



Lewis - Mason - Thurston Area Agency on Aging

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Area Agency on Aging

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Advisory Council Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, May 3, 2023 9:30 – 12:00 p.m. Via ZOOM

Members Present

Lewis County: *Tim Wood, Carolyn (Carol) Brock, Heidi Buswell, Liz Hicker*

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

Thurston County: *Cat McGaffigan; Ellen Wendt; Michele Horaney; Anna Schlecht*

Members Absent

Lewis County: Debbie Aust

Mason County:

Thurston County: Eileen McKenzie Sullivan, Chair; Angela Hock;

Staff Present

Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director; Jemma Williamson, Deputy Executive Director; Donna Feddern, Community Supports Director; Melaine Minson, Case Manager; Chrissy Franklin, Administrative Secretary; Jessica Hodges, Senior Executive Assistant

Guests:

Welcome & Introductions

Glenn Harper, *Vice-Chair*, called the meeting to order at 9:33 AM, followed by introductions.

Approval of Minutes and Agenda

Motion to accept the Draft Agenda for May 2023 and Draft Meeting Minutes was made by Heidi Buswell and seconded by Liz Hicker. A vote was taken and carried unanimously.

Guest Speaker: Melaine Minson, Case Manager

Melaine presented her background information and due diligence in collaborating with other Case Managers to gain a well-rounded perspective on the day-to-day experience and perspective of a Case Manager. Every day, Case Managers do routine checks along with a wide range of management tasks such as:

- Filter notifications through financial and Care
- Tend to voicemails
- Internal and external emails
- Do monitor plan calls to check in on clients
- Schedule assessments
- home visits and home assessments
- Adjust authorizations so providers get paid
- Social services collaboration to find placements
- Determine staff equipment needs for clients
- Write up Exception to Rule when asking for something out of the ordinary – significant change assessments (health)
- Calls and assessments using interpreters
- Lengthy convos with CDWA
- Transfer clients to facilities (nursing or adult family)
- Discuss employment opportunities with clients
- APS reports
- Help clients connect with new resources such as silver sneakers, financial department, Farmers Market Vouchers work, CCG (community choice guide) to help with the physical moving of a client, nurse delegation – medical care for their conditions.

Some clients who only qualified for services because of the PHE are getting letters that their services are ending as the PHE ends. Qualifications are based on the clients' financial and functional status and some financial qualifiers were put on hold because of the PHE. We do emotional conversations to provide reassurance. Melaine emphasized client post-pandemic mental health, and how Case Managers are helping with that. Glenn Harper asked if Case Managers are seeing an increased experience of isolation in clients, to which Melaine confirmed; many are lonely and have little support. Activities throughout the pandemic fell by the wayside and contributed to loneliness. Some clients need reassurance that their Case Manager will come back and call often to combat the loneliness. Many of our clients watch the news a lot and heard the qualification requirements would change soon. If mental health diagnoses were in place, it was exasperated. Some mental health services were stopped as phone conversations were not meeting client needs. Housing has been a huge issue among our client population. A question on availability or cost being the issue was asked. Melaine responded with both. Caregiver shortage has a huge impact on clients' mental health as they become unsure if they can stay at home if they don't have a caregiver. It is hard to get caregivers to work with clients with behavioral issues. Through care agencies, there are no substitutes like there used to be. Several dedicated caregivers stayed home with their kids during the pandemic and chose not to return. Some Caregivers quit due to the vaccine mandate. Foodbanks are struggling to meet demands. Some clients need nurse delegation with complicated needs. Liz Hicker asked what the recommendation is in getting information out there to connect them in some way. Melaine responded that the fastest route is to have someone from the committee speak during the case management meeting on the first Monday of the month. Questions regarding those that cannot afford housing were discussed. Case Managers are having conversations about alternative housing and Coordinated Entry process to research housing vouchers. Some clients are younger and may be on services for a less physical disability, and we are able to connect them to supportive employment.

Questions regarding service qualifiers, caseloads, process for the assignment of clients to Case Managers, transitional assistance, and team sizes were discussed.

Reports

Community Updates & Announcements – Glenn Harper, Vice Chair

Anna Schlecht reported The Senior Housing Alliance made its first round for Lewis and Mason Counties and working to develop networks and is putting together a fact sheet advocates can use. We are preparing people in those counties to testify at Commission Meetings and writing letters to editors of newspapers and building support to share those housing dollars to get more subsidized senior housing funded.

Liz Hicker reported for Lewis County, Lewis is likely to split night by night shelter contracts with 2 organizations. Senior centers are all open and are experiencing an influx in people showing up as a result of food stamps being lowered. The Seniors of Lewis County are looking forward to the farmers market vouchers. There was a fundraiser held at McMenamins last night. Raffle tickets for sale.

