



Lewis - Mason - Thurston Area Agency on Aging

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Advisory Council Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, March 1, 2023

Members Present

Lewis County: *Tim Wood; Carolyn (Carol) Brock; Liz Hicker; Heidi Buswell; Debbie Aust.*

Mason County: *Glenn Harper, Vice-Chair; Tamra Ingwaldson; Becky Cronquist; Cynthia Stang.*

Thurston County: *Eileen McKenzieSullivan, Chair; Ellen Wendt; Michelle Horaney; Angela Hock; Anna Schlecht*

Members Absent

Lewis:

Mason:

Thurston: *Cathleen (Cat) McGaffigan*

Staff Present: *Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director; Jemma Williamson, Deputy Executive Director; Carrie Petit, Contracts Director; John McBride, Access Services Supervisor; Megan King, Interim Senior Executive Assistant; Lisa Bachmann, Administrative Coordinator; Chrissy Franklin, Administrative Assistant*

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Eileen McKenzieSullivan at 9:37 am, which was followed by introductions.

Approval of Minutes & Agenda

Eileen McKenzieSullivan, Chair, entertained a motion to approve the draft agenda for the March 1, 2023 meeting as well as the draft meeting minutes from February 1, 2023 meeting. Glenn Harper made the motion to approve both items and it was seconded by Tim Wood. The motion was passed unanimously.

Comments from the Council Chair - Eileen McKenzieSullivan, Chair

Eileen thanked everyone for coming and for their hard work. She shared that this month is National Social Workers Month, Woman's History Month and Developmental Disability Awareness Month.

Community Supports Presentation, Alzheimer's and Dementia – John McBride, Access Services Supervisor

John McBride, Access Services Supervisor, shared that while Alzheimer's Disease is the most commonly diagnosed form of dementia there are almost 100 types, some tied to different diseases like diabetes. Symptoms of dementia can start to show 20-30 years before the onset of the illness which typically progresses over 8-12 years. Obesity is a high risk factor for dementia, so eating a Mediterranean diet, high in healthy, full-fat foods; limiting sugar; and exercising are beneficial.

John gave an overview of the programs the Lewis Mason Thurston Area Agency on Aging (LMTAAA) provides for family caregivers. The Family Caregiver Specialists work to support caregivers who are assisting people experiencing symptoms of dementia. The Dementia Study Group provides a safe place where caregivers can come and share challenges and wins with other caregivers in their community. These classes currently take place via Zoom, but eventually may return to in-person meetings.

LMTAAA will be partnering with local author Gretchen Staebler for a three part series at the Centralia Library on March 8, 14 and 21. Gretchen will share portions from her book "Mother Lode; Confessions of a Reluctant Caregiver" based on her experience caretaking for her mother. John and his staff will bring materials to share about LMTAAA programs. John also shared that LMTAAA will co-sponsor the local Alzheimer conference on May 18, which will be held in person.

Area Plan Survey Request – Jemma Williamson, Deputy Executive Director

Jemma Williamson gave a brief overview of the area plan survey. She shared her appreciation for the input the members had already given and asked for input on the survey. Glenn Harper, Vice-Chair and member of the Socialization Committee wants to know if participants are experiencing any social isolation. The committee agreed that there should be 2-3 questions for each of the following topics: social isolation, housing, transportation, nutrition and LGBTQ+ as well as space for any additional information the participant wants to share.

It was suggested that the council members have the previous survey emailed to them for ideas. Also discussed was the option to skip sections of the survey if not applicable. To reach more seniors, it was suggested that the survey be offered in print form as well as on Survey Monkey in English and perhaps other languages.

The survey will go out in April by email to consumers and community partners; by distribution to different groups in the community; and by council members spreading the information in person, by email and using social media. There are plans to have a QR code for the survey. Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director, shared the agency will send staff to local events to share the survey prepared with brochures listing LMTAAA programs & resources. It was suggested that the agency create a simple brochure that is smaller than the Resource Directory.

Community Updates & Announcements:

Lewis County: Carol Brock shared a poster of the Night of Magic, hosted by the Lewis County Seniors, happening March 4. Doors open at 5:00 and the event starts at 6:00 which includes dinner, a magic show featuring Jeff Evans, and a raffle. Ticket can be purchased online or at the door. The event can also be attended virtually.

Mason County: Glenn Harper, Vice-Chair, shared that Friday Fun Night will March 10 at the Shelton Senior Center with free pizza, dancing and drinks for a minimal charge. On March 23, 2:00 pm at the Lacey Senior Center, Glenn will be hosting a Death Café; an open discussion on what happens after we die. There will be cake and beverages.

