

Kern County Commission On Aging

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

May 17, 2021, 1:00 p.m.
Video Meeting via Zoom

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Prado called the meeting to order at 1:01 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, Kris Grasty, Loron Hodge, Jan Lemucchi, **Stephanie Lynch, Felicia Mears, Sandy Morris, Linda Oswald, Roger Oswald, *Yolanda Prado, and ***Judy Snyder

Excused Absences: Aaron Flucker, Devora Gonzalez, Norma Jackson, Roland Maier

A QUORUM WAS PRESENT

Honorary Commission Members Present:

None

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Michele Timmerman, Program Coordinator

Guests:

Josh Dhanens, Lourdes Garcia, Catherine Vasquez, Leslie Devitt, and Brooke Whitehead-Tolles

AGENDA POSTING:

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

CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

None.

Commissioner Comments :

Commissioner Morris shared that she knows of a senior who is on a fixed income and looking for housing. Lito Morillo asked that Commissioner Morris provide him with the senior's contact information.

Chair Prado shared information about the virtual C4A "Coming Together" virtual conference that was held April 22, 2021. It was very interesting and she was able to navigate through the virtual workshops easily. She also shared that the next virtual Ethics training will be held June 4, 2021 via Teams. Michele Timmerman will let you know if you are due to take the training this year.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONERS

None.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes for the April 19, 2021 Regular Commission on Aging meeting were approved as prepared.
Motion/Second/Abstained/Opposed
(M/S/A/O) Grasty/Lynch/Goodlow/None - Motion carried.
- **APPROVAL OF REVISED STANDING RULES** – Changes to the Standing Rules of the COA Bylaws are as follows:
Approval of designating the Executive Committee as the Aging Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) Advisory Committee
(M/S/A/O) Lynch/Hodge/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 Veterans Administration extended Presumptive Service Connection benefits for veterans who served in Vietnam. Veterans, who previously applied for and were denied because they were considered "blue water only" (did not step foot on Vietnam soil), can have their claims re-adjudicated and they, or if they already passed, their spouse, could possibly receive back pay from the time they were denied. Veterans will need to apply for this benefit and the Veterans Service office can help with the application process.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Windy Jewett

Not in attendance.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Lourdes Garcia

Lourdes Garcia reported May is Mental Health Awareness Month. They had a few events that went really well throughout the month. Their last event will be “Here for Health Pit Stop” on May 20, 2021 at their Westchester location on F Street from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. They will have free health screenings available, and will provide many resources to those who need it. Referrals have been coming in for the Volunteer Senior Outreach Program (VSOP). Lourdes shared they recently had a loss in their VSOP clientele and she thought it was important to share his story. When he first started with VSOP, he had no hope and was just waiting in his apartment to die, that is, until he started receiving services and was connected with Partners in Care, Independent Living Center, and the Digital Divide program through Aging and Adult Services. He enjoyed being at the senior centers, and at the end of it, he was hopeful for a future and was truly an inspiration to others.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Gayla Hughes

Not in attendance.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Not in attendance.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez reported they are still operational and continue to receive funds from the Federal Government for their Home Accessibility grant. This grant allows them to install ramps, walk-in showers, etc. to make it safer for disabled individuals to get in and around their home safely. Their no interest, deferred payment Home Improvement Loan is also still available for homeowners who need improvements for roof, plumbing, and electrical. Catherine thanked the Commission for the referrals she receives from them and welcomed them to continue referring people to their program. Catherine can be reached at (661) 862-5062.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Brooke Whitehead-Tolles

Brooke Whitehead-Tolles reported they hired a Transitions Coordinator, Jessica Renteria, and have been busy moving individuals into homes. Their biggest hurdle right now is finding housing. If you have any clients or people you know who are currently in a skilled nursing facility who are looking to transition out, please call their office at (661) 325-1063, and ask for Jessica Renteria. With wildfire season approaching, ILC is working with Southern California Edison and Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) on their Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) program to help those who depend on power for medical equipment. ILC can help clients with enrolling in the Medical Baseline Program, which can help lower electricity costs to operate their medical equipment, and can loan them a portable battery to use in the event there is a PSPS. The high fire risk areas can go on to Southern California Edison's website at <https://www.sce.com/wildfire/pmps-alerts> to sign up for PSPS alerts. PG&E offers a program to help individuals who were affected financially by COVID-19 and are behind on paying their electric & gas bill. ILC can assist them in applying for this program to help cover arrearages up to a certain amount. This program through PG&E will end on June 30, 2021.

