

## **Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging Governing Board**

### **Minutes**

**June 14, 2021**

The regular meeting of the Governing Board of Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging via Zoom was called to order at 1:00 p.m.

Board members present: Schoenrock; Braun; Gakle; Crownover; Douglass; Ferguson; Haskell; Haxby; Krueger; Seitz and Swenson

Absent: Hall and Nieveen

Guests: None

Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging staff present: Carla Frase, Executive Director; Beth Williams, Fiscal Officer; Kathy Erickson, Home and Community Options Manager; Carmen McKeever, Nutrition Manager and Clifton Lindell, Transit Manager and Tracie Fossler, Administrative Assistant.

Schoenrock chair, presided over the meeting and Fossler recorded the minutes.

**MOTION** to accept the agenda and consent agenda by Ferguson; second by Haskell; voice vote; motion carried.

#### **TRANSIT REPORT – CLIFTON LINDELL – TRANSIT MANAGER**

Lindell stated that he needs a new Transportation Resolution signed for the bus that needs replaced in Syracuse. The previous form stated that we needed two buses instead of one. Lindell reported that he is having a hard time filling driver positions due to the fact that no one is applying for the jobs. A lot of it has to do with people on unemployment are receiving the extra \$300 a week due to COVID. That is coming to an end on Friday. So hopefully we will start seeing more of an interest. Lindell stated that he and Frase have discussed this topic and he proposed implementing steps in the pay scale to help maintain our staff. Frase stated that we have already submitted our Transportation Budget to the Department of Transportation for the next two years. We have to remember that when we submit those budgets we also have to match funds by 25% with county dollars and city dollars with a budget over \$900,000 per year. Frase agrees with Lindell that she would love to work out something, but to keep those match funds from counties/cities in mind. This whole last year we had the ability to utilize Federal Cares Act funds for all transit expenses and didn't have to match anything. As of July 1, 2021 we will begin utilizing matching funds. Williams added that we already have our budget for next year set and we are trying to keep the same guidelines/incentives for both Nutrition and Transportation since they work out of the same offices. What benefits/incentives we do for one program, needs to be done for the other programs or we create massive morale and team work problems. The fact that our work hours are Monday through Friday is a benefit. Also the fact that benefits begin for employees almost from the start of their employment should help make up for lower wages. Frase stated that we know that we are getting new ARPA (American Recovery Program Act) funds but they haven't figured out the accountability/funding formula as of yet. There are available funds of \$7.7 million state wide. There will be special rules attached as what it can be used for. Douglass asked if the COVID funds could be used to supplement the wages. Frase stated that once the new funds end as they have deadlines,

then we would need to be able to sustain programs and wages without those funds. We are expecting a census cut, although there are talks beginning regarding the IFF (Intrastate Funding Formula) which is part of Frase's Directors Report. The IFF is looking at a new funding methodology of how the state will funnel down the funds to all of the AAA's. Krueger stated that looking back on our benefit package, Thayer County had lost employees who didn't care about the benefits. They made a spreadsheet that had their hourly wage and the value of the benefit package to show them what their total wages were. That seemed to catch their attention. Since the beginning of the calendar year 2021, we have continued to see a steady growth in both the number of miles driven and the number of passengers for all areas except May had a slight decrease and it looks like it is mostly due to the seasonal change as schools end their year, as we transport many school age passengers during the school year. The buses that were requested through the State DOT have been approved through the second level but there is still a hold-up in the processing of the requests. This is also due to the bus assigned to Syracuse had a very expensive repair that has been decided in consultation with the NDOT staff members, that it would be too expensive and that we should request another vehicle. Although the board voted on it at the last meeting, there was an error on the form. We only required one bus, not two and now the previous format of 80% USDOT funding and 10% State and 10% local match has returned. The Otoe County Board of Supervisors have agreed to the request of a 10% match from Otoe County using their Keno funds and the State has also approved their expenditure. The other 100% Federally funded buses are in the pipeline now and we may see them in late summer or early fall. The State NDOT also authorized us to purchase up-to-date computers for the dispatch sites as the NE Safety Center has agreed to do so many of the Zoom meetings for the drivers so that they are not on the road but can attend the training sessions at the dispatch site. All of the transit offices either have them or they are scheduled to receive their equipment shortly. Lindell also discussed the worksheets and graphs of passengers and revenue services hours for FY2020-2021.

