

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**

January 24, 2022, 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, Gloria Brown, Doris Duquette, Devora Gonzalez, Barbara Goodlow, Kris Grasty, Jan Lemucchi, **Stephanie Lynch, Linda Oswald, Roger Oswald *Yolanda Prado, Tawny Rocha, ***Judy Snyder, and Bill Wright

Excused Absences: Aaron Flucker, Loron Hodge, Norma Jackson, Roland Maier, and Sandy Morris

A QUORUM WAS PRESENT

Honorary Commission Members Present:

None.

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Laura M. Juarez – Senior Office Services Specialist

Guests:

Jens Blum, Lourdes Garcia, Peggy Langels, Chelsea Palmer, Brooke Whitehead-Tolles, Joseph Anderson, Gayla Hughes,

AGENDA POSTING:

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

CORRESPONDENCE:

- Letters were sent to Ex-Officio Department Directors thanking them for their designee's active participation at the monthly COA meetings.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

None.

Commissioner Comments :

1. Lito Morillo shared that Honorary Commissioner, Linda Fuller, passed away over the weekend. Will share service information as it becomes available.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** for November 15, 2021 Regular Commission on Aging meeting were approved. **Motion/Second/Abstained/Opposed(M/S/A/O)**
Lynch/Grasty/Brown/None - Motion carried.

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Leslie Wallace

Leslie Wallace reported senior center reservations have increased. If you have a COVID positive case at one of the senior centers or halls, please let Bruno know ASAP so that they can fog the areas with a disinfectant. Commissioner Brown reported everyone at the Cal City Senior Center is wearing masks, except while eating, and they also sanitize their chairs and tables after each use. Lito thanked Leslie and her General Services team for being very responsive to a sewage issue in the restroom at the Rosamond Senior Center.

VETERANS SERVICE – Josh Dhanens

Not in attendance.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Wendy Jewett

Wendy Jewett was the guest speaker prior to the meeting and provided her report on COVID vaccinations and quarantine rules at that time. She also provided information about the Shingrix vaccination. This information was emailed to Commissioners per their request.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Lourdes Garcia /Jens Blum

Lourdes Garcia reported the Department had to revert to 25% of staff in the office due to an increase in COVID exposures. There is a lot of need out there for the Volunteer Senior Outreach Program (VSOP), especially while in isolation, so they are still trying to get the program out there and reach the most vulnerable seniors. They gave a presentation to the homeless team and reached out to the homeless centers. They want everyone to continue sending referrals to her and Jens.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Gayla Hughes

Gayla Hughes reported they are mailing out Medi-Cal renewal packets and letters telling clients to return them within 60 days. They will process the renewals as they receive them; however, if it changes their coverage or benefit level, they will postpone their renewal until the State of Emergency is over. It was projected the pandemic would end in January so the State was requiring them to wait 60 days before taking action on renewals. They now received a notice from the State that they were pushing the date out to April 2022 before any action could be taken on renewals. For this reason, they mailed out February renewal packets because clients have 60 days to return their renewals. This timeframe will match with the 60-day notice the State gave them before taking action.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Peggy Langels reported they are seeing people by appointment only. They are still at having only half the amount of staff in the office. All programs, including workshops, are available online on their website: <https://www.americasjobcenterofkern.com/>. Job Squad is done virtually on Facebook Live every Thursday at 9 a.m. Jobs will be posted on their Facebook page after the live is over. The Epic Center (Youth Center) moved downtown to H Street to a larger building. They had a big turnover in Admin due to retirement over the last year so they have a lot of new staff. Their Business Center in Oildale is open with a new giant conference room. Typing tests are done two days per week and by appointment only. They are scheduled about six weeks out. Their Resource Rooms are open by appointment only. The Unemployment Department only has about two people in the office so if anyone is having issues with their unemployment, they will need an appointment to see someone. They have many employers with a lot of job opening but the labor pool is low right now. CalWORKs is not requiring their clients to job search right now due to the pandemic.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez reported they are fully operational and still doing inspections. They continue to fund for their Home Access Grant program, which provides a grant up to \$4,500 for low-income, disabled persons to apply for modifications to their homes. This is for low-income homeowners and renters, with homeowner's consent. It is a grant so there is no charge to the individual. They can widen doorways, building a ramp, taking out a tub and put in a walk-in shower. They also have a Home Improvement Loan for homeowners to apply. It is a mortgage secured as a lien on the home. There's no interest or monthly payment but it is a lien that has to be repaid when the home is sold. This loan is used to repair or replace existing items such as heating, cooling, floors, roof, painting, and windows. Anyone interested in applying for either program can call the office for an application at 661-862-5024.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Brooke Whitehead-Tolles

Brooke Whitehead-Tolles reported their office is closed for appointments. No walk-ins are allowed and no home visits for the next couple of weeks to ensure the safety of staff and consumers. They are rolling out their vaccine initiative program. If you are an individual with disabilities and you received your first vaccination on or after December 21, 2021, if you complete your vaccination, you can get a \$50 gift certificate. They still have limited CARES

ACT funding for digital divide, telehealth, and tablets that can be used for virtual Dr. appointments, etc. Commissioner Lemucchi announced that the State has recognized ILC and AASD as a fully functioning Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC).

