

Kern County Commission On Aging

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

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

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Prado called the meeting to order at 1:03 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, Barbara Goodlow, Kris Grasty, Loron Hodge, Jan Lemucchi, **Stephanie Lynch, Roland Maier, Sandy Morris, Linda Oswald, Roger Oswald *Yolanda Prado, Tawny Rocha, ***Judy Snyder, and Bill Wright

Excused Absences: Gloria Brown, Doris Duquette, Aaron Flucker, Devora Gonzalez, and Norma Jackson

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, Janelle Capra, Josh Dhanens, Wendy Jewett, Gayla Hughes, Catherine Vasquez, 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:

1. Janelle Capra reported she is looking at creating dog treats for the Christmas for Seniors program.

Commissioner Comments :

1. Chair Prado welcomed new Commissioner, Bill Wright, to the Commission on Aging.
2. Chair Prado congratulated Commissioner Morris for receiving the Bakersfield Beautiful Chairman's Award for her work with Christmas for Seniors of Kern County for the past 15 years.
3. Chair Prado asked all Commissioners to review the revised Commissioner contact list. Please let Laura know if any changes need to be made.
4. Commissioner R. Oswald thanked the Commissioner for the birthday card he received.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** for October 18, 2021 Regular Commission on Aging meeting were approved. **Motion/Second/Abstained/Opposed(M/S/A/O)**
Grasty/Hodge/Snyder/None - Motion carried.

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Leslie Wallace

Not in attendance.

VETERANS SERVICE – Josh Dhanens

Josh Dhanens reported there are many groups charging veterans for services that their office does for free. Please spread the word that their office assists veterans and their dependents with filing claims free of charge. Their office is open but they encourage everyone to call the office (661) 868-7300 as they can handle mostly everything over the phone. Their hours of operation are Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Wendy Jewett

Wendy Jewett reported we are at an average of 321 COVID cases per day, which is about the same as two weeks ago. We have 53% of the Kern County population vaccinated with at least one dose, and 47% of the population is fully vaccinated, which is why we are still seeing a lot of COVID cases. They are estimating a potential surge in COVID cases in February and March 2022, dependent on if people are being vaccinated or getting their booster, and if they are social distancing. Individuals vaccinated with the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine can get their booster shot six months after their second dose, and two months after

the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. Public Health is recommending everyone to get the flu vaccine. You can receive the flu and COVID vaccinations at the same time. A high dose flu vaccine is available specifically for persons 65 and older that causes a stronger immune response in individuals. The CDC does not recommend one flu vaccine over the other so if you have an opportunity to get a flu vaccine, just get what they offer because some providers do not have the high dose vaccine. The Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (PPSV23) is recommended for persons 65 and older because it will protect against 23 types of bacteria that can cause pneumonia. You only need one dose of it unless you are in a high-risk group then they may ask you get a second dose. The Shingrix vaccine is also recommended for individuals over 50 years old because it is more than 90% effective against Shingles. You will receive the first dose and then 2-6 months later, you get the second dose. You can get the Shingrix vaccine at the same time with any other vaccine. If you have already received the Shingles vaccine, you do not need to get another one.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Jens Blum

Jens Blum reported the Volunteer Senior Outreach Program (VSOP) is a free, up to one-year, service for seniors 60 years and older. They are an early intervention prevention that helps seniors in the early stages so that they won't need that higher level of care later on. They meet with them once each month for those who are isolated or need emotional support to help them set and achieve short-term goals for themselves. They also help them with phone, socialization, and coping skills, as well as linking them with other resources within the community. If you know of anyone needing these services, please refer them to VSOP. Staff are still 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 expecting to have everyone return to the office mid-January or February, depending on how everything goes with this pandemic. They are still seeing clients in the home with proper PPE.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Gayla Hughes