Thurston County reports from Michele Horaney – talk about finding a new location for the Senior Center for South Sound as the building is worn out. There has been some information in the newspaper that was unhelpful with talk moving it to west Olympia as a county center. There is a desire to put the new senior center at the mall. Anna added the city offering the site to move out of downtown and interested in an auxiliary location. The beauty of a new location is the city has wanted to build a new swimming pool, walking trails and ball fields. Potential for senior center to partner with the city to provide that type of exercise is a positive. Dementia conference is approaching. May 18th.

Mason County – Friday fun night on the 12th – pizza beer wine for purchase, line dancing couples dancing from 6:00PM – 9:00 PM. Hosting Death Café at Lacey Senior Center on the 25th. The first one was well received and the second one not so much but the weather was very nice so that might be why. We had a speaker who had worked in funeral home industry with green burials. The Death Café is not about funeral planning but can be anything.

State Council on Aging (SCoA) – Michele Horaney

Michele reported the direction of the meeting experienced AL TSA W4A and AARP in legislative session that has passed. Not as much money is being disbursed as in the pandemic but we are ok on the state side. SCoA's charge is to advise the governor and work on what SCoA can do vs what we want to do. We tried to move to promote older Americans month but were stumped through ways to promote. There are discussions on whether to meet in person in May with logistics concerns being brought to the forefront of the conversation.

Housing Committee & Charter – Anna Schlecht

The Committee is hoping to get more information around those that are homeless and why. A lot of seniors aging in place are on the streets as not all shelters are geared to accommodate them. Many are interested in serving on the committee. It's found to be useful to have monthly meeting of LMTAAA's core team and rotate to other counties. It's understood it is not possible for every county every month. Glenn and Anna will coordinate on a date to meet that is not a Friday.

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

Glenn reported the committee had a regularly scheduled meeting on the last Wednesday of the month. Discussions around the Mona Me phone reassurance program and Grandpads migration to IN2L.

Advocacy & Legislative Committee – Michele Horaney

Nicole reported on the state legislative session with a special thank you to the Advisory Council for spreading our message around. Nicole expressed appreciation for the work that went in to that. She reported some wins, and some things we have to go back to the drawing board for. Health Homes rate increase was successful and is keeping pace with inflation with a \$7.3M increase. We are a care coordinator agency partner with Molina and our program is off the ground and running. We currently have some staffing in place for that. Case Management we received \$2.4M to share with 13 AAA's in the state. We also received ratio funding to get to 75:1 caseloads. The decision package the state put forward was funded. As for Parody dollars, we got \$2.4M out of the \$4M request. Case management will be a priority for W4A next year. We were successful for dementia catalyst funding except they are only looking to fund one program instead of the two we asked for; including the pilots. The state will add one AAA for one year and will require additional funds requests from legislature. WACARES funding for AAA is in the decision package put forth by DSHS and was funded. This includes outreach funding and a second piece of funding state depending on AAA network to build more capacity in terms of offerings of new or more robust services. When people tap into the benefit, the network and system has been built. This funding includes 2 FTE's per AAA. Heidi asked if there is a way to build dementia funding in to WACARES. Nicole responded, as W4A helps build this network, piece serving with a level of service delivery expected from WACRAES benefit. Michele added that the program is preceding with amendments to be made.

Executive Director's Report and Legislative Updates – Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director

Nicole shared national priorities and informed the Council that the priority pamphlet is out. Some of the hunger relief bill funding is out to our providers. We are looking to partner with Thurston County Foodbank serving all 3 counties. Additionally, we have some Senior Nutrition Program funding that will help. October 18th is W4A's first back in person fall conference. October 19th Senior Lobby is holding their conference in person. The event has not secured a venue yet, but put a place holder on your calendar. Looking to get Sandy Markwood from USAging and Bob Blancato for this conference. There is uncertainty around hybrid attendance for this conference.

Nicole shared the USAging Policy Priorities 2023 shared with recommendation to review the document on the details of the priorities. We will have opportunities for grass roots advocacy to switch gears to the national piece. People need to know the impact of things happening as the pandemic ends with people losing benefits. Next year is reauthorization of the Older Americans Act itself. Conversations around the reauthorization and listening sessions where Advisory Council could have great impact in providing input were held. We are looking at 3B services that allow the most flexibility in the OAA and hasn't gotten as much attention in the ladder years as the nutrition program has. In Washington state, 60% of funding is related to Medicaid services. There is a strong desire to have wider variety in connecting healthcare and aging sectors more.

Adjournment

Tim Wood motioned to adjourn the meeting; Carol Brock seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously at 11:57 AM

Submitted by: Jessica Hodges, Senior Executive Assistant