

BLUE RIVERS AREA AGENCY ON AGING ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes

Regular Meeting via Zoom

January 20, 2022

A regular meeting of the Advisory Council of Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging was called to order at 10:00 a.m., via Zoom.

Council members present: Janice Price; Rhonda Dettmer; Lana Likens; Jessica Gerdes; Karen Richardson and Jennifer Schell

Absent: Tracy Wieckhorst

Guests: Danny DeLong, State Unit on Aging Advisory Committee member

Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging staff members present: Carla Frase, Executive Director and Tracie Fossler, Administrative Assistant.

Price, Chair, presided over the meeting and Fossler recorded the minutes of the meeting.

MOTION to approve the agenda as printed by Likens; second by Richardson; voice vote; motion carried.

MOTION to approve the minutes of October 20, 2021, as printed by Richardson; second by Gerdes; voice vote; motion carried.

DIRECTORS REPORT

- October 21-22 – NIRMA Conference
- October 27 – Management Team Meeting
 - Care
- October 28 – Nebraska Data Users Conference
 - October Nutrition Coordinators Meeting
- October 29 – NAPIS Clients – AAA missing data review
 - Home office staff meeting
- November 2 – Save Your Brain with Dr. Shah
- November 3 – Discussed catered Christmas Party for Home Office/other events for outlying office with NIRMA
- November 4 – HBE – continue Audit of NDOT
 - NIRMA HR Monthly Roundtable
 - Disability
- November 5 – Elder Justice Training in house
- November 8 – Sent 30-day notice to ESI for termination of phone system
- November 9 – AAA Directors Meeting
- November 10 – Monthly CM and Caregiver Support Meeting

- November 15 – Service Units from September
 - Management Team Meeting for Christmas Party details
 - Governing Board meeting
- November 16 – Recognizing/Addressing Employee Burnout
- November 17 – Healthy Living and Taking Care of You via zoom
- November 18 – Modivcare Help
 - November Nutrition Coordinators Meeting
- November 19 – Addressing Social Isolation in Rural America
 - Statewide AAA Meeting
- November 23 – SUA will notify AAA of Variance workbook by this date, via sharepoint
- November 29 – BRAAA check in with Cynthia Brammeier
- November 20 – Brain Injury Training for Blue Rivers AAA
- December 1 – ADRC Leadership Team Meeting
 - AAA/LHD leader meeting
 - File Review
- December 2 – Phone System and phones with Capital Business installed
 - File Review
- December 3 – Sent Fairbury Contract information to Mark and Vicki
- December 6 – 10 – One hour each day of training through the American Society on Aging, Ageism to Age Inclusion
- December 13 – NE IFF AAA Workgroup Meeting
- December 14 – AAA Director’s Meeting via zoom
- December 15 - Met with the Fairbury City Administrator and Mayor to renegotiate the Contract and Presentation of Services we have provided in Fairbury
- December 16 – Set up for the Christmas Party at the Senior Center
- December 17 – All Staff Christmas Party at the Beatrice Senior Center
- December 20 – Single Case Management Discussion
- December 21 – Consumer Review Meeting
- December 27 – MAC reports due
- December 28 – Signed papers at Twin Rivers on three new vehicles. 2018 Ford Edge, IIIB program, 2019 Ford Flex, IIIC program and 2016 Chrysler Town & County, Gage County Meal Delivery program
- January 3 – Preparing for AAA IFF meeting
- January 4 – AAA Director’s Meeting regarding IFF
- January 10 – Ne4A LOC Discussion
- January 12 – Monthly CM and Caregiver Support Meeting
 - Elder Rights
- January 17 – Completed 10% variance due to SUA

Interstate Funding Formula revision for FY2023 is going to have a direct impact on our funding. The IFF determines the distribution of the Title Grant Monies awarded to the State Unit on Aging. The SUA is trying to find a fair way that won’t hurt one agency more than another.