Gayla Hughes reported Medi-Cal renewals remain on hold until after the pandemic health crisis is lifted with a tentative date of January 31, 2022, but it could be pushed out for a later date. The State will first have to give a 60-day notice to clients. She will have more information at the next meeting. Their office is open 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Not in attendance.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez reported their doors are open and they are still operating as usual. Their Home Access grant program allows homeowners and renters to make their homes easier to get in and around their home. They can install ramps, higher toilet seats, grab bars, and walk-in showers. To qualify, you have to have a permanent disability and be low income. For a household of one, that would be less than \$39 thousand per year, and a household of two would be \$44 thousand per year. The Home Improvement loan is for homeowners to replace or repair anything existing such as plumbing, electric, roof, heating, cooling, energy upgrades (window replacement), and new flooring. They must also meet the low-income eligibility requirements. Requests for either program can be made by calling Kandi at 661-862-5024. If you have any questions, you can call Catherine at 661-862-5062.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Brooke Whitehead-Tolles

Brooke Whitehead-Tolles reported ILC received approval to use ADRC funding to implement a vaccine incentive program to encourage the community to get vaccinated. They are hoping to launch this within the next few weeks. Individuals with disabilities who have not yet been vaccinated can participate in this program. They will need to get vaccinated and show proof of their vaccination then they will receive a \$50 gift card. In an article she read, 60.1% of the general population has been vaccinated with at least 1 vaccine, and only 43.8% Medi-Cal beneficiaries have received at least one vaccine, so that's group who will be targeted for this incentive program to help get that number up. They will pilot the program with 10 individuals and then will increase it from there. She will provide further details about the program at the next meeting.

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. It's estimated to increase Social Security Beneficiaries check by an average of \$92 each.

The Build Back Better spending package of \$1.75 trillion is up for a vote in the House and if approved, it will go to President Biden for final approval. Under this bill, funding for Older Americans Act (OAA) is expected to be \$1.2 billion and will be in addition to the regular annual appropriations.

- The Senate proposed \$500 million for OAA Title III B Home & Community-Based Supportive Services, which is \$50 million short of the House bill but represents an increase of \$107 million above the FY 2021 level
- \$1.045 billion for OAA Title III C Nutrition Services with \$468.9 million in congregate meals.
- \$230 million for OAA Title III E National Family Caregiver Support Program.
- \$80.8 million for OAA Title VI Native American Nutrition, Supportive and Caregiver Services
- \$26.3 million for OAA Title III D Evidence-Based Health Promotion and Disease Prevention.
- \$34.9 million for OAA Title VII Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. Other Programs

- Expand Medicare to cover hearing benefits. Only 30% of seniors over the age of 70 who could benefit from hearing aids have ever used them. The Build Back Better framework will expand Medicare to cover hearing services, so that older Americans can access the affordable care they need.

State

Beginning May 1, 2022, Medi-Cal full scope benefits will be provided to all individuals **50 or older** regardless of immigration status who meet Medi-Cal financial eligibility requirements.

CDA has informed Kern that we will be receiving \$2,541,453 for CA Department of Aging related programs here is the breakdown:

- Title IIIB Supportive Services- \$830,580
- Title IIIC 1 Congregate - \$541,683
- Title IIIC 2 Home Delivered - \$812,524
- Title IIID Preventive Services/Health Promotions- \$79,447
- Title IIIE Family Caregiver - \$259,149
- Title VII Ombudsman - \$18,070

This is in addition to the previous Consolidated Appropriations Act, where Kern received \$314,950 for nutrition home delivered meals and \$9,116 for the Ombudsman program.

County

North of the River (NOR) will no longer operate Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) as of June 30, 2022. Golden Empire Transit (GET) will take it over by July 1, 2022. This is good news 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 the homeless population in Kern, in particularly Bakersfield initially and eventually all of Kern. For AASD, we will be adding 1 Lanterman Petris Short (LPS) conservator to join the Regional Outreach and 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 allow prohibit encampments, sleeping on sidewalks, in front of businesses, etc. A hearing to pass the ordinance is set for November 9, 2021.

