

ST. JOSEPH COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES – APPROVED MAY 15, 2024

The April 17, 2024, meeting of the St. Joseph County Commission on Aging Advisory Board of Directors was held at Oaks Enrichment Center. The meeting was called to order by Deborah Davis, at 3:00 pm. Roll call was taken by Deborah Davis.

PRESENT: Sarah Apwisch, Deborah Davis, John Gelvin, Phil Kline, George Letts, Kathy Pangle, Rick Shaffer, Terry Conklin, Tim Barron, and Jon Withers

ABSENT: Pat Dane

AGENDA: A motion was made by Mr. Letts with support from Ms. Pangle to approve the agenda as presented. This motion was approved 6-0.

OTHERS PRESENT: Pam Riley, Executive Director; Ruth Mancina, Marketing & Life Enrichment Manager; Katie Hughes, Nutrition Manager; Britt Buscher, Finance Manager; Nicole Notestine, Residential Services Manager; Dianne Wood, COA Member.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None

MINUTES

Minutes from November 2023 were approved. A motion was made by Ms. Apwisch with a second from Ms. Pangle. This motion passed 6-0.

FINANCE REPORT:

Although Ms. Buscher provided a preliminary 2023 year-end report in the COA Advisory Board packet, she only discussed the finance report for March of 2024. The Finance Director and auditors are still working on 2023 finances, so we won't have a final report until June. We will revisit the 2023 finances after the report is finalized. Since the board hasn't met since November, Ms. Buscher provided a brief refresher related to the finance report and explained what each line/column means. Ms. Buscher mentioned the COA has made two capital project purchases, including a new Meals on Wheels truck, and new copy machines for both centers.

Mr. Letts made a motion with the support of Mr. Withers to accept the March Financial Report. Motion passed 6-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

Ms. Riley reviewed the Commission on Aging's 2023 goals and how they were met throughout the year. Ms. Riley provided copies of the COA's 2023 goals so Advisory Board members could review the goals as well. She highlighted a few things, including the number of speaking engagements she was able to attend, and a large increase in exercise (classes & exercise room) participation.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ms. Riley discussed the Commission on Aging's 2024 goals, how we have met some of them already, and how we can meet these goals moving forward. All COA Advisory Board members received a copy of the 2024 goals in their meeting packet. Ms. Riley highlighted the COA's number one goal, which is the upcoming millage renewal. Ms. Riley explained the importance of the millage renewal and how it can impact the COA's ability to provide services and activities to St. Joseph County's senior population. It is a 6-year millage renewal for .75 mills, and it is expected to generate 1.8 million in the first year. The COA has operated with this millage for over 50 years in St. Joseph County. The Friends of the COA, which is a group of Commission on Aging members, have started to collect donations and design materials to promote the COA and the upcoming renewal. John Gelvin and Deb Gelvin are fronting the Friends of the COA. Ms. Riley mentioned the "Ax Mi Tax" group. This group is on a mission to eliminate property tax in Michigan, however this could potentially harm service providers like the Commission on Aging. The COA reaches around 30% of the senior population in St. Joseph County. There are other organizations in St. Joseph County also up for millage renewal. Multiple Advisory Board members mentioned several meetings to Ms. Riley, seeing if she would be interested in attending to speak about Commission on Aging's activities and services.

Ms. Riley highlighted a few other 2024 goals, including professional development, an increase in speaking engagements, hiring in-home aides, and continuing to have a full production nutrition department/kitchen.

PROGRAM REPORT:

Life Enrichment Services – Ms. Mancina reported that the first quarter has gone very well in Life Enrichment. As always, exercise classes have continued to be our most popular activity. Classes are booming. In addition to the classes, we have seen an uptick in usage of our fitness room at both centers, so we are working hard to maintain our equipment and have put a request in the May newsletter for gently used equipment...we could use another treadmill and/or an elliptical machine in TR.

Later this month we're celebrating Soft Pretzel Day and giving out 100 soft pretzels to our members. Next month we will celebrate Older Americans Month by collaborating with the Nutrition Department for National Barbeque Month and having grilled hamburgers at each center. The theme of Older Americans Month is Powered by Connection, so we are going to play the game Connections after lunch on the day we serve the grilled hamburgers. Connections is a popular word game in the New York Times.

Ms. Mancina reported that the Life Enrichment department has been focused on throwing a Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast. For the first time we are going to have a breakfast at each center. We are doing it next Tuesday (April 23) in Sturgis and then in Three Rivers on April 30. All board members should have received an invitation.

Ms. Mancina is also focused on an event we are having on Tuesday, June 11 at the Three Rivers High School Performing Arts Center. This was made possible through out Caregiver Education, Support and Training grant dollars. We are bringing in a very special performer, Breeda Miller, who does a one-woman show telling the story of what it was like caring for her mother who had dementia. This show will resonate with anyone who is a caregiver – whether it is for someone with dementia, or any type of chronic illness, or a grandparent who is caring for a grandchild.

While the grant covers quite a bit of the costs associated with this event, it doesn't cover everything, so she is working on getting more sponsorships.

Ms. Mancina is also working on some big trips coming up in May and June – in May the COA is taking their first overnight trip to Meadow Brook Hall in Rochester, Michigan. In June we are going to a Detroit Tigers ball game, and we have 25 people signed up for that already – we are borrowing a bus from Thurston Woods, so we are very appreciative of their generosity.