They want to keep the cuts within a 5% basis overall. They are looking at all kinds of demographics, whether you live alone, the miles in your area, how many Senior Centers are in your area, different age groups, how many disabilities and how many minorities. Out of all of the meetings Frase has been in, Blue Rivers is the biggest loser in all of this due to our rural demographic. Blue Rivers Agency cuts are right at the 5%, which means that we are going to have to take some hardcore looks at how to stay in this lesser budget. Discussions revolve around the utilization and matching aspect of the ARPA funds are still occurring statewide and with the SUA. No other entities, city or state, have to match those funds. We were supposed to have those funds to us by October 1, 2021. SUA has asked Congress to take out the language stating that we match them. Right now SUA is asking AAA's to match ARPA with their current CASA funds at 5%. The Directors are all meeting to discuss if we will accept 1/3 of the ARPA funds yet this fiscal year and match with current CASA, or decide to receive 1/2 of the ARPA funds FY2023 and 1/2 FY2024, hoping that the matching aspect is changed by that timeframe. Price asked if we have to accept those funds. Frase state that yes, we have to accept. them. They are \$7.7 million statewide, and we can't turn it down. Price stated that Blue Rivers used to have the highest percentage of elderly in the population, based on total population in the area. Price asked if that was still the case. Frase stated that it is, but we are still the smallest Agency on Aging. We have 35% of the population in our eight counties that are 65 and older. Price asked if we were still comparable to AOWN in Scottsbluff. Frase stated they are a little bit bigger, but we still get the least amount of dollars in the state based on our population. We are trying to ask our cities and counties to buy in to help pay our utilities, forgive our rent when it is a city or village and that we cannot be their funding source. We just don't have the funds and want them to value our services. We have been all over presenting that model. Price asked if we were having any luck. Frase stated that we had luck in Wymore and Palmyra, and Fairbury. We haven't had a lot of time to go everywhere, but we are having some success. Fairbury and Beatrice congregate dining are closed today and tomorrow due to staffing illness. We have two staff from the Administration office that are helping in Fairbury and Beatrice centers. We issued a mask mandate; however, some are not listening. We will re-evaluate it again on Monday. The congregate clients were asked to pick up their meals as take and go. We will re-evaluate that because we want to continue the services, but we need to also keep the integrity of the buildings. In our transit program we increased our fares of one-way small town to small town trips from \$5 to \$6 because of the increasing fuel prices. Our in-town and inter-city rates remain the same. We may get our new buses earlier than we thought, because they are starting to get the chips. The new buses have been paid for with Cares Act funds. We have a total of eight buses coming for the five counties we have transportation.

Review And Discussion on Updating the Bylaws

Frase reported that there are some things in the Bylaws that might need to be re-visited. One page one under Article II Section 1-E – To engage in activities as may be necessary for developing recommendations and proposals to the Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging. We are going to be developing our area plan in next several months which is due to the State Unit on Aging by May 1, 2022.. This is where the Advisory Council comes in. You can give us any recommendations of what you think are important issues that we need to tackle. Objectives,

strategies and focus issues. The majority of the representatives shall be age 60 or older. The Advisory Council shall consist of actual consumers of services, the general public, and representatives of public and private agencies. Frase stated it is something to think about if that was an old rule and if it still comes into play. Next is Section 3 Terms – The Chair shall make the initial designation of term appointments to the Advisory Council whereby one-half of the total number of members are appointed to terms of one year and one-half the total number members are appointed to terms of two years. Thereafter, members may be re-elected to additional terms by a majority vote of members present at a regular meeting. All vacancies shall be filled by majority vote of those present at a regular meeting on nominations presented. Frase stated that she didn't know if we are following that. It seems like once someone is on the Advisory Council; they stay on for a while. Those were just things Frase wants everyone to think about. There doesn't need to be any action taken. She wanted everyone to re-visit the Bylaws, it's never a bad idea to re-visit and realize what it takes to make up the committee that you are on, understand what we are about, how we came to be and Robert's Rules of Order. Frase stated that she didn't know if we need to add the Open Meetings Act, since we are informal. Frase asked statewide and they are all pretty informal as well. Liken added that she didn't think we need to add the Open Meetings Act since all members are not elected. If there was ever anything we were doing that a news reporter would want to come to a meeting, we could give them that right. Frase stated that Lincoln's Advisory Council members are appointed, so they do follow the Open Meetings Act. Members are here because they believe in what we are doing. Price asked if we needed to include something about zoom meetings. Frase stated that she thinks that was covered under the Nebraska Emergency Declaration and that they are allowed as long as we meet in person once in a while. Price added that if anyone has any suggestions about making any changes to let Tracie know, so she can put it on the agenda for the next meeting.

