

Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging Governing Board

Minutes

March 21, 2022

The regular meeting of the Governing Board of Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging, 103 Eastside Blvd., Beatrice, NE and also available via Zoom was called to order at 1:01 p.m.

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

Absent: Ferguson, Hill, Holtzman and Pohlman

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 Tracie Fossler, Administrative Assistant.

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

MOTION to accept the agenda and consent agenda by Haskell; second by Gakle; voice vote; motion carried

TRANSIT REPORT – CLIFTON LINDELL, TRANSIT MANAGER

Due to illness there is no Transit Report at this time. Lindell will email it to the board when he gets it done.

NUTRITION REPORT – CARMEN MCKEEVER, NUTRITION MANAGER

McKeever attended a speed-networking event with Frase. They networked with many other local agencies about our services. McKeever work with the management team to prepare for our yearly monitoring visit. Scheduled visits with our contract site in Auburn and a stop back at Table Rock. The Hebron Senior Center has the gas line in. An add was placed in the Hebron Journal-Register for a Site Manager. The ad ran for two weeks and we received one applicant. The Syracuse Site Manager/Cook has resigned to take another position. She will help us as much as she can until we find a replacement. An ad was placed in the Syracuse paper immediately for both a Site Manager and a Cook position. It will run for two weeks. In Deshler the Site Manager walked out of the center on March 11, 2022 and will not be back. One of our volunteers at Deshler is helping with the meals and delivery. The delivery driver for our Davenport, Deshler, Hebron and Chester route will be having knee replacement and we hope to utilize Kathy George temporarily until we get people hired. The Davenport Site Manager will assist with paperwork for now.

Lana Likens, our Jefferson Co. Advisory Board member is working to spread the need for volunteers in Fairbury and trying to increase our congregate meal numbers. Likens will also be working to get the Fairbury Site's Facebook page up and going. We will also be looking for a substitute cook in Fairbury. A volunteer has stepped up and has taken on the Diller meal route.

The Wymore meal numbers are increasing as well. The Palmyra center Site Manager would like to have someone to job share her position. McKeever and Frase met via zoom with the team from Sysco to discuss the menu options they have available. The presentation was very helpful and we are looking to make the change to Sysco. Staffing and Food Prices are the biggest issues facing the Agency at this time. Schoenrock asked if we are not getting applicants because we don't pay enough? McKeever said yes,

that is what she believes. Our volunteers have expressed concern about the gas prices. We can pay volunteers \$.14 a mile, per IRS regulations. One volunteer said that would help. It would be helpful if our former Congregate participants would do take n go's, instead of the home delivery. McKeever is getting in touch with the Department of Labor. Schoenrock asked how we advertise our positions when they come open. McKeever replied via local newspaper, our webpage, Indeed, Nebraska Workforce Development and on Facebook sites. McKeever is also going to reach out to the new Advisory Council member in Thayer County for help. McKeever is going to ask the Site Manager in Douglas to assist with paperwork in Syracuse, but still need to hire a cook. Swenson asked what we pay per hour. McKeever state that Site Managers and Cooks start at \$10/hour. Schoenrock stated that his thought is that we are not competitive at \$10 an hour. Everyone agreed that people can get paid more working at fast food jobs. Schoenrock asked Frase and Williams what budget implications do we have if we were to consider raising the pay scale. Frase stated that we are discussing that later in the meeting. Frase stated that she has met with Nebraska Workforce and they stated that our starting pay is too low. Frase said she knows we need to revamp it, but at the same time we need to increase the pay for our current employees also. We are looking at funding sources and grants. One of our thoughts was the Sister's Grant from Wymore to adopt a section of the food program, as an annual grant. We are feeling out some creative ideas while moving into the new area plan and the goals for that. The rules for Home Delivered meals was discussed. We will eventually have to go back to those rules so we can cut down on deliveries. Schoenrock suggested we become members of the Chamber in all towns we serve. It was also suggested we put out fliers for help. Another thing Williams and Mason are planning to go out and visit the communities we serve and get out information about our services. A suggestion was made to reach out to SCC about internships/volunteers

MOTION to accept the Nutrition Report by Swenson; second by Haxby; voice vote; motion carried.

