



# LEWIS-MASON-THURSTON AREA AGENCY ON AGING

 [LMTAAA.org](http://LMTAAA.org)

 (360) 664-0791

 (360) 664-2168

## Lewis-Mason-Thurston Area Agency on Aging **Meeting of the Council of Governments** Meeting Minutes via Teams Teleconference & In Person

**January 23, 2025, 2:00pm**

### ***Members Present:***

Commissioner Sharon Trask, Chair, Mason County; Commissioner Sean Swope, Vice-Chair, Lewis County; Commissioner Rachel Grant, Thurston County.

### ***Members Absent:*** N/A

### ***Staff Present:***

Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director; Jemma Williamson, Deputy Executive Director: Mary Beth Mercer, Chief Human Resources Officer; Sabrina Dean, Chief Financial Officer; Donna Feddern, Chief of Programs & Services; Carrie Petit, Chief of Contracts & Planning; Emily McFarland, Case Management Director; Julie Dasso, IT Director; Lisa Bachmann, Sr. Executive Assistant; Chrissy Franklin, Executive Assistant.

***Guests Present:*** Heidi Buswell, Advisory Council Vice-Chair; Eddie Allen, Union Representative

### ***Call to Order:***

Commissioner Trask called the meeting to order at 2:01 pm

### ***Opening/Introductions:***

Commissioner Grant was welcomed and had the opportunity to share her background. Introductions were made by all who attended, and the Pledge of Allegiance recited.

### ***Approval of Draft Agenda & Minutes***

A motion was made by Commissioner Grant to approve the January 23, 2025, draft agenda and the draft minutes for both the October 17 & October 25, 2024, draft minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Trask. A vote was taken and carried unanimously.

### ***Public Comments:***

*There were no public comments.*

### ***Election of Officers:***

Commissioner Swope nominated Commissioner Trask to continue acting as Chair and

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Commissioner Grant nominated Commissioner Swope to continue acting as Vice-Chair. Commissioner Trask made a motion and called for the vote which carried unanimously.

### ***Review of 2025 COG Meeting Dates & Cadence – Lisa Bachmann, Sr. Executive Assistant***

It was discussed and decided that meeting quarterly with occasional special meetings works well. Lisa Bachmann, Sr. Executive Assistant, will email the Commissioners to coordinate dates that will work with their schedules.

### ***Advisory Council Report – Heidi Buswell, Advisory Council Vice-Chair:***

Heidi Buswell let the Commissioners know that last quarter, the Council focused efforts in several areas. Advocacy work is ongoing for the Reauthorization of the Older American's Act (OAA) and many council members attended a virtual Advocacy Webinar to prepare for meetings with state Representatives and Senators the first week of February. The Mon Ami phone reassurance program has passed through all security process and has started in Thurston County, with plans to extend to Lewis and Mason Counties. The group is also reviewing the Advisory Council by-laws and membership.

### ***Executive Director Report - Nicole Kiddoo:***

Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director, gave updates on the Agency's efforts advocating at the state and federal levels. For state advocacy, the main focus is a nutrition requests for \$35.4 million. This would allow Area Agency's around the state to continue our programs at the current capacity. The proposed amount that is in former Governor Inslee's budget is \$28 million which would mean cuts. There was an additional smaller ask of \$750,000 that was awarded to fund a pilot program called Building Dementia Capable Communities, which three AAAs in the state are taking part in. Our Advisory Council members have been extremely helpful in advocating for us. We are busy preparing for Advocacy Days at the State Capitol. Nicole referenced the documents we are sharing with our legislators, included in the packet. Commissioner Swope suggested that Nicole reach out to him regarding Bill #1373 that Representative Orcutt is sponsoring. Nicole also shared that on the Federal level, we have been focused on the Reauthorization of the Older American's Act. She will be going to DC end of March to help advocate for that and the 2025 USAgings policies, yet to be released