Medicare Open Enrollment is now open through December 7, 2021 and AASD's Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (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 to the new suite, which is a little

over 900 square feet. This will free up needed space in our main building as we continue to outgrow our current space.

We are in the process of testing frozen meals for the Richard Prado and Ben Austin Senior Centers. Results have been positive for the most part. Frozen meals are an alternative to our current model where we prepare meals at designated senior centers for distribution throughout Kern County, as a way to cut costs and continue to add seniors to the program. We will be addressing box weight, cooking temperatures, and microwave issues in the coming months as we transition from hot to frozen meals.

Public Health is offering COVID vaccinations/boosters, and flu vaccine shots Tuesday – Friday from 10:30 a.m. – 6 p.m. 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 reported they are still open to suggestion for changes to the Bylaws so keep them coming. They will start working on the few changes they have after the new year.

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

Commissioner Lemucchi reported they had their annual session and received their top ten State proposals as well as one Federal proposal. She will be sending the proposals out to the Commission soon. Laura Juarez reported 4-year CSL Elections will take place in 2022. We will start accepting applications in January through March 2022. She will have more information at the January meeting.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – S. Morris, R. Maier

Commissioner Morris reported District 5 reappointed Kris Grasty's. Her new appointment expires on 09/17/2023. Stephanie Lynch was reappointed by District 3. Her new term expires 09/22/2023. Bill Wright was appointed by Alzheimer's Disease Association of Kern County (ADAKC). His term expires 01/01/2023. Doris Duquette's term expired on 09/29/2021. A follow-up email was sent to District 2 on 10/13/2021. Laura will follow up with District 2. Devora Gonzalez's term expired 11/08/2021. A reappointment letter was sent to GBLA on 10/13/2021. Laura will follow up with GBLA. Barbara Goodlow's term will expire 12/08/2021. A reappointment letter was sent to Bakersfield Senior Center on 11/12/2021. 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

Commissioner Lynch reported they will prepare and distribute candy canes to AASD staff on 12/10/2021 at 9 a.m. at Aging and Adult Services. Commissioner Grasty will purchase the candy canes.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – B. Goodlow, K. Grasty, J. Lemucchi, S. Lynch, L. Oswald, Y. Prado, J. Snyder

Chair Prado reported the committee met November 3, 2021 and discussed today's agenda and the 2019-2021 Commissioner Highlights that will be sent to the Board of Supervisors.

For safety reasons, the COA will not have an in-person holiday luncheon. Instead, we will have a Holiday Virtual Gathering on Wednesday, December 8, 2021 at 11 a.m. Laura will send a Zoom link for the event. If you can join, please do so.

The Committee had their first Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) meeting after the Executive Committee. Kern County is in the process of becoming a designated ADRC.

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

Commissioner Snyder reported the next meeting is scheduled for November 18, 2021. The IHSS Advisory Committee meets every other month so there was no meeting in October.

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

Chair Prado reported the committee met November 3, 2021 and discussed revising the COA Handbook. The committee will meet again to discuss what needs to be in the binder and what can be removed.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE - G. Brown; N. Jackson

No report.

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

No report.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

No report.

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

No report.

TRANSPORTATION – Y. Prado

Chair Prado reported seniors at the Richard Prado Senior Center received a memo from CTSA informing them GET will assume the responsibilities of CTSA services effective July 1, 2022. NOR will continue with their services through June 30, 2022.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – G. Brown; R. Maier

No report.

INFORMATION ITEMS –

- Virtual Holiday Gathering – December 8, 2021 at 11 a.m. via Zoom
- Employee Appreciation – December 10, 2021 at 9 a.m.
- 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.
- Volunteer Center of Kern County is having a Cinnamon Roll fundraiser December 16, 2021 beginning at 7 a.m. until sold out. If interested in placing an order, contact Marie Barnett at 661-395-9787.

NEXT MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, January 5, 2022 (Dark in December) 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, January 24, 2022 (Dark in December) 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 2:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lito Morillo
Secretary