MOTION to approve the January and February Bills by Seitz; second by Douglass; voice vote; motion carried.

FISCAL REPORT – BETH WILLIAMS, FISCAL OFFICER

City of Beatrice Contract – Frase, Williams and McKeever had previously met with Beatrice earlier this year when we were having some issues at the Senior Center and some communications that needed to be resolved. The City did not realize how many services our Agency provides to their citizens. Frase enlightened them how highly used these services are in Beatrice. The Outcome of several meetings with the Mayor and the City Administrator resulted in the City writing a contract that states they will provide \$140 a month for our electric utilities in the main office building for the next two years, with renewal available. That is the first contact and first monetary support we have gotten from the City of Beatrice. We are extremely thrilled. They consider the use of the city building the Beatrice Senior Center is located in as their contribution to our program. We don't pay utilities there. However, that doesn't help our match program with our transit program which is huge in this community. They don't understand the complete scope of our transit program. That is another side we will work on getting support for also in the future. They are going to put us on the Senior Center website.

Hebron Center Updates – We finally got the gas line in. Williams also had a great conversation with the landlord's wife, letting her know all of the utilities have been put in our name. She said she hadn't had any issues with the rent, it has all been coming on time. Williams asked them to contact the main office if there were any issues in the future to eliminate rumors. We are filing a motion to compel with

sanctions, in regards to the old address in Hebron That is because nothing is happening and they have not responded to the interrogatories that they have been sent. Swenson asked if we are ready to move the kitchen to Hebron. McKeever stated that she first wants to hire a site manager and get congregate meals started before we move the kitchen.

Monitoring Update – The monitoring results from HBE were distributed to the members present. The rest will be mailed out to the other members. There were two findings. They were “We rely on external auditors to prepare financial statements”. This is for the statement of cash flow and the depreciation. We have a certain amount of award that they create all the documentation that allows that award amount to become a payable. Then we clear that out at the end of the year. They do that for us since it started from the beginning and we didn’t have anyone in our system that was able to do that. This is a normal finding we have every year. The other finding was a journal voucher entry on an In-kind such as radio and tv ads. The number was typed wrong and we didn’t catch it, so it counted against us. If we would have caught it first it wouldn’t have been a finding. We have discussed the issue and found a solution to avoid that in the future. The monitoring visit from the SUA is complete, except for the APA. She will probably be asking questions for the next couple of weeks. We think the SUA side went very well. They were happy with all areas of the program. We had an exit interview and aside from a couple suggestions like additional training to some of the newer staff. They said we are doing an excellent job with our legal services, our nutrition plan and pretty much all of our programs. The APA is looking at allocations and additional time studies. She is just asking for documents and feedback will be coming.

