the information.

Lito asked Lourdes if the VSOP clients have internet access. Lourdes advised that a good amount of them do have internet, but do not necessarily know how to use it. Lito said based on information he previously shared about the department receiving devices and what Janelle shared today, there might be some opportunity to share some devices for these clients. Lito said the department will potentially be receiving Ipads through the California Department on Aging that will include a 2-year data plan, so there may be opportunity to share those as well.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Gayla Hughes

Gayla Hughes reported Medi-Cal renewals remain on hold and they are not processing any changes. Things are staying as is, as long as we remain in the existing emergency situation. New Medi-Cal applications are being processed as soon as possible.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Not in attendance.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez reported they still have funding for their Home Access Grant Program, to put in walk-in showers and build ramps for wheelchair low income disabled. They also have their Home Improvement Loan Program for homeowners to apply, with no interest and no payment. This is a loan and is secured as a mortgage on the property, and is for home improvement such as plumbing, painting, electrical, roof work. Interested individuals should contact her at 661-862-5062.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Brooke Whitehead-Tolles

Brooke Whitehead-Tolles reported that the new tier of individuals eligible to become vaccinated includes those who are consumers of the Independent Living Centers. They are working on sending out mass mailings to their consumers to let them know they can now register for the vaccine. They still have their CARES Act programs up and running. This includes a program aimed at combatting social isolation, so if an individual is in need of a tablet or device to stay connected with family they can contact them. They also have a Relief program for those who have a disability, and have fallen behind in their rent or utilities, through a financial hardship due to COVID-19. They also have PPE available, that they can distribute to individuals who contact their office and request the items.

Leslie Devitt shared that she created a two-sided color brochure on the newest ten scams affecting seniors. The brochure includes contact information for the District Attorney and Aging and Adult Services which will be available for the 1,200 bags the Commission is working on. Aging and Adult Services will be providing the copies. She also said that they are working on getting 1,200 copies of her information packets printed to include in the bags.

If anyone needs flyers, a presentation, or would like to receive the DEAR Newsletter, please contact Leslie at ldevitt@kernda.org or by calling 661-868-1109. Upcoming newsletters will feature Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance and their Warm Hearts Program, as well as Behavioral Health.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Lito Morillo

Lito Morillo reported the following:

Federal

American Rescue Plan Act \$1.9 Trillion Stimulus

The final spending levels for this additional OAA funding are:

- \$460 million for Supportive Services (Title III B), which will be used for continuing traditional III B services, supporting and facilitating vaccinations for older adults, and additional activities to mitigate the risks of prolonged social isolation and loneliness among older adults. Senate moved \$10 million from the original \$470 million allocation for III B to create a national technical assistance center for grandparents raising grandkids and kinship caregivers at ACL.

- \$750 million for Congregate and Home-Delivered Nutrition Services (Title III C), which is considerably more than FFCRA and CARES act
- \$25 million for Native American Nutrition, Supportive and Caregiver Services (Title VI, Parts A and C).
- \$44 million for Evidence-Based Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (Title III D)
- \$145 million for National Family Caregiver Support Program (Title III E)
- \$10 million for Title VII Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
- Stimulus checks in the amount of \$1,400 will be issued to individuals making less than \$75,000, and to married couples filing jointly with a combined income below \$160,000. The income limits have increased, so less people will be eligible to receive a check but the amount is greater at \$1,400 per person.

State News – Golden State Stimulus

California's coffers — already overflowing with a \$25.3 billion surplus — could soon see another massive infusion of cash.

California's state and local governments are set to reap \$40 billion of the \$1.9 trillion federal stimulus package. The massive measure, which represents nearly one-tenth of the U.S. economy, closely follows a \$7.6 billion state stimulus package Gov. Gavin Newsom signed into law late last month. It also fulfills one of Newsom's major requests of the federal government: The governor in January asked Biden to provide emergency funding for state and local governments after it wasn't included in the December stimulus package.

