

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**

October 15, 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:

Susan Bodnar, Gloria Brown, Doris Duquette, 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 Tawny Rocha

Excused Absences: Aaron Flucker, Felicia Mears, and ***Judy Snyder

A QUORUM WAS PRESENT

Honorary Commission Members Present:

None.

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Laura M. Juarez – Senior Office Services Specialist

Guests:

Joseph Anderson, Jens Blum, Angel Galvez, Peggy Langels, April Uribe, Catherine Vasquez, and Brooke Whitehead-Tolles

AGENDA POSTING:

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

CORRESPONDENCE:

Lito Morillo reported a letter was sent on behalf of the Commission on Aging to the Kern County Public Health Services Department thanking them for co-sponsoring Senior Day at the Fair, and for offering free Covid-19 and flu vaccinations.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

1. Angel Galvez, CEO of Bakersfield American Indian Health Project (BAIHP), introduced some of his staff, Joseph Anderson and April Uribe, who will attend the Commission on Aging meetings regularly. He also shared information about their upcoming event, Native American Heritage Celebration, happening Saturday, November 6, 2021 at 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Marriott Convention Center. BAIHP is partnering with several agencies as vendors during this event, including Aging and Adult Services. He extended an invitation to the Commission on Aging to join them for this celebration. On November 11, 2021, BAIHP will be participating on a float in the Veterans Day parade.
2. Commissioner Lemucchi shared that she serves on Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) Communities of Color Advisory committee, which represents a demographic of people of color who are more disadvantaged than others to receive special assistance for their PG&E bill. Currently, she is the only representative for people with disabilities on the committee, and one of two representatives from the San Joaquin Valley. Native American/Alaska Natives, LGBTQ, and other demographics are not represented on the committee so if you know of anyone who might be interested in joining to represent these demographics, please email their contact info to jan@ilcofkerncounty.org and she will pass on the information to PG&E, who would then reach out for an interview. Meetings are held in San Francisco or via virtual platform. Stipends are given for those who prefer to travel to San Francisco for the meetings. Committee members must be PG&E customers.

Commissioner Comments :

1. Chair Prado shared that everyone who receives a Social Security check, the amount is going up next year to 5.97%. This is the highest amount it has gone up in 10 years.
2. Chair Prado reminded everyone Medicare Open Enrollment is going on now through December 7, 2021. Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP), is a service provided at Aging and Adult Services to assist seniors with their Medicare plan changes.
3. Chair Prado reported that she attended Senior Day at the Kern County Fair and gave opening remarks on behalf of the Commission on Aging. It was good to see Lito and some of the Commissioners there in person. There were less seniors in attendance this year than in previous years.

4. Chair Prado shared that Commissioner Felicia Mears has resigned from the Commission on Aging. ADAKC will be appointing another person to represent them on the Commission on Aging.
5. Commissioner Morris reported that she has resigned from the Christmas for Seniors Board and is not working with the program this year due to potential liability issues, as the City Attorney had advised her. The program is still open at the same location on Rosedale and Allen Road. Anyone helping with the program this year will be required to be vaccinated. She will return to leading the program next year, working closely with Robin Robinson of CityServe.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** for September 20, 2021 Regular Commission on Aging meeting were approved as amended. **Motion/Second/Abstained/Opposed (M/S/A/O) Lynch/Grasty/None/None - Motion carried.**
- **APPROVAL OF SCHEDULE:** The 2022 Regular Commission on Aging meeting schedule was approved as prepared.
M/S/A/O: Grasty/Duquette/None/None - Motion carried.

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Leslie Wallace

Not in attendance.

VETERANS SERVICE – Josh Dhanens

Not in attendance.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Wendy Jewett

Not in attendance. Brynn Carrigan, Director of Kern County Public Health Services, was the guest speaker before the meeting and she shared information about COVID cases in Kern County, and provided information about the COVID-19 booster vaccination. Her PowerPoint presentation and press release letter was emailed to all Commissioners.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Jens Blum

Jens Blum reported the Volunteer Senior Outreach Program (VSOP) is a free, up to one-year, program for seniors to help set short-term goals for them. They help with coping and socialization skills, and counseling if they're interested. VSOP is an early intervention prevention program that helps seniors in the early stages so that they won't need that higher level of care later on. They are working on a 50/50 model right now, where half of the staff are working in the office one week and the second week from home and vice-versa. They are still seeing clients in the home.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Mark McAlister

Mark McAlister reported the following:

DHS Update

- **Staff Schedules**
 - 90+% of staff now working a Hybrid schedule
 - Hybrid A = First week of pay period, work from home; second week, in office
 - Hybrid B = First week of pay period, work in office; second week, from home
 - Half of the 90+% are divided between Hybrid A and B schedules
 - Includes all permanent and extra help staff with no performance challenges.
 - Does not include probationary I and IIs or Program Directors and above.
 - Staff may choose to work full time in office
- **MediCal (MC) Updates**
 - Renewals (REs) are still on hold
 - We may resume processing MC REs in January 2022 but nothing official received yet.
 - Also heard preparation has begun at the state level to be ready to resume processing MC renewals.
 - SB 133
 - Full Scope MC for individuals 50 and older regardless of immigration status
 - Slated for 5/2022 implementation
 - Should be a seamless transition similar to the Young Adult Expansion.
 - Assess Limit Increase – Implemented in 2 Phases
 - #1 – 130K plus 65K for each additional household member. Slated for 7/2022 implementation.
 - #2 – Will eliminate asset test all together. Pending Federal (CMS) approval.
- **CalFresh (CF)**
 - CF Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) went into effect 10/1. Increase allotment by \$36 per person.
 - Due to the ending of PHE UIB benefits, applications have increased tremendously.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Peggy Langels reported their offices are open by appointment only. Appointments can be made by calling 325-HIRE. Their Business Center that was previously located on the Truxtun extension has moved next door to their Oildale office on Olive Drive. Their Epic Center that was previously inside the library was moved to 2020 H Street into a much larger building. Their Lake Isabella office was moved to a brand new office in the shopping center between Rite Aid and Vons. Job Squad is now being done on Facebook Live on Thursdays at 9 a.m. on America's Job Centers of Kern Facebook page. During the live, they announce many jobs that are available and when the live is over, they will post the job listings so others who couldn't join the live, will be able to view the list of jobs. There are many jobs available right now. DHS CalWorks clients are not required to get a job right now so it has been rough

getting jobs filled. Information about their workshops and resources can be found on their website: americasjobcenterofkern.com. Hall Ambulance is starting a new EMT Academy February 15, 2022. Persons interested in this program will be placed in a training and that will pay them while they train. They also have a construction related career-training program with the local construction trades. In this Pre-Apprenticeship Readiness Program they will learn a little about many different trades (Cement Masons, Iron Workers, Electricians, Plumbers/Pipefitters, etc.) and then they can choose which trade they want to go into. The Department still doesn't have their budget for next year yet. They are looking to hire for the vacant positions in their outlying areas.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez reported they are still operating as usual. Their Home Access grant program allows them to install grab bars, ramps, walk-in showers, etc. for persons with permanent disabilities to make their home more accessible. The maximum amount for this program is \$4,500. The Home Improvement loan allows them to replace or repair anything existing such as new windows, cooling, roofs, painting, flooring, etc. It is a mortgage secured as a lien on the property up to \$100,000, based on how much equity is on the home. There is no interest and no payments for this loan and it will be paid when the home is sold or the homeowner is no longer living in the home. Requests for either program can be made by calling Catherine directly at 661-862-5062. Catherine thanked the Commission on Aging for the referrals they have sent her way.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Brooke Whitehead-Tolles

Brooke Whitehead-Tolles reported ILC is still closed to the public; however, they are getting more individuals in by appointments to train them on electronic devices and meeting with individuals for housing. Jan has been busy with the safety power shut-off and is expecting it to peak for the next few months in the mountain area due to high winds. If you know have any medical baseline consumers or elders who need to be signed up for medical baseline, Jan is the contact for that. They still have their COVID program to help with getting and training individuals on electronic devices, as well as the rental and utility forgiveness program. These funds are related only to assist financial hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Lito Morillo

Lito Morillo reported the following:

Federal

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for approximately 70 million Americans will increase 5.9 percent in 2022, the Social Security Administration announced today. It's estimated to increase Social Security Beneficiaries check by an average of \$92 each.

The 5.9 percent Cost-Of-Living Adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits payable to more than 64 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2022. Increased payments to

approximately 8 million SSI beneficiaries will begin on December 30, 2021. (Note: some people receive both Social Security and SSI benefits).

Social Security and SSI beneficiaries are normally notified by mail starting in early December about their new benefit amount. Most people who receive Social Security payments will be able to view their COLA notice online through their personal my Social Security account.

Information about Medicare changes for 2022, when announced, will be available at www.medicare.gov. For Social Security beneficiaries receiving Medicare, Social Security will not be able to compute their new benefit amount until after the Medicare premium amounts for 2022 are announced. Final 2022 benefit amounts will be communicated to beneficiaries in December through the mailed COLA notice and my Social Security's Message Center.

County

North of the River (NOR) will no longer operate Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) as of December 31, 2021. However, it appears as though Golden Empire Transit (GET) may take it over, which is good news if that happened for the thousands of users and riders of this vital transportation service of our seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Using, American Rescue Plan Act funds, the County passed an \$8.3 million dollar homeless package designed to have more law enforcement and mental health staff deal with homeless population in Kern, in particularly Bakersfield initially and eventually all of Kern. For AASD, we will be adding 1 LPS conservator to join the Relational Outreach & Engagement Model (ROEM) teams of Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) to help deal with the homeless population who are appropriate for conservatorship. As part of this agenda item that was approved, they are set to pass an ordinance that will prohibit encampments, sleeping on sidewalks, in front of business, etc...A hearing to pass the ordinance is set for November 9, 2021.

Medicare Open Enrollment is now open through December 7, and HICAP is here to help with Medicare questions you may have.

