

Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging Governing Board

Minutes

September 27, 2021

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

Board members present: Schoenrock, Gakle, Haxby, Douglass, Ferguson, Seitz, Haskell and Crownover

Absent: Krueger, Swenson and Hall

Guests: Senator Tom Brandt, Senator Myron Dorn and Attorney Stacy Williams.

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; Tracie Fossler, Administrative Assistant.

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

GUEST SPEAKERS – SENATOR TOM BRANDT AND SENATOR MYRON DORN

Senator Brandt opened by talking about bills they have been working on, the first is a bill to reform the Tax on Social Security. Nebraska is 1 of 6 states that tax social security benefits by 100%. They are going to be reducing the tax to 50% in the next 5 years in small steps each year. It is a small step, but at least it is a step. Brandt's office works a lot with AARP, a leader in broadband expansion, who testified on this issue. They passed the Governor's Bridge Bill, that will give \$20 million a year towards broadband for three to four years. The exciting thing is that Nebraska has about \$1 billion in ARCA funds or CARES Act funding. It used to cost \$15,000 a mile to bury the microfiber and now it cost around \$30,000. The expansion of the SNAP (food stamps) program and the Home Energy Assistance program was also addressed. They raised the poverty level from 130% to 150%, costing nothing to the taxpayers. This will assist another 8,000 families. The Senators have spent the past two weeks working on the Redistricting. They have to pass a new budget every two years, and Redistrict every 10 years, with a brief explanation. Schoenrock asked what the number of voters per district are. Brandt stated that the state has 1,960,000 voters divided by 49 senators, which makes it approximately 40,000 voters per district. Senator Dorn talked about the states ARP Act money. Any funding that flows in when the senate is not in session, the Governor has the authority to disperse. The Appropriations Comity will be working on it in October and then disperse it. There is also \$4 million set aside for income tax refund for school property taxes. As a result of Nebraska's CARES Act funding, state revenue grew by 18 or 19%. With \$550 million, Nebraskans would receive approximately a 24 – 25% credit from the school taxes, resulting in our property tax relief. When Brandt and Dorn started on January 1 two and a half years ago the Rainy Day fund was listed as \$275 million, and is now at \$998 million. Last year \$225 million was on the floor for appropriation bills that senators had brought requesting money and then added another \$40 million to delegate. During the previous 10 years it averaged at \$27 million. Dorn feels that last year at least 25% of the time the Appropriations Committee did not talk about our current situation, they were trying to position themselves for when the Federal Funding runs out and make sure we have a solid Rainy Day Fund. Our state is in a better financial state then before COVID hit. Nebraska does two things really well, our agriculture and our manufacturing. Discussion revolved around the utilization of these funds,

state and county wide. Dorn stated that he heard on the radio that there is petition going around to get the minimum wage increase to \$15.00 and get it on the voting ballot next year. Brandt added the schools are getting hit hard with more teachers retiring then graduating to become teachers. Brandt stated that if anyone has any ideas of how the Legislature can help employers make the rules easier, within reason, they are open to ideas. Haxby asked if the 111B Bridge Match Program would be increasing the cap since the cost of construction is increasing. Brandt stated that the Bridge Cap program is gone. Brandt stated that they would have to call his office for information about the Design Bill, with a brief description. Erickson mentioned that the last time Senator's Brandt and Dorn were here they talked about DHHS. Brandt discussed the Privatization of Foster Care. They did a poor job and everyone knows that. Brandt said that it is likely that the Legislature will probably approve to pay for what it takes to get these Social Workers back to work to take care of it. Brandt asked if anything had changed with us. Erickson stated that we used to be under Long Term and Medicaid, but we are now under the Department of Developmental Disabilities, which have no understanding of aging programs. DDD took away the level of care determinations from the AAA's who have been doing it for 20 years and gave it to people who don't know what an activity of daily living is. Brandt stated that his wife in worked in the finance department at DHHS and ran BSDC until five years ago. They are losing people left and right in their 50's and 60's, they can't leave fast enough. Therefore, they hire 20 or so people off the street with a finance degree to fill these jobs, but they don't have the experience or anyone to teach them what needs to happen. There is a DHHS committee, chaired by Senator Arch, who might be a great committee to work with on this issue. All of the people on that committee are caring. Brandt recommends working with that committee or speak with a senator who holds Aging issues near and dear to them. Frase stated that we have been working with Toni Green, Curtis Walters and Kevin Bagley in person and zoom for the past two months to help remedy some of this. They have talked about what will be our next step to get the senators involved in it, because it is a very big issue. We are trying to keep in good standing with our contacts at DHHS. Brandt and Dorn then wrapped it up and we thanked them for coming. They were very insightful. Schoenrock told the board members that Senator Slama had also been invited, but could not make it.