Commissioner Morris shared that the Housing Authority's Emergency Rent & Utility Assistance Program can help pay rent and utilities for households financially impacted by COVID-19. Contact Housing Authority directly to apply for their program or apply online on their website at <https://rup.kernha.org/>. ILC has CARES Act funding that can also assist with past due rent and utilities for those affected financially by COVID-19. ILC is currently hiring and has openings for four positions.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Lito Morillo

Lito Morillo reported the following:

State News

The May Revision proposes:

- Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP) will receive \$2 million annually in 2021-22 and 2022-23. This funding will allow for three positions at California Department on Aging (CDA) to develop, implement, and lead HICAP modernization efforts and local assistance funding to allow local HICAPs to hire one full-time Volunteer Coordinator.
- Medi-Cal Coverage to Undocumented Older Adults. This will expand Medi-Cal, including In-Home Supportive Services, to undocumented adults aged 60 and older effective no sooner than May 1, 2022.
- Older Adult Recovery and Resiliency (CDA) - The May Revision proposes a one-time General Fund investment of \$106 million, available over three years, to strengthen older adults' recovery and resiliency from the severe isolation and health impacts from staying at home for over a year due to the Coronavirus pandemic. This investment will facilitate older adults' reengagement with in-person community activities and services, through the network of aging and disability services provided locally by Area Agencies on Aging (AAA). The investments include \$2.1 million one-time for the Behavioral Health Warmline; \$17 million one-time for Digital Connections; \$1 million one-time for Elder and Disability Abuse Prevention; \$20 million one-time for Legal Services; \$17 million one-time for Employment Opportunities; \$2.8 million one-time for Family Caregiving for services provided by unpaid family caregivers of older adults and grandparents, or other older relatives, with primary caregiving responsibilities for a child; and \$6 million one-time for State and Local Leadership and Oversight.
- CalFresh Expansion Older Adult Outreach—The May Revision includes \$2 million ongoing for the Department of Aging to continue CalFresh Expansion outreach efforts to older adults.
- Office of Long-Term Care Patient Representative—An April 1 proposal included \$4 million Public Health Licensing & Certification funding ongoing for the Department of Aging to provide public patient representatives to nursing facility residents who lack capacity to make

their own health care decisions and who do not have a family member or friend who can act as a patient representative.

- Alzheimer's funding of \$12.5 million General Fund one-time to address Alzheimer's in California. These investments include \$5 million for public awareness, \$2.5 million for standards of care, and \$5 million for geriatric workforce development.
- Fall Prevention/Home Modification - \$5 million General Fund re-appropriation from FY 2019-20 until 06/30/2022. The Dignity at Home Fall Prevention Program was established in 2019-20 with a one-time \$5 million. Also as part of May revise there is an additional \$10 million one-time for Fall Prevention and Home Modification
- Home Safe - the May Revision includes \$100 million General Fund in both 2021-22 and 2022-23 for the Home Safe program for access to health, safety, and housing supports for individuals involved in or at risk of involvement in Adult Protective Services. Kern currently receives \$56,666 a year in funding for this project. It is also supposed to decrease the required match for counties from 50% county to 25%.
- Housing and Disability Advocacy Program—The May Revision includes \$175 million General fund annually through 2023-24 to assist disabled individuals who are experiencing homelessness.

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)

- IHSS State and County Sharing Ratio will remain 65% state and 35% county. This was previously going to be flip-flopped where the county would pay the larger share for any local negotiated wage. The State cap remains at \$1.10.
- Long Term Care Career Pathways—The May Revision includes \$200 million one-time General Fund to incentivize, support, and fund career pathways for IHSS providers, allowing these workers to build on their experience to obtain a higher-level job in the home care and/or health care industry.
- IHSS 7 Percent Suspension—The May Revision proposes to eliminate the IHSS 7 percent reduction in service hours.
- Permanent In-Home Support Services Back-Up Provider System - The May Revision includes \$11.1 million General Fund onetime in 2021-22 to support a permanent back-up provider system for severely impaired In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) recipients to avoid disruptions to caregiving due to emergencies.
- Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) “No Wrong Door” (CDA) (Local Assistance: \$7.5 million General Fund in 2021-22 and \$10 million General Fund ongoing); The May Revision builds on the Governor’s Budget and proposes to remove the ADRC program suspensions to provide local assistance funding of \$7.5 million in 2021-22 and \$10 million ongoing for the ADRC Infrastructure Grants program. Additionally, an April 1st Budget Change Proposal includes \$2 million ongoing to support 13.0 permanent positions for CDA to support the ADRC program. There are currently six designated and 11 emerging ADRC

programs in the state and this funding will enable the establishment of ADRC programs throughout the state. CDA will also work to establish the administrative capacity for the ADRC program to draw down federal funding through Medicaid Administrative Claiming. In addition, the Older Adult Recovery and Resiliency proposal (see above) includes \$9.4 million General Fund one-time for ADRC.