Wage Discussion 2023 – The Area Plan budget has not been completed as of yet. Frase has been in some meetings about wages and we know that we are getting an 8% Federal budget cut. We also know that we are getting some additional ARPA funds. We also know that we have to retain our staff so that we can provide services. Frase’s NIRMA roundtable discussed being an employer of choice, and that we need to offer 4-7% increase at all levels to retain staff. That is just the annual salary increase not the starting wage. We are asking that we write in a 5% wage increase in the Area Plan budget. We can’t wait until July to discuss it; we need to discuss it now. Our FTE is at 41.16, which is our fulltime equivalency for staff. Our Area Plan is due to the SUA by May 2, 2022. Prior to that we need to complete a budget revision to include our ARPA funds we will expend and have expended by June 30, 2022. Schoenrock said he would be interested in what the board has to say about it. Haxby said that at the County offices they increased wages anywhere from 5-6.8% because of inflation. Schoenrock stated that he takes the silence from the board as concurrence. He thinks we definitely have to increase starting wages and current staff wages, believing we don’t have much of a choice. Schoenrock told the board that now is the time to step up if they disagree. No one disagreed, so Schoenrock stated that the board concurred that we can put a 5% wage increase in the Area Plan Budget for FY23. Williams stated they would rewrite the budget and revisit with the wage increase. Schoenrock said he hopes the 5% is enough to help. Williams said we will look at it because hopefully that will help get everyone up to the starting wage. We reached out to Karen Houseman DHHS Program Manager II regarding purchasing vehicles for our AD Waiver staff with Waiver funds and received approval on this, which we have never had before. At our last meeting we discussed revisiting extending Covid pay to employees. The current plan ends March 31. The past two weeks we have had five people out with Covid. Schoenrock asked what the boards thoughts were on the subject. Schoenrock thinks we should extend it. Gakle agreed and said it should be extended at least until the end of April. Crownover stated he doesn’t think that is

long enough. He thinks it should be extended until June 30. Haskell stated that Walmart, the biggest employer around no longer pays Covid pay. Frase reminded everyone that we are considering employee retention. Williams asked what the county does. Haxby and Crownover said their counties have also stopped paying it. Williams stated that we are looking at trying to keep people home when they are sick so they aren't out passing it around to our clients. Schoenrock stated to the board that they need to consider two factors. The counties pay more and they have a better benefit package for their employees. The mission of the AAA's is different than the counties. Schoenrock said he thinks it should be extended 30 days. Krueger agreed that we should extend it 30 days and then revisit it.

MOTION to extend the employee covid pay 30 days by Krueger; second by Douglass; voice vote; motion carried.

MOTION to approve the Financial Report by Seitz; second by Gakle; voice vote; motion carried.

AUDIT REPORT/FEDERAL AUDIT CLEARINGHOUSE – BETH WILLIAMS & CARLA FRASE

We have gotten a letter from the Secretary of the Department of Human Services that they have no findings and they have accepted our audit as it is. They had no findings, which is good news to get this report that says its ok at the national level.

MOTION to approve the Audit Report by Krueger; second by Haskell; voice vote; motion carried.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT – CARLA FRASE

- January 26 – AAA Director's Meeting
- January 26 – Nutrition Coordinator's Meeting
- January 28 – ADRC Leadership Team Meeting
- January 31 – Met with Tony Green, Director DDD & Kevin Bagley
- February 3 – NIRMA HR Round table, New Year's Resolutions
- February 4 – Met with the Management Team, re: Monitory tools, roles of staff
- February 8 – AAA Director's Meeting
- February 9 – Met with Big Iron Auction Representatives to discuss the sale of buses #18 – 2010 and #12 – 2008
- February 10 – Met with Care Managers and Erickson re: CM/CG/ADRC to review programs
- February 14 – Zoom Executive Board Meeting re: Audit Approval
- February 15 – Community Connection Networking Event at the Beatrice Vintage Venue. Met with local service agencies one on one for a four-minute discussion detailing our Agency's mission.
- February 23 – Agenda Nutrition Coordinator's meeting
- February 24 – AD Waiver Staff concerns
- February 24 – Ad Waiver meeting
- March 2 - Met with Holly Carr from SCC regarding a possible caregiver class
- March 3 - NIRMA HR Monthly Roundtable Discussion – Employee Recruitment & Retention
- March 3 – Disability Education Series – Dignity of Risk
- March 4 – Sysco Menu Discussion
- March 4 – Uploaded LOC Budget Narrative to DDHS

- March 8 – AAA Director’s Meeting
- March 10 – ADTBI Service Coordination Meeting with Tony Green and Karen Houseman re: new processes, Therap and upcoming trainings for AD Waiver staff
- March 14 – Ad placed with Beatrice Daily Sun to promote IIIIE Caregiver Respite services
- March 16 – Monitoring visit via zoom with Cynthia, Ben, Erik, Gene, Matt and Antonio on on Governance, Fiscal, Legal and Disaster Plan.