DISCUSSION OF STATUS OF THE HEBRON BUILDING – STACY WILLIAMS, ATTORNEY

MOTION to move into closed session by Haxby; second by Ferguson; voice vote; motion carried.

Moved into closed session at 2:12 p.m.

MOTION to move into open session by Crownover; second by Ferguson; voice vote; motion carried.

Moved into open session at 2:40 p.m.

MOTION to accept the agenda and consent agenda by Haxby; second by Seitz; voice vote; motion carried.

TRANSIT REPORT – CLIFTON LINDELL, TRANSIT MANAGER

The Transit report was distributed to all members to review. Lindell gave a brief review of the content of this report, trips increasing, mileage and the fact we will keep repairing the buses we have as the eight new buses that became available with CARES ACT funds will not be available until 2023. Also reported on the sanitizing taking place on all buses daily.

NUTRITION REPORT – CARMEN MCKEEVER, NUTRITION MANAGER

The Nutrition report was distributed to all board members to review. McKeever commented and briefly discussed all aspects of her report.

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

The Financial report was distributed to all board members to review. Williams reported that if it was not for the CARES Act funds we would be at 17% expended if we would have been using our usual budget. The CARES Act money is not on the reports; however, the MAC money is in the report even though we do not have those funds yet. The SUA wanted it to be on the reports and in the budget.

DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION: APPROVAL OF JUNE, JULY, AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2021 BILLS – BETH WILLIAMS, FISCAL OFFICER

MOTION to approve the Transit Report, Nutrition Report, Home & Community Options and Financial Report by Haxby; second by Haskell; voice vote; motion carried.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

- July 27 Met with Stan Wirth, City of Beatrice Mayor, Mark Pethoud, City Building & Grounds and Tobias Tempelmeyer, City Administrator at the Beatrice Senior Center.
- August 3 AAA Directors/AD Waiver Supervisors meeting.
- August 3 Drove to Davenport with Williams and McKeever to meet with the Achievement Board regarding the usage of the facility. We learned that they are not on tax rolls and there is no city involvement and that they fundraise on their own. We discussed our agencies and the need to lessen our expense there. They were very positive and gave ideas for additional funds such as grants, regulatory meter for our use and trash reduction.
- August 4 met at Beatrice Community Hospital with the Big Give Gage committee regarding the fundraiser to be held September 10, 2021
- August 5 NIRMA Spotlight Seminar Series on employment laws and practice at the Champions Club.
- August 10 met with Stan Wirth and Tobias Templemeyer. Presented a report to the Mayor regarding our Agency's services to Beatrice citizens. It was a positive meeting with the end goal to meet with Deb Drewel for better relations and coordination of services to seniors.
- August 12 was Bev Burhs' funeral our long time transit employee in Beatrice.
- August 17 AAA Director's meeting in Lincoln at Aging Partners.
- August 20 SUA/AAA Partner Agency funding Distribution Methodology Updates and Discussion.
- August 24 ADRC Leadership Team Meeting
- August 25 Caregivers & Self-Directed Care IIIB & E Self Directed Care & September 13 email whereas we are praised by the SUA for our diligence. Also attended a meeting at Beatrice Hospital at the same time.
- August 25 Verjean, Service Coordinator, Frase, APS representatives and Director of Nursing at the Beatrice Community Hospital Tasha Hesman & Co. regarding the discharge of an APS person that the hospital called our services to take the client home on our bus, with inappropriate clothing. Frase believes it was a personality conflict between the discharge nurse at the hospital and the APS worker and our agency was caught in the middle. We discussed the diagnosis, the