Golden State Stimulus –

- An estimated 3.8 million workers who made up to \$30,000 last year will qualify for a \$600 tax rebate along with the 2020 California Earned Income Tax Credit. This includes undocumented workers who file taxes. Expected to be sent out four to five weeks after filing 2020 tax returns, if you have direct deposit. Six to seven weeks after filing, if you need the check mailed.
- About 215,000 undocumented workers who made less than \$30,000 will qualify for a second stimulus payment, bringing their total to \$1,200.
- Roughly 350,000 undocumented workers who made between \$30,000 and \$75,000 can qualify for a single \$600 tax rebate.
- An estimated 405,000 very low-income families with children who are enrolled in CalWORKs will receive grant payments of \$600 sometime by mid-April
- An estimated 1.2 million blind, elderly and disabled recipients of Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment or the state's Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants will receive grant payments of \$600. Unclear on time but depends on coordination with the Social Security Administration, according to the state.

County News

The County recently concluded a yearlong state audit of the IHSS Division and the report was received – stating that California IHSS programs are not providing enough care to meet

IHSS clients' needs, and are not paying IHSS care providers a livable wage. They highlighted Kern, Butte, Stanislaus, and San Diego in this report. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology using an economic model, determined a livable wage in Kern County to be \$18.18/hour.

State officials have announced that outdoor sports and live performance venues as well as amusement parks will be begin reopening April 1st, with restrictions.

As of today, March 15, Californians aged 16-64 who have certain high-risk medical conditions are eligible to be vaccinated. This includes various individuals enrolled in Medi-Cal Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) programs such as In-Home Supportive Services, the Medi-Cal Home and Community-Based Alternative Waiver, the Medi-Cal Assisted Living Waiver, Community-Based Adult Services, Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), and others. Regional Center clients are also eligible. Individuals enrolled in these programs will receive notices from the state informing them of their eligibility. Individuals who are 65 years old or older and enrolled in one of these programs should have already been eligible prior to March 15. Also individuals with severe disabilities are also eligible to be vaccinated.

Kern County Fairgrounds received 10,000 additional doses from a company called Office Serv who was unable to utilize them, so there are slots available for this week at the vaccination site at the Fairgrounds. Aging and Adult launched transportation service to mass vaccination site. If you need a ride, please call 868-7090. Special thanks to ILC for working with us on this project.

Commissioner L. Oswald asked if the audit report was holding the county accountable for not paying the IHSS Providers more money that the state will provide. Lito explained that although the providers are not county employees, the county is responsible for locally negotiating wages for providers in Kern County. In the event the state were to provide more funding, the county could possibly negotiate a larger wage. The audit report implies that as a result of not providing a livable wage the county is not able to get care providers for IHSS care recipients, hence why we are not providing enough care for these recipients.

Commissioner Gonzalez asked Lito if the addition of Program All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly in our community over the next couple of years might reduce the number of paid IHSS workers needed. PACE is a healthcare plan that provides everything from a day program to in-home care, to all medical needs in one. There is currently one PACE in Kern, which is called Bakersfield Pace. Lito said that it would be great to have more programs because it would allow for more of our seniors to get all-inclusive care.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

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

No report.

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

Commissioner Lemucchi reminded that Senior Rally Day is on May 4th. She also has shared the CSL Newsletter with the Commission, and the newsletter includes the senior legislative proposals. If there is anyone who did not receive it, contact her and she will re-send it.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – S. Morris, R. Maier

No report.

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 last met on March 3rd, and one of the topics of discussion included bringing back presentations that previously took place prior to the regular meetings. Chair Prado asked the Commissioners for feedback.

Commissioner Gonzalez asked if it might be beneficial to send the Zoom link for meetings to the seniors who attended the senior centers, so they could participate if they wanted to. Chair Prado said that contacting these individuals might be difficult, but it could be considered.

Commissioner Lynch said she likes the idea of bringing in a presenter, and is especially interested in what is happening with the DA's office, GBLA, and the new programs that are being introduced. Commissioner Grasty said she agrees, and suggested the presentations take place at 12:30 and those who are able to/interested in attending could do so. Chair Prado said they can start looking to see who would be interested in presenting soon, maybe even for the next meeting. Chair Prado shared that Leslie Devitt has offered to provide a presentation.