We have finally found a new Thayer County representative for the Advisory Committee Board. Her name is Cheryl Walsh. The UNL Law Clinic will be in-house on April 12, 2022. There are 22 clients and 7 law students expected. We will be hosting Focus Groups in Beatrice and Nebraska City sponsored by UNO Gerontology in regards to needs and wants going forward. We will advertise it in the newsletter. Schoenrock stated that he and the board want to thank Frase for all she does. Frase is very involved in all of the organizations that BRAAA are a part of. He notes that he sees her logged onto lots of the meetings. She always has a lot of good input and he is sure she takes a lot away from them. Schoenrock stated that he and the board wanted to thank Frase for her engagement and for representing us at those higher levels. It’s also a great opportunity to learn to help make our organization even better. Frase reported that from all of the zoom director’s meetings, she tries to give the board the minutes and notes. On January 26th they were supposed to be meeting with our senators. However, with the rise in COVID numbers they didn’t. They chose to still have their Director’s meeting via zoom to talk about our ADRC Legislation, which will change who is paying the Disability Partners the ADRC funds, currently the AAA’s are responsible, and this would change to the SUA. We see that as an SUA responsibility but it has to come through legislature which has already passed one hoop and is really close to passing. We are still talking about the VAC5 – Public Health Funding. At our last meeting Frase told the board they would be meeting with the State Public Health Department. However, they backed out. So we still don’t know what we are going to do with that \$220,000 funds per agency. We have until September 2024 to figure that out. They still talk about it at every meeting and sometimes in between. Schoenrock asked if Frase had spoken to Kim Showalter about it. He asked if there was a way to collaborate with her. Frase said she had not, but will reach out to her as we still have the VAC5 \$23,000 funds available. It is educating and getting people to their appointment. It’s very restrictive funding and they all end in 2024. Kim Showalter of Public Health Solutions gave us 200 sets of Covid tests. We have given out some of the tests to staff to take home and use. Frase has instructed our Care Managers to offer them to their clients as well. Schoenrock stated that Jefferson County had their Public Health Solutions Board meeting on Thursday morning in Crete. It is the same situation there. We had two buses being auctioned on Big Iron Auction online, a 2008 and 2010 bus, located here in Beatrice. The Department of Transportation wants us to dispose of these buses in this manner. Big Iron receives 15% of the proceeds. One was sold for around \$5,300 and the other \$5,500. After they take out their fees we will receive just under \$10,000. These funds will be used in the transportation system, possibly as a bus match. We have been meeting with Cynthia and Gene, the Fiscal Representative up at SUA about our 2023 Reservation Tables, as the IFF has been applied to the figures. They are having a public hearing in April, but the cuts already are a part of the budget. We are getting a 5% cut. Our Care Management is getting an 8% cut next year. We are trying to promote our Caregiver Respite Services because we have funds available. We see it as a viable resource and we know there are people who could really use the

Respite. Frase has had the Beatrice Daily Sun work up and ad based on our Respite brochure, which we also sent to our other local papers. Frase announced that our Choices Manager Kathy Erickson has accepted a new job and submitted her four-week resignation. Her last day will be April 15. We will be looking for her replacement immediately. She will be hard to replace. She was here at the start of the Care Management, worked into the AD Waiver and expanded to the ADRC. Frase had a meeting with Erickson's staff this morning. We have a policy to try to promote within. Three of her staff have shown interested in it so far.

MOTION to approve the Executive Directors report by Crownover; second by Douglass; voice vote; motion carried.

NEXT GOVERNING BOARD MEETING will be on Monday April 25, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. at Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging, 103 Eastside Blvd., Beatrice and via zoom.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 2:45 pm by Schoenrock.

RECORDING SECRETARY

Tracie Fossler