AASD has acquired another suite located at 5251 Office Park Drive Suite 130. We have moved our SNAP-Ed team, which is led by Martin Reynoso. This suite is a little over 900 square feet but will free up needed space in our main building as we continue to outgrow our current space.

As of October 12, the County will continue to offer COVID and flu vaccine shots Tuesday–Friday 10:30am–6pm at the Kern County Fairgrounds. The entrance to the clinic is Gate 40 via Ming Ave.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

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

Commissioner L. Oswald asked that the Commission please continue to review the Bylaws and send your suggested changes to her or to Commissioner L. Oswald.

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

Commissioner Lemucchi reported the CSL General Session will be held virtually this year from October 27th - 29th. During next month's COA meeting, she will update the Commission of the proposals they will be working on for 2022.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – S. Morris, R. Maier

Commissioner Morris reported Kris Grasty's term expired 6/17/2021. A follow-up email for reappointment was sent to District 5 on 10/13/2021. Stephanie Lynch's term expired 09/22/2021. District 3 is working on her reappointment. Doris Duquette's term expired on 09/29/2021. A follow-up email was sent to District 2 on 10/13/2021. Appointments soon to expire are Devora Gonzalez (11/08/2021). A reappointment letter was sent to GBLA on 10/13/2021. Barbara Goodlow's term will expire 12/08/2021. A reappointment letter will be sent to Bakersfield Senior Center as the date nears. We have two vacancies: CSL Senior Assemblymember – Not filling vacancy at this time, and District 1 (replacing Jon Johnston). 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 October 6, 2021 and discussed today's agenda, the guest speaker for today's meeting, the COA Executive Committee 2022 meeting schedule, and the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC).

Commissioner Lemucchi shared the ADRC is a partnership between AASD and ILC; this is in alignment with the State of California and the Master Plan on Aging. The partnership we have is we are to be designated at the end of this month by the State of California as a Designated ADRC. The work we are already doing is set at a higher standard/connected relationship with the consumers or extended partners. We have a shared database system where we are submitting referrals between the two agencies, or talking with the consumer/client staff members. It is considered a whole person care. The State is giving us additional funding for this. The responsibility of the Kern County ADRC Advisory Committee is to provide suggestions, recommendations, input and/or information to the co-partners into the development and operation of the ADRC. She shared how she was able to easily remember what ADRC is about by breaking down the acronym as follows:

A - Assist consumers regardless of age, disability, or income in making

D - Decisions by delivering the

R - Right information at the right time to available Long Term Services and Support for their

C - Choice of Care (Assist, Decision, Choice, and Care)

They are hiring a professional marketing team to create professional looking brochures and materials. Lito Morillo thanked Commissioner Lemucchi and Brooke Whitehead-Tolles for their tireless work in making this designation happen for Kern County.

Chair Prado reminded the Commission to notify Laura if you will not be able to attend a meeting.

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 thanked Commissioner Duquette for assisting them with the “Cards to Warm Hearts” project. Over 1,200 individualize cards will be sent to the long-term care residents. The program is growing and it is something they look forward to. The continue to visit and assist residents and resolving the #1 concern of visitations. There's no such thing as a “lock down” rule. There is restrictions but no lock down. If you hear of a facility being “locked down” please refer them to their office. They will begin servicing rural areas. A lot of marketing will be done for the outskirts of Kern, as well as the Latin community to bring awareness to the Ombudsman services and how they can get in contact with them. They continue to train new Ombuds volunteers. Three of them have just been certified so they will be adding three more to their group. They recently hired a new Case Manager, Catherine Bonilla, and she is doing a really great job.

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

No report.

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 sent out birthday cards in October and will be sending two birthday cards in November. Please let her know if anyone is ill or needs a card sent. She also asked if the COA Executive Committee will discuss COA Holiday lunch at their next meeting.

THE AREA AGENCY ON AGING COUNSEL OF CALIFORNIA (TACC) – Vacant, Vacant

If anyone is interested in serving on this committee, please let Chair Prado or Laura Juarez know.

TRANSPORTATION – Y. Prado

Chair Prado reported the committee met on October 13, 2021. GET Bus was there discussing ridership and possibly changing the fare. There are many things in the works. Talks of “co-mingling” to utilize the drivers to their full capacity. They also shared that they had free rides during the month of September thanks to a grant they received. Bob Snoddy attended and he shared about CTSA and all that they did. They lost a lot of ridership during the pandemic. At the time of the meeting, no one had stepped up to take over this program. On Friday, there was an article in the paper about GET looking to help with CTSA.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – G. Brown; R. Maier

No report.

INFORMATION ITEMS –

- Ethics Training – Virtual Ethics training is scheduled for November 4, 2021 via TEAMS.
- 2022 Executive Committee Meeting Schedule – approved by the Executive Committee.
- Veterans Stand Down – it went well and they had so many items. Thanks given to Commissioner Lynch for the beautiful scarves and hats. There wasn't many people out there as there was two years ago, but it was nice and they gave away everything they had.
- 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
Wednesday, November 3, 2021 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, November 15, 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 2:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lito Morillo
Secretary