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 that the Kern Ombudsman Program has been working on a systemic issue since 2016 on wrongful discharges in nursing homes, specifically Brookdale Bakersfield River Walk. It was made public today that a lawsuit has been filed. The DA in Kern teamed up with other DA offices in California and brought this case. Since 2016 there has been a huge reduction in wrongful discharges in this community. They are continuing to build family councils, which a lot of families are interested in. They are finding different tools and resources to support them and organize these councils. Their office continues to serve the residents over the phone, via Skype, Zoom, and also in person. The majority of the long term care residents have been vaccinated, and cases are definitely low.

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

Chair Prado reported that the System of Systems have been duplicated and are in the process of being laminated. Once the lamination is completed, they will need to be trimmed

and then placed in bags that will be distributed to Meals on Wheels clients, including the outlying areas. Chair Prado thanked Commissioner Lynch for her help in finding a connection for the lamination. It will need to be determined where the volunteers will complete the laminate trimming and the stuffing of the bags. Lito has offered use of the Aging and Adult Services office. Commissioner R. Oswald also previously offered use of his backyard. The bags will include the System of Systems, and several flyers provided by Behavioral Health, the District Attorney, and Public Health. There is also a very informative packet of information Leslie Devitt provided, and a complete package will be provided to all Commissioners. As previously mentioned, Leslie has also offered to make a presentation, so she will be talking with Leslie to get something scheduled. Leslie advised that if anyone needs a packet they can contact her at 661-868-1109 or ldevitt@kernda.org.

Commissioner Lynch advised that the laminating expenses came in under budget and that half of the System of Systems have already been trimmed by the vendor.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE - G. Brown; N. Jackson

No report.

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

No report.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

Commissioner Duquette reported she will be sending out one birthday card for their member in California City. A card was also sent to Michelle Pearl Krizo, who is retiring.

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

Linda Oswald reported the following information from the last meeting:

- A student from Sacramento State has developed a pilot project to teach teenagers about the issues of aging. They have developed a lesson plan and are moving pretty far ahead in getting permission to try this pilot out.
- One jurisdiction shared they might consider doing internships for high school students with places like the Commission on Aging.
- A couple other jurisdictions have set up either scouts or school children to write the seniors letters to be included with their meals.
- The Ventura County representative reported they had a robotic pet for dementia patients that can be brushed and pet. Lito shared that the department also just received a robotic dog from “Joy for All Ages”.

Janelle Capra shared that their agency also has a baby doll program, which has been well received. Commissioner Bodnar shared that she purchased a robotic dog for one of her clients in a nursing home, and she said it has really made a difference for her client. Lito advised if anyone knows of someone that would like the pet received by the department to let him know.

- A presentation was also made on the Master Plan on Aging.

- There was a speaker from the COVID-19 Vaccination Outreach. They are conducting a lot of outreach, and also shared that the pharmacies are getting their vaccines directly from the federal government, a separate allocation than the state allocation.

The web page www.vaccinateall58.com was also provided as a resource.

Lito shared that there will be conversation in the coming week(s) about the senior centers and what to do to reopen them.

TRANSPORTATION – Y. Prado

No report.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – G. Brown; R. Maier

Commission Brown reported when the centers begin to re-open and they begin to meet at them they will resume the normal volunteer recognition.

INFORMATION ITEMS –

- Smile Amazon- Yolanda reminded to Select “Kern County Commission on Aging” as your charity.

Commissioner Grasty shared that they just received their largest Smile donation of \$45 for the quarter of October-December, and they have received a total of \$313 from the program. Lito shared that the staff have been instructed to latch onto the charity when making purchases for the department. Lito reminded everyone to make sure they are on the Smile Amazon account when placing orders.

NEXT MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, April 7, 2021 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Michele Timmerman at 661-868-1054.	Monday, April 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 2:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lito Morillo
Secretary