

## ST. JOSEPH COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING

### ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES – APPROVED NOVEMBER 20, 2024

The September 18, 2024, meeting of the St. Joseph County Commission on Aging Advisory Board of Directors was held at Rivers Enrichment Center. The meeting was called to order by Rick Shaffer at 3:02 pm. Roll call was taken by Rick Shaffer.

PRESENT: Rick Shaffer, Sarah Apwisch, Tim Barron, Terry Conklin, and George Letts

ABSENT: Deborah Davis, Pat Dane, John Gelvin, Phil Kline

AGENDA: A motion was made by Mr. Letts with support from Mr. Barron to approve the agenda as presented. This motion was approved 5-0.

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.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None

#### MINUTES

Minutes from July 2024 were approved. A motion was made by Mr. Barron with a second from Ms. Apwisch. This motion passed 5-0.

#### FINANCE REPORT:

As the August Revenue and Expenditure Report shows, the Commission on Aging is around 66% through the fiscal year. Ms. Buscher reported COA's expenditures are below 66% at this time so we have continued to stay within our 2024 budget. Ms. Buscher and Ms. Riley worked on the 2025 budget, as well as the capital project budget for 2025 through 2029. These items were submitted to the Finance Director, Angie Steinman, and a meeting has been scheduled for next Tuesday. Additionally, Ms. Buscher and Ms. Riley worked on the AAA grant budget and the master contract was received from AAA. The grant cycle runs from October 2024 to September 2025, and there was an overall decrease of \$36,475.

Ms. Buscher also shared the resignations of two Advisory Board members, which were Kathy Pangle and Jon Withers. Their resignations were read on the record. Mr. Letts suggested we send both Kathy and Jon a card thanking them for their service.

Ms. Apwisch made a motion with the support of Mr. Letts to accept the Financial Report. Motion passed 5-0.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

None

#### NEW BUSINESS:

Ms. Riley presented the AAA Program Assessment Findings letter. Ms. Riley explained the COA has an annual assessment by the Area Agency on Aging every year, and the staff does an incredible job all year long of keeping things clean, and programs running. The assessment is to ensure that we are following all regulations, and there were no findings, which means we were in absolute compliance again. Ms. Riley described parts of the assessment, such as the portion where the assessors go on a Meals on Wheels route and speak with clients. The assessors also check food temperatures, the condition of the COA's freezers and refrigerators, as well as client charts and staff charts.

Following Ms. Riley's explanation of the findings, all the board members congratulated COA for their compliance and commitment to following regulations.

#### PROGRAM REPORT:

**Residential Services** – Ms. Notestine reported the most recent in-home aide that was hired is in full swing and has around 10 clients right now. Ms. Notestine also reported the waitlist for services is around 40 people. In the last two or three months we have had a few apartment move-outs, but they were immediately filled by people on the apartment waitlist. Our apartments continue to be completely full. Ms. Notestine stated apartment turnovers vary from 1 to 2 weeks, and that fortunately many tenants leave their apartments in good condition.

**Life Enrichment Services** –Ms. Mancina mentioned it is National Senior Center Month and the COA is celebrating with a painting activity. Pat Asbury teaches members how to paint small floral wall tiles, and the wall tiles are visible in both our Oaks and Rivers Center as they are hanging up in the lobby. The COA has planned this activity the last couple of years, so wall tiles from previous years are also visible. Ms. Mancina thanked the volunteer who is going to hang all the wall tiles and stated he has been helpful around the center by assisting with landscaping and beautifying our grounds. Ms. Mancina is acknowledging him in the newsletter, and she plans on highlighting two volunteers in Sturgis who make our lunch service go smoothly.

The Commission on Aging is hosting a Smart Driver course, which is put on by AARP. The course offers a refresher on driving rules and seniors who complete this course may be eligible for a discount on their insurance. AARP will be coming back in November to offer a course on smartphone basics. In October, the COA will have someone coming in to talk about shoulder and neck pain. Ms. Mancina will continue to seek out educational and informative programming that will help seniors with their day-to-day lives.

Ms. Mancina revealed the COA is welcoming the Three Rivers German Band to our Sturgis Center next week for an evening performance with a German style dessert, and in October there will be a Dinner Night Out in Three Rivers featuring a trombone quartet. The trips continue to be popular, and Cindy is doing a fantastic job planning a variety of experiences. Ms. Mancina said the life enrichment department will continue to try to work hard to ensure everyone knows how the trip sign up procedure works to be fair to all. Ms. Mancina thanked Thurston Woods Village, who is always willing to loan us their bus, and has made it clear to Cindy that whenever, whatever, they are happy to let us borrow it. The next big focus is the annual holiday party, which is on December 12<sup>th</sup> at Sturges-Young Center.