#### **NUTRITION REPORT – CARMEN MCKEEVER, NUTRITION MANAGER**

Senior Centers are open with the exception of a few. Syracuse, Palmyra and Douglas are not currently open due to staff shortages. Center attendance numbers are up at some locations and a few are starting out with minimal numbers. Wymore is also not open yet. Unadilla meals service started June 7, 2021. We are serving 5 home delivered meals on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. In Davenport, RW's came back with a meal bid of \$7.00/meals. They said the price was set with the considerations of them using a higher quality of meat, facility usage and staffing. Frase and McKeever discussed the \$7/meal cost and determined that if we had just a few meals a day coming from Davenport would be feasible. Our meals numbers are too high to justify that pricing. If we were to go with this proposal, it would require us to cap the number of meals we could serve to area residents to keep our costs in check. We are able to currently run our center more efficiently than this with the labor and rent costs involved. Davenport is also running on a skeleton crew for staff, however we have great staff in Deshler that has worked with us to keep the meal service going. We are looking to move some of the equipment from Davenport to Hebron so that we can begin the process of cooking the Thayer County meals in Hebron, for distribution throughout Thayer County. As of June 11, 2021 we have moved out of the old Hebron center. Patriot Energy provided us with a report on the mold testing and the levels of mold over a long term basis would have caused health issues to those working in the facility. Williams has worked on a contract for Steven Anderson in Hebron to rent the former Daylight Donuts facility. It is not ready for use as they have a few things to clean out, but he was gracious to allow us to move into the facility to

store the salvageable items from the old center. The goal is to take possession of the new facility in Hebron by July 1, 2021 if at all possible. We have a potential Site/Director/Cook that McKeever will be talking to within the next week. We hired two new site managers for Douglas and Palmyra at minimal hours for those centers. The main goal for these two centers is to keep the meal delivery system going and open the centers on a gradual basis. Both of the newly hired staff are willing to help out in Syracuse as an Assistant Cook when needed. The Beatrice center is fully open and Congregate meal numbers are high. Morning coffee and rolls is attracting a large group of individuals and other Senior Center activities are increasing. McKeever is working with the Senior Center Board to navigate a better relationship. We have hired a new site manager in Cortland. The first meal service was Wednesday June 9, 2021 and they had 21 in attendance. We hired a new Site Manager in Syracuse and she will also fill in for the cook position. Syracuse is currently not open as there is a need for more staff. The Farmer's Market Program is in full swing and coupons have been at the Senior Center sites since June 1, 2021. This year I'm sending out a listing of vendors in each area that accept these coupons. BRAAA has one of the highest usages of coupons in the state.

#### **HOME & COMMUNITY OPTIONS – KATHY ERICKSON**

Erickson presents a formal report together quarterly with updates in between. We hired Jennifer Seibolt for the Services Coordinator/Resource Developer position. We also have hired Teresa Hill for the ADRC Options Counselor/Care Manager position. These positions were open due to staff retiring. Erickson and McKeever have discussed doing IID Evidence Based Health Promotion Programs now that we have our new video equipment in the conference room. We will be starting with Tai Chi at the Beatrice Senior Center. This will help build up their numbers and make a point to show their board and the City of Beatrice City Council how much services they have that is provided through this Area Agency that they are not helping provide match funds for. Erickson and McKeever are also trained on a program called Stress Busters. It can be done virtually online. It was initially started for Caregivers for people with dementia. The caregivers need a lot of support and at least they can connect with someone.

#### **DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION: FINANCIAL REPORT – BETH WILLIAMS, FISCAL OFFICER**

We have spent 92% CASA as of today. The goal is to spend through the CASA money, as it is unavailable for carry over to next fiscal year. We are starting a pilot program to spend the CASA funds. All federal funds will be carried over into next year. The MAC funds have not been received. The State Unit on Aging is trying to figure out how and when they will distribute them. We will be implementing a 4% wage increase for staff as of July 1, 2021. The IIIB Handyman/Housekeeper Program allowable hours has been increased to allow people the ability to utilize our services where they have been struggling in the provider area. Last week we piloted a program where they can bank some funds. We allow them \$200 and they can choose their own provider, which mirrors the Respite Program. Then we can bypass the background check. Even though they are picking their own provider, they will still have to turn in their hours every month. They will have to still sign off that they received those hours. That is in order to help where we have a lack of providers. This will spend CASA funds and also tackle the housekeeper lack of provider's issue. We are also still offering help for one-time only special projects. All of the federal funds that don't get spent will carry forward into the next year. All of the funds that were going to end in September are now carrying over until September 2022. MAC (Medicaid Administrative Claiming) funds are still on the back burner. They are still trying to figure out how to manage it at the state level.