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Lito Morillo

Lito Morillo reported the following:

- The Governor released his proposed budget on January 13, 2022. The State has an estimated \$45.7 billion surplus, with about \$29 billion of that being discretionary that can be allocated to other programs as the Governor and Legislature agrees to.

The following is budget highlights that potentially affects In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) and AASD as a whole:

- The Governor proposes expanding full-scope Medi-Cal coverage regardless of immigration status for those aged 26 to 49, who had represented the last uncovered age group of undocumented immigrants in California. The estimated cost is \$819.3 million (\$613.5 million General Fund) for half of 2023-24 and \$2.7 billion (\$2.2 billion General Fund) annually at full implementation, inclusive of IHSS costs. Coverage will begin no sooner than January 1, 2024. This adds to the previous bill the Governor signed which beginning May 1, 2022, allows for Californians 50 and older to be eligible for Medi-Cal full scope coverage regardless of immigration status.
- Also, as part of California's budget for FY 21-22, the Medi-Cal asset test will be phased out completely by January 1, 2024. As of July 1, 2022, the State will raise the asset limit in the Medi-Cal program serving older adults and people with disabilities to \$130,000 (previously \$2,000) for an individual and \$65,000 for each additional household member, which should allow more people to qualify immediately.
- Aging Programs the Governor's January budget includes investments to continue forward with the implementation of the Master Plan for Aging. There is a proposed investment of \$2.1 million to enhance the state's data dashboard to improve outcomes for statewide Master Plan initiatives. The January budget also includes a proposal for a new position at the California Department of Aging to coordinate with county Public Conservators on best practices for serving people with probate conservatorships. In addition, there is \$10 million proposed for the Alzheimer's Healthy Brain Initiative to support activities to address dementia. This funding would be used to support the existing six local health jurisdictions and for an expansion of up to an additional six local health jurisdictions.

- Regarding IHSS program FY 2022-23, the Governor's January budget proposal includes \$18.5 billion for IHSS, of which \$6.5 billion is from the General Fund. These costs also reflect \$399 million General Fund in 2022-23 for the state minimum wage increases. The budget proposal estimates that average monthly caseloads will be 599,000 recipients in 2022-23. In FY 2022-23, the Governor's January budget proposal includes the establishment of a permanent IHSS backup provider system. There is \$24.8 million (\$11.2 million General Fund) included for this system that would allow recipients to get services from a back-up provider in case of immediate needs or emergencies.
- In recognition of the IHSS care service provided during the COVID-19 pandemic, the one-time Care Economy Payment of \$500 dollars, approved by the State of California, will be sent to each current IHSS provider who provided service to IHSS or recipient(s) for a minimum of two months between March 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021. On January 21, 2022, the one-time Care Economy Payments will be sent to the IHSS care providers who meet the payment eligibility criteria.

Following are key points of information regarding the payments to assist counties with responding to Care Economy Payments related inquiries.

- To receive payment, must be currently working as an IHSS or Waiver Personal Care Services (WPCS) provider and provided services for an IHSS or WPCS recipient for a minimum of two months between March 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021.
- Only one \$500 payment will be sent to an eligible IHSS provider regardless of the number of recipients they provide with IHSS or WPCS services.
- Payments will be sent to qualifying IHSS providers beginning January 21, 2022.
- Payment will be sent as Electronic Funds transfer (EFT) to IHSS providers who currently use Direct Deposit. Providers with multiple recipients who receive both EFT and paper warrant payments will receive this Care Economy Payment through EFT. All other providers will receive a paper warrant. Providers should cash the paper warrant.
- Adult Protective Services (APS) statewide is changing its age eligibility criteria from 65, older to 60, and older. So the new criteria for doing APS investigations and/or providing services is if you are a dependent adults between 18-60, or 60 years or older. Because of this change, the State is providing additional funding to APS, and for Kern we are expected to receive about \$2.1 million over the next 3 years.
- COVID is affecting the entire Department and most staff are all still under a hybrid telework schedule in an effort to limit exposures. For our senior centers, we've had to close a couple (Prado and Rosamond) as a result of COVID exposure amongst staff and staff shortages in general.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

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

Commissioner L. Oswald reported they are still trying to work out which changes are needed. They haven't received much input from Commissioners. They are waiting to get everything together before taking it to County Counsel for review. The Committee is asking that all Commissioners please read the Bylaws and provide any suggested changes to Commissioner L. Oswald or Commissioner Grasty.