Summertime means parades and working with our seniors to help us make sure we have representation in several parades, including the Three Rivers Water Festival and the Sturgis Electric Parade.

Nutrition Services – Ms. Hughes thanked Commission on Aging's volunteers for assisting with serving lunch and putting in hours at both of our centers. Ms. Hughes reported year to date, the nutrition department has served around 5,000 congregate meals, and 35,000 home delivered meals, which is a 22% increase from last year. She also discussed the COA's partnership with The Young Adult Transition Center and how they have been a phenomenal partner. Young adults come in on Mondays & Wednesdays twice a day. Usually there is a crew of six here with two teachers supervising. Unfortunately, their last day will be May 23rd.

COA members were sad to see the state desserts go, and Ms. Hughes reported that she has received several requests to continue desserts, so she designated the first Wednesday of each month as a congregate birthday celebration day with a birthday dessert. She added that the third Wednesday of the month a "special dessert" will also be served, although it will not be as in depth as the state desserts.

Ms. Hughes also shared that we have a new volunteer helping in the kitchen on Tuesdays & Thursdays that helps for 4 hours on each day.

Residential Services – Ms. Notestine mentioned the waitlist for a 1-bedroom apartment is currently at 35, while the waitlist for a 2-bedroom is at 12. The last few apartment turnovers have been relatively quick, so that has been a plus. Ms. Notestine also reported the waitlist for in-home services has continued to grow, however we are still short staffed in the Residential Services Department. The Commission on Aging continues to work on hiring in-home aides so people can be removed from the waitlist and receive services. Lastly, Ms. Notestine talked about the chore worker, who is also a substitute driver for the nutrition department. He currently has 13 chore referrals, so he is working on getting those referrals taken care of for our COA members.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

1. Restaurant ticket update: the COA sold 28,152 of the 30,000 in 2023. Sales slowed down significantly after August which is a typical trend. We are back to 25,000 tickets in 2024 at \$5 per ticket and three per month per member. We have so many new members who are coming in just for tickets. We must keep it at 3 per month per member. This is a \$125k program and we do not have additional funding to increase the number of tickets per month.
2. Capital projects for 2024: MOW truck, new copiers in Sturgis and Three Rivers, replace entry way and hallway carpet in TR and possibly remove carpet from community room in TR and replace with a laminate. The MOW truck and copiers have been purchased. The carpet in TR is not high quality and is impossible to extract stains from. We have a quote below our project amount;

however, we have received notice from AAA that the Federal government has cut some nutrition funding when they finally passed the budget. AAA has not received the amount of reduction in funding. We are putting the carpet capital project on hold for now.

3. Gary has been diligent for the last year trying to get the leaks fixed in the new roof in TR. He had the original installer out several times to fix the problems and a few months ago the installer told us we would need to contact the manufacturer because he couldn't figure it out. Gary has spoken with Duro Last multiple times, and they sent out an inspector who found and patched 16 holes, this did not fix the leaks. Duro Last sent out another installer who found 14 holes and patched them. This still did not fix the problem and created another large leak. Duro Last sent out the inspector and a supervisor last week and the supervisor agreed that our roof looked like it had been on there for 20 years vs 5 years. There are numerous patches, and several seams were found to not be sealed.
4. The Special Education Parent Advisory Committee from the ISD has selected the COA Nutrition Department as the recipient of the Community Agency of the Year for the '23-'24 school year. There were 4 nominees, and the COA had several letters of support for our agency. Our partnership with the Young Adult Transition Center is a tremendous benefit to our staff, HDM and Congregate participants and to the many students who volunteer in our TR kitchen twice a week. We are thrilled to help these young adults develop work skills and as I've mentioned their work has been crucial for the COA to be able to produce the enormous amount of food daily. YATC had the wonderful idea of creating "happy meal" cards which are index cards with positive and heart-warming messages. These cards go out twice a week in the HDM meals. Our MOW clients are so appreciative of these cards and make a point to tell their drivers, call the office, and even send thank you cards back. It's a wonderful way to let our most isolated citizens of our county know that people care about them.
5. Landscaping in Sturgis in the front island area is pretty much completed. I think we are moving around some more lilies that can be split and add a few Hosta plants from an employee. Landscaping in Three Rivers is finishing up as well. Melton has worked hard on these projects for the last several months. We also appreciate the volunteers who helped and the volunteers who continue to help with the landscaping clean up and care in Sturgis.

MEMBER'S TIME:

Mr. Withers, Mr. Gelvin, Ms. Pangle, and Ms. Davis all welcomed the new Advisory Board members (Terry and Tim) during their member's time.

Mr. Conklin expressed he is looking forward to serving on the Commission on Aging Advisory Board.

Mr. Letts thanked the Commission on Aging staff for all their hard work. He also expressed he missed meeting, so he was happy that we were all back together again.

Mr. Shaffer mentioned the upcoming Senior Resource and Caregiver Fair, which takes place on May 8th in Three Rivers.

Mr. Barron conveyed he is also looking forward to serving on the Commission on Aging Advisory Board. He also asked to donate the remaining amount needed for lawn signs to the Friends of the COA.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Mr. Withers with support from Ms. Davis to adjourn the meeting. This motion was passed 6-0 at 4:30 pm.