- As proposed in the January Governor's Budget, the Governor aims to appoint a Senior Advisor on Aging, Disability, and Alzheimer's to advance cross-Cabinet initiatives and partnerships between government, the private sector, and philanthropy, such as closing the digital divide, transportation options beyond driving, and caregiving workforce solutions, for Californians of all ages.
- Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for State Supplemental Payment (SSP) will bring payments to \$990 from \$955, and for couples \$1,636 (previously \$1,598) in 2022.
- Senior Nutrition: Home Delivered Meals and Community Center Meals (CDA) (\$17.5 million General Fund ongoing) - The May Revision builds on the Governor's Budget and proposes to remove the Senior Nutrition program suspensions to provide local assistance funding of \$17.5 million ongoing. The Senior Nutrition Program provides both home-delivered and congregate meals at community and senior centers, as well as nutrition education and nutrition-risk screening to individuals aged 60 or older. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a record number of meals have been delivered to older adults at home, due to increased federal, state, and local funds. In addition, the Older Adult Recovery and Resiliency proposal (see above) includes \$20.7 million General Fund one-time for the Senior Nutrition Program.

California will phase out and ban oil fracking by January 2024. This will definitely impact Kern County revenue in the coming years if oil extraction is phased out and ultimately completely prohibited by 2045 as Governor Newsome is proposing.

County News

Effective May 3, 2021, Kern County Aging and Adult Services Department (AASD) went back to an 8am-5pm office hours schedule. Previously it was 8am-4pm. We will still be closed from 12 noon to 1pm, and will still have by appointment only scheduling.

AASD is looking at reopening senior centers on June 16, 2021. We will ease into the opening using all safety protocols similar to restaurants. With the exception of California City, we will initially open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday until possibly July 2021. This is primarily due to staffing and being able to administer all the safety protocols. California City stated they could manage opening Monday-Friday for an hour each day for dine in. There will be no activities initially during the senior nutrition program operation.

Additional shelf stable meals were provided to California City on May 7th, which will be distributed to their seniors on Meals on Wheels.

On April 27, 2021, a pipe burst in the kitchen ceiling and flooded the Richard Prado Senior Center. Meals are currently being prepared out of the Ben Austin Senior Center for the time being. Damages are around in upwards of \$150,000, and renovation is estimated to be 2-3 months.

Luanne Jones was rehired as a retiree. She is filling in for Kristian Besnard who will be off on a leave.

Laura Juarez will be returning to AASD on May 24, 2021.

Commissioner Synder asked what happens to the programs started with funding received during pandemic when the funding is gone. Lito answered that is also a concern he has and will be a challenge that we will have to deal with in fiscal years 2022-23 and on.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

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

Commissioner L. Oswald thanked the Commission for approving the Standing Orders. They are not currently working on any other changes to the Bylaws.

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

No report.

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 met on May 5, 2021 and discussed the Aging & Disability Resource Connection (ADRC). Zach Hoover, of Around the Clock Care confirmed to speak for the June 21, 2021 meeting regarding their Fall Prevention program. Chair Prado reminded the Commission to let us know if you will not be able to attend a meeting so you can be marked as Excused Absence. It is time for COA Officer Elections. Commissioner Brown will be seeking nominations for Officers.

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

Commissioner Snyder reported the next meeting is May 20, 2021. She will have a report at the June COA Regular meeting.

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

No report.

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

No report.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE – G. Brown; N. Jackson

Commissioner Brown reported she sent the Commissioners a note that we will be voting for Chair, Vice-Chair, and Parliamentarian at the June COA Regular meeting. She has not received any nominations. Each of the current Officers have agreed to run for another term. Commissioner Brown requests that Michele Timmerman create the ballots, in the event we can vote in person. If there are no other nominations, the current Officers will win by default and no voting will be necessary. Commissioner Duquette shared that we also have the option to vote via Zoom. Commissioner Brown is requesting another Commissioner to join the Nomination Committee. Lito Morillo shared we do have a large conference room that we can utilize for meetings but we can only have a capacity of 28 to maintain social distancing. We can also hold a hybrid meeting, where we can offer an in person meeting for those want to attend physically (under 28 people), and a virtual meeting for those who prefer to join via Zoom. This matter will be discussed again later.

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

No report.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

Commissioner Duquette reported she will send out a birthday card in May and will be sending one in June. Please let her know if anyone is ill or has an exciting event coming up and she'll be happy to send a card.

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

No report.

TRANSPORTATION – Y. Prado

Chair Prado reported the committee is once again discussing "Unmet Needs". North of the River is having trouble making their contract again this year with The Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) so they are looking to Kern Council of Governments for help to see if anyone else can continue to provide transportation services. There is an ad hoc committee working on different options to help keep CTSA available for seniors. Michele Timmerman shared that they will potentially discontinue the service in June 2021. A slideshow of CTSA was presented at the Transportation meeting and Michele will share it with the Commissioners, per their request.

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.

Commissioner Grasty thanked Michele Timmerman for all of her help with the Commission on Aging meetings and with the resource bags. Other Commissioners also commented on what a great job she did and how nice it was to work with her.

NEXT MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, June 2, 2021 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at (661) 868-1052.	Monday, June 21, 2021 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 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lito Morillo
Secretary