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

Commissioner Lemucchi reported there is a CSL vacancy for Senior Assemblymember. CSL will be holding elections for Senior Senator and Senior Assemblymember in May 2022. Applications are due by March 31, 2022. The Joint Rules Committee are also reviewing their Bylaws. Senior Rally Day will be either May 3rd or May 4th. It will once again be held virtually due to the pandemic. They are working on some renovations and expansion of offices being made at the Capitol. They have ten Assembly and Senate proposals to submit to our Legislatures and one Federal Senate proposal. Last Friday was the one-year anniversary of the Master Plan for Aging. The Governor is still promoting the Master Plan for Aging. The challenge they are facing right now is our Legislatures have had a decrease in the number of Bills that they can submit.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – S. Morris, R. Maier

Lito Morillo reported on behalf of Commissioner Morris and Commissioner Maier. No recent appointments. Doris Duquette's term expired on 09/29/2021. A follow-up email was sent to District 2 on 10/13/2021 and 01/21/2022. Devora Gonzalez's term expired 11/08/2021. A reappointment letter was sent to GBLA on 10/13/2021 and 01/21/2022. Barbara Goodlow's term will expire 12/08/2021. A reappointment letter was sent to Bakersfield Senior Center on 11/12/2021 and 01/21/2022. We have two vacancies: CSL Senior Assemblymember, and District 1. No new applications were received.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – A. Flucker, S. Lynch

Commissioner Lynch reported she and Chair Prado passed out candy canes, with a poem attached, to the AASD employees thanking them for the work they do for seniors every day. Thanks was also given to Commissioner Grasty for donating 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 January 5th and discussed the following:

The Spring Alive Senior Resource Fair is postponed to the fall and will be combined with the Senior Celebration. Commissioner Snyder secured the Rasmussen Senior Center for the event on Saturday, October 15, 2022. Commissioner Snyder agreed to co-chair the event. Commissioner Lynch, Commissioner Grasty, Commissioner Duquette, Commissioner Goodlow, and Chair Prado volunteered to help with this event.

The CSL Elections flyer has been posted on the AASD website, COA website, posted in the AASD lobby, and sent to all Senior Center Coordinators to post at their nutrition sites. Please submit applications to Laura Juarez by 5 p.m. March 31, 2022.

The COA Highlights for 2019-2021 has been completed and has been sent to the Board of Supervisors.

The Committee discussed Commissioners meeting with the entity/person who appointed them to serve on the Commission. This would be an opportunity to expand on what the COA does. We will discuss this further during Executive meeting.

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

Commissioner Snyder reported the committee met January 20, 2022. There are three consumer vacancies on the IHSS Advisory Committee for supervisorial districts 1, 4, and 5. If you know of anyone interested in serving on this committee, please contact Commissioner Snyder or Laura Juarez, or apply online. You do not need to reside in those districts with vacancies in order to represent them.

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

Commissioner Gonzalez reported they have three new volunteers who will start the Ombudsman training. Thanks given to Commissioner Duquette for doing such a wonderful job with serving many older adults in our community. There is a new order issued from the State Public Health Office on January 7, 2022 for acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, intermediate care facilities, and assisted living facilities. This order includes many restrictions for visiting a loved one in one of these facilities. It gives details for unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated visitors, and for patients who are unable to leave their rooms. There is a lot to this order and every situation is unique so they are urging family and visitors to contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman first to ask what the rules are for their particular person they are wanting to visit. This order is expected to expire February 7, 2022. Just to clarify, visits are not being blocked, there are just a lot of restrictions for these facilities. The Ombudsman also needs to be tested often. They have a Dashboard they purchased with their CARES funding where staff and volunteers can get their COVID test results within 30 minutes. The tests are 98% accurate. They are growing and will be adding more staff to their program. They are looking for Case Managers and other positions.

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

Chair Prado reported the committee will meet January 27, 2022 at 1:30 p.m. via Zoom and will have more information after they meet.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE – G. Brown; N. Jackson

No report.

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

Commissioner Goodlow reported the Bakersfield Senior Center had a problem with servers who were out sick but the Board members stepped up to help serve.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

Commissioner Duquette reported she mailed birthday cards for January and will be sending out the birthday cards for February.

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

Commissioner Wright has volunteered to serve on the TACC committee. He will work with Commissioner L. Oswald and Commissioner R. Oswald on more information about the TACC meetings.

TRANSPORTATION – Y. Prado

No report.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – G. Brown; R. Maier

Commissioner Brown suggested recognizing the volunteers at the Cal City Senior Center and other senior centers for all they continue to do with senior nutrition. Chair Prado asked that the committee meet and come up with a couple of ideas to share with the Commission and they can discuss it during Executive meeting.

INFORMATION ITEMS –

- CSL Elections – Applications for CSL Senator and Assemblymember will need to be submitted to Laura Juarez at AASD no later than 5 p.m. on March 31, 2022. Elections will take place during the May 16, 2022 COA Regular Meeting.
- 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, February 9, 2022 (2 nd Wednesday) 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, February 28, 2022 (4 th Monday due to County Holiday 2/21/22) 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 2:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lito Morillo
Secretary