We are about to turn in our third report in which we have now gone nine months without seeing any money. Cynthia at the SUA says we might get a three-month payment by the fall. This has been based off of our staff doing time studies twice a day for the past nine months. We have spent a lot of time training and having meetings on it. We are owed approximately \$75,000, which we now have to match those funds at some level, and we were just informed of this. We will have to be informed about how we match it. We hired a contractor to go around and measure the square footage of the sites we don't have to pay rent for. We can use that as In Kind by figuring out the cost of the square footage. This means we don't have to ask the counties to match that. We can use the assets that we currently have. We had to put the MAC funds in our Area Plan budget. In relation to the Congregate and Home Delivered Meals, congregate has started running stronger since we have opened up the centers for congregate meals. We have managed to spend all of the CASA funds there, and will be finishing off with the third Home Delivered Meal van. In IIIE we have spent all our CASA funds and the rest of the budget is on target for where we want it to be. Care Management is perfect for where it needs to be. We are trying to wrap up all loose ends and make sure we spend the money we need to have spent and do it responsibly. Also prepare ourselves for packing away as much money as we can carry forward and sustain us at the rates we are going. The IIID money that we don't usually get spent is what paid for our new equipment that is in the conference room. It is for the IIID Evidence Base Programs and other uses here.

**DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION: APPROVAL OF April & May 2021 BILLS – BETH WILLIAMS, FISCAL OFFICER**

**MOTION** to approve the Transit Report, Nutrition Report, Financial Report and April & May 2021 Bills by Gakle; second by Douglass, voice vote; motion carried.

**PRESENTATION OF THE FOUR-YEAR PLAN FY2020-2023 – CARLA FRASE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & BETH WILLIAMS, FISCAL OFFICER**

Each member was given a copy of the Four-Year Area Plan FY2020-2023. Members who were absent will receive their copy at a later date. We have one more year in this Area Plan and then we will have to re-write it. We added to some things and updated the Disaster Plan and put in some Pandemic things. We also added to our history and all the COVID services that we added. When we add a service we have to also write up new narratives for that service. The ADRC Plan was put together by all of the Directors state wide. They worked together with a contractor and clean out dead weight off of it. Now it looks a lot cleaner and nicer. This year when updating the information to the State Unit on Aging, we used a new program called SharePoint which was so much easier than having to scan everything in. We also updated the Pandemic and Influenza Plan. Erickson took it and ran with it and did an excellent job.

**MOTION** to approve the presentation of the Four-Year Plan FY2020-2023 by Braun; second by Crownover; voice vote; motion carried.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT**

- April 29 Senior Center Public Website Updates Webex
- April 29 Submitted Area Plan to SUA, via SharePoint
- May 6 Leadership Management Meeting, discussions of Senior Center openings, Older Americans Month, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

- May 6 Email from Julie Masters, UNO Gerontology, regarding a collaboration of AAA's w/UNO for a one-hour programs, FAST Forward. A focus on encouraging people to think about their own aging as well as family members. This is set to air August 17, and Kathy Erickson will sit on the panel.
- May 7 SPR HDM technical Assistance
- May 11 AAA Directors Zoom Meeting
- May 14 Received a letter from SUA, regarding Corrective Action Responses
- May 18 Received ADRC PowerPoint presentation, overview of Nebraska's ADRC.
- May 21 Update on Targeted Case Management –AAA, League, Heather Leschinsky & Curtis Walters
- May 22 Walk Alongside Resource Forum-Beatrice Centenary Methodist Church-Blue Valley Mental Health, Al-Anon, Hope Crisis, Gage Co. Sheriff, Blue Valley Behavior Health, LOSS (Local Outreach Suicide Survivors), pastors from Beatrice, Pickrell, Claytonia, Wilbur, Gilead, Reynolds, Ellis, Swanton, Dewitt, Fairbury, Blue Springs, Wymore, Adams, Diller/Odell. Frase presented a "commercial" detailing our services, so that pastors would know where to refer parishioners.
- May 24 traveled to Davenport, Deshler and Hebron with McKeever and Williams to look over possible Hebron new center site.
- May 25 Nutrition Coordinators meeting
- May 28 Received a letter from NIRMA regarding the renewal of the Agency Insurance Coverage. 2021/2022, 12% increase over last year with several workman's comp claims.
- June 2 Introduction to SUA/AAA/Partner Agency Funding Distribution Methodology Updates
- June 3 check in call with Cynthia Brammeier from the SUA on progress
- June 4 Training on Bank Reconciliations/Finance Information with Williams
- June 8 AAA Directors Meeting
- June 8 VAC% & ARPA Guidance, webex
- June 9 Hebron Center move all agency contents to new location
- June 11 Review of Service Provider Agreement Meeting
- Future meetings: June 15 Williams & Frase to Humboldt to fiscal audit SENCA, per our corrective action plan. June 16 UNITE Nebraska Workshop. June 22 Advisor Board Meeting in house.

**MOTION** to accept the Executive Directors report by Krueger; second by Douglass voice vote; motion carried.

**NEXT GOVERNING BOARD MEETING** will be on Monday July 26, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. at Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging, 103 Eastside Blvd., Beatrice.

**MOTION** to adjourn by Haskell; second by Haxby; voice vote; motion carried.

**MEETING ADJOURNED** at 2:35 p.m. by Schoenrock.

RECORDING SECRETARY

*Tracie Foster*