fact that this person had been brought to the hospital in an ambulance and we had no idea why she had been in the hospital, so the last minute call was the last time we will deal with a last minute called. As we have protocols that we must adhere to as well. Our driver was put into a difficult position. Frase made them aware that we want to continue a good relationship with them, but we will be unable to meet a last minute demand if we have not transported them to the hospital.

- Sept. 2 Staff meeting at 8:30am regarding Big Give Gage and current issues.
- Sept. 2 NIRMA HR Monthly Roundtable with Woods and Aikens.
- September 9 Check in Call with Cynthia Brammeier. They discussed Big Give Gage? Leadership, Beatrice/Board Meeting/Audit change of date/Monitoring/Mac funds/the fact that the 6-month monitoring follow up is good to go.
- September 10 Blue Rivers had a booth at the Vintage Venue for Big Give Gage, raising funds for meals delivery vehicle. We had donations totaling \$2185. T-shirt sales were 41 shirts of which we received \$10 each. It was very successful. These funds will be match by the Gage County Foundation and a check will be presented to all non-profits who participated on October 7 at Classics. A total of \$300,000 was raised County Wide.
- September 13 Interview were held for the Fiscal Assistant-Receivables position.
- September 14 AAA Director's meeting in Kearney.
- September 15 Non-Profit Day for Leadership Beatrice. Frase gave a 15-minute presentation to the 14 individuals present regarding our services, Agency, goals & objectives.
- September 15 Chore Unbundling on web-ex
- September 15 Interviews for Fiscal Assistant position.
- September 16 Made decision to hire Amy Mason for the Fiscal Assistant/Receivables position and offered her the job. She accepted. Her start date will be October 7, 2021.
- September 16 Management Team Meeting. Discussion topics: new funds we are receiving, staff issues, bus disposal, Erik's survey of clients, time study, Covid-19 policies revisited, MAC 3 amounts, a key check out plan at the outlying offices to be implemented and a presentation from the Brain Injury Alliance.
- A letter is attached to the Director's notes to Don Kracke for his assistance in the valuation of the proper we reside at for In-Kind purposes. He was the only realtor in our area willing to provide this service for our Agency.
- Also attached is a letter regarding the Healthcare Grand Award to assist in purchasing meal delivery van.

Upcoming dates:

- September 28 – October 1 Agency Audit in house
- September 28 – Nutrition Coordinator meeting
- September 29 – SPR Training via web-ex
- September 30 – Staff meeting in house
- October 2 – Senior Fair @ Beatrice Senior Center
- October 4 – October NE RMTS workgroup meeting
- October 12 – AAA Director's meeting via zoom
- October 13 – Elder Coalition via web-ex

- October 14 – State Advisory Board Meeting via zoom
- October 20 – Advisory Board meeting at Table Rock Center
- October 21 – 22 – NIRMA Conference in Kearney

MOTION to approve the Executive Director's Reports by Haxby; second by Haskell; voice vote; motion carried.

DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION: BILL FROM 6/21/2021

Cliff Lindell paid a bill for a starter to be replaced on one of the buses when it broke down in Lincoln. The bill was \$230 in which Lindell paid for with his personal credit card.

MOTION to approve the reimbursement of \$230 for the repair bill on 6/21/2021 by Haxby; second by Gakle; voice vote; motion carried.

NEXT GOVERNING BOARD MEETING will be on Monday November 15, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. at Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging, 103 Eastside Blvd., Beatrice.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 3:37 p.m. by Schoenrock.

RECORDING SECRETARY

Tracie Foster