Thurston County: Angela Hock shared that the Lacey Senior Center will be having a sock hop in April with nostalgic memories, retro games, music from the 50's, root-beer floats and snacks.

Housing Committee & Charter - Glenn Harper, Vice-Chair

Glenn Harper, Vice-Chair, reported for Anna Schlecht. There were twelve people who attended the first Mason County Housing Committee Meeting, including Commissioner Trask and several Shelton City Officials. Glenn will forward an email to be distributed to all council members, which includes all the details from the meeting. There was some additional discussion about local housing needs, with one challenge being a lack of affordable spaces for mobile homes/trailers. Glenn commented there are new programs that turn mobile home parks into cooperative housing properties, which help keep them affordable and kept up.

State Council on Aging (SCoA)- Michele Horaney

Michele Horaney explained that the State Council on Aging met the previous day so a written report will be emailed later. The council discussed the current legislature session. The Hunger Relief Bill (HB 1784) is currently in the Senate. This bill will assist people who are losing their SNAP benefits due to the end of the pandemic. 40% of seniors and those with disabilities currently benefit from this program. Another bill will return money held in estate funds to the families of the deceased. There are three bills that will hopefully increase the number of in-home caregivers: one on credentialing, (HB 1568); one on testing, (HB 1694); and one on skills tests during training, (SB 5278). Bill HB 1329 will help protect seniors from having their utilities turned off during extreme weather situations. Bill SB 5560, introduced by Sam Hunt, will assist seniors in allowing them to turn in their drivers license for a free ID card, provide drivers licenses for shorter terms or require seniors to take a refresher course to keep their license after a specific age.

There is legislation that may cause Kaiser to change their policy for dispensing medications to coordinate with non-Kaiser pharmacies, as currently you can only pick them up at a Kaiser facility or by mail, which can be a hardship for those in rural communities. Michele also discussed a movement across the country to have each state have a Master Plan in place. The Council on Aging will be working on this for our state, so we have a comprehensive plan put together that incorporates all the resources, services and agencies.

Socialization & Engagement Committee – Glenn Harper, Vice-Chair / Angela Hock

Glenn Harper shared that the GrandPads have some challenges and take a lot of management. The IN2L tablet is specifically for patients in nursing homes and retirement communities and may be a better option for our use. These can interface with an Amazon Firestick. Angela Hock shared that are also reviewing a telephone reassurance program called Mon Ami. We would need volunteers to take part in this program that is a confidential way for seniors to have interactions by phone and reduce social isolation. Glenn also shared information on a scholarship program for caregivers to reduce the financial burden of the cost to become certified.

Advocacy & Legislative Committee – Michele Horaney

Michele Horaney deferred to Executive Director, Nicole Kiddoo to share any updates in her report.

Additional Comments

Eileen McKenzieSullivan, Chair, shared that the standing committees are in the by-laws and there are other committees in addition to those. She encouraged the new council members to see if there are any committees they are interested in joining.

Executive Director's Report – Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director

Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director, thanked all of the council members for their hard work. She explained that home care bills will make it easier for people to become certified as caregivers and provide needed services for our seniors. W4A is working with SIKU and AARP to help these bills move forward. The Hunger relief bill, SHB 1784, will help fill in the gap for seniors when the SNAP benefits expire. Area Agencies on Aging around the state were asked if they were given money, could it be distributed to seniors by the end of June 2023. Because of this and other COVID monies that will expire end of June, we will be working with our nutrition partners to develop a plan to spend the funding quickly.

Nicole also shared that with the legislative dollars we have received last year, we have been able to hire more staff and reduce the ratio of clients for case managers to 75:1. The agency is currently hiring with all current positions listed on the agency website. When fully staffed with the current budget there will be 92 employees, up 30% from when Nicole started with the agency. Depending on the outcome of this year's legislative session, that number may increase further. We hope to remain in our current building for the near future. Several council members mentioned it would be nice if the Advisory Council could rotate locations to each of our counties. Carolyn Brock shared that she could help coordinate scheduling a meeting for a future Advisory Council meeting at the Twin Cities Senior Center in Chehalis, if needed.

Next Advisory Council Meeting

The next Advisory Council Meeting will be on April 5, 2023 via Zoom and in person.

Adjournment

Eileen McKenzieSullivan, Chair, called for a motion to adjourn. Glenn Harper, Vice-Chair made a motion to adjourn and Tim Wood seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 12:02 pm

Submitted by: Lisa Bachmann, Administrative Coordinator.