**Nutrition Services** – Ms. Hughes reported the nutrition department has served 7,000 congregate meals since our last meeting, and around 21,000 home delivered meals. Besides the daily grind, which includes hot, cold, and weekend meals, the nutrition department has been supporting life enrichment

activities. In July the nutrition department assisted with the Summer Picnic, which had around 150 in attendance. Ms. Hughes also said the nutrition department has been preparing boxed lunches for activities such as the painting classes or trips. For activities such as the AARP driving course Ms. Hughes has been providing pizza and light refreshments. Ms. Hughes has also been working on the upcoming Dogs & Donuts event, which is when the COA begins the re-enrollment process. Dogs & Donuts takes place on the 23rd in Sturgis, and the 24th in Three Rivers. Weenie king will be at centers serving hot dogs, and the nutrition department provides sides such as potato salad and coleslaw. Currently there are over 100 signed up in Sturgis, and 125 or more in Three Rivers.

Ms. Hughes shared fantastic news, which was the ongoing partnership with the Young Adult Transition Center (YATC). The ISD is going to continue having young adults assist at our center this school year, and today was their first day. The young adults will come two times, twice a week from 8:30 to 10:30, and then 11:30 to 1:30. During their time at COA they help the nutrition department with various tasks, and everyone is grateful for their help.

Mr. Letts asked Ms. Hughes if drivers are responsible for washing their own trucks. Ms. Hughes explained that many of them do in fact wash their own MOW's trucks, however maintenance and repairs are scheduled and handled by her.

#### DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

##### 1. Purchase of New Van and MOW Truck

We have successfully completed the purchase of both a used replacement van and a Meals on Wheels (MOW) truck. These vehicles are essential additions to our fleet. We are replacing the van as it was totaled due to an accident, which was not our fault. While test driving the van, we found a potential MOW truck with 5600 miles on it. We have in our 2025 capital budget a MOW truck and last evening the Commissioners approved the early purchase of the MOW truck and the replacement van. Both vehicles will be picked up on Sept 25<sup>th</sup>.

##### 2. County Wage Study

The county is in the midst of a wage study. We have completed 19 job descriptions across all departments. Of those, four require revisions due to changes in responsibilities. These changes reflect evolving service needs, role adjustments, and some expanded job functions. The information has been sent to the Administrators office and we wait for the next phase of the process.

##### 3. Board Vacancies and Recruitment

Currently, we have two vacant seats on the board. I am pleased to inform you that we have two interested citizens who have expressed a strong desire to serve. Both candidates will be scheduled for interviews in the coming weeks. I need to get with Rick and Terry on potential interview times.

##### 4. AI Taskforce:

As part of the St. Joseph County AI Taskforce, I collaborate with Department Directors to explore and implement innovative AI-driven solutions that can benefit our county. Our focus is on enhancing public services, improving efficiency in county operations, and ensuring the responsible and ethical use of AI technology. We work to identify opportunities where AI can help solve challenges and improve the

overall quality of life for residents. I've worked with a couple of the managers to explore time saving applications like producing a monthly menu based on required guidelines. According to Katie, there is a potential to save her about 40 hours a month. The goal of the taskforce is to eventually report to an AI steering committee at the commissioner level to determine if additional policies are needed and implemented.

#### MEMBER'S TIME:

Mr. Letts inquired about the Oaks Center parking lot and if the COA has experienced any issues related to parking as previously discussed. Ms. Riley assured him parking has not been an issue yet.

Mr. Conklin congratulated staff members on the good review and mentioned he was appreciative of all the hard work that everybody puts in.

Mr. Barron echoed Mr. Conklin and added that he thinks it is fantastic that Ms. Riley is on the AI Taskforce.

Ms. Apwisch stated she will be resigning from the Commission on Aging Advisory Board because she has joined a new board, Three Rivers Pride. Ms. Apwisch mentioned there is a need there and would love to be of assistance to Three Rivers Pride as she has a lot of experience. The group is responsible for Three Rivers Pride Festival, and they focus on helping people feel welcome and they are hoping to create a resource center. Ms. Apwisch mentioned her husband will be turning 60 soon and she is looking forward to becoming a COA member so she can be involved in other ways. She will continue to bring in artwork for the enrichment centers.

#### ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Mr. Letts with support from Mr. Conklin to adjourn the meeting. This motion was passed 5-0 at 3:45 pm.