COUNTY UPDATES

NEMAHA COUNTY: Jessica Gerdes

Gerdes reported that Auburn Senior Center assistant cook Kaylynn Winkleman has now become the head cook. She has hired an assistant and will now be having help. The menu and the meals have greatly improved. Auburn Transit is looking at what they will be doing for Transit Week in March. With the weather getting so cold, there has not been any issues with the buses starting.

PAWNEE COUNTY: Karen Richardson

The assisted living facility in Pawnee City is nearly full. There is lots of influenza and Covid in the community. People are still enjoying the congregate meals at the Table Rock Senior Center.

JEFFERSON COUNTY: Lana Likens

The hospital is back to doing monthly programs at the Fairbury Senior Center.

RICHARDSON COUNTY: Rhonda Dettmer

The Falls City Senior Center is having issues finding volunteers to deliver meals. The assistant cook is now head cook and is doing a good job.

JOHNSON COUNTY: Jennifer Schell

No updates.

GAGE COUNTY: Janice Price

The Beatrice Senior Center is closed to the congregate today and tomorrow due to staff illness. They are still cooking, and meals are being delivered or picked up to-go.

BRIEF UPDATE ON BROADBAND – Danny DeLong

DeLong stated that he has been trying to think about what role Blue Rivers could play in the development of Broadband in our area. At the point we are at in Nebraska, we have a lot of unserved and underserved areas. That's true in the areas of Blue Rivers. If you look at the reports DeLong sent out, you will notice there are very few communities that were funded this time for the expansion of broadband. He thinks what the problem is with Blue Rivers is that it is already busy, so it's difficult to think about taking on another program initiative. We have a lot of seniors who live in served and underserved areas because they live in smaller communities which don't have broadband. Nebraska funded \$20 million for the FY21 year, \$20 million for this year and \$20 million for next year. The Public Service Commission just awarded a number of grants for a total of \$17 million. DeLong had sent out that report for the members to review. The report is divided into two pieces, the applicants and the challenges with it and the awarded companies that made the cut and are going to build. The Public Service Commission handles all of the coordination of build out of the areas. The report is from the Public Service Commission, and it is by law the organizing coordinator of Broadband Expansion in Nebraska. The question is what can an organization like Blue Rivers do to help all of the seniors in this area. We have to believe there is a need for Broadband. One of the ways to know is that every year in Nebraska, Telehealth expands. Telehealth requires a broadband connection to use in your home or public library. The goal is to get everyone hooked up at home where they live so they can use the Telehealth. The other thing broadband does, is reduce social isolation because seniors want to live in their own homes and in their own communities. Broadband provides that through the reduction of social isolation. DeLong suggested everyone think about broadband expansion in our area. Pay attention to what you hear about it and pay attention to what people are saying about it in the public, what you read in the paper and what's going on in your area. When we are meeting with City Officials such as County Commissioners and let them know that we support broadband expansion. What can we do to help, and we need your help to get it expanded? We could also put something about it in our Table Talk to help get it to the top of people's minds. Broadband is a long-term build out and it's not going to be done with \$20 million a year. There is an estimated \$6 billion of broadband expansion still to go in Nebraska. So help get the word out. It might be good to have a conversation with SEND, to see what we can do to persuade and exercise leadership. DeLong says he would be happy to go talk also.

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

The next Advisory Council meeting will be Tuesday April 19, 2022 at the Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging, 103 Eastside Blvd, Beatrice at 10:30 am in person, via Zoom or both.

MOTION to adjourn the meeting by Richardson; second by Dettmer; voice vote; motion carried.

MEETING ADJOURNED by Price at 10:53 a.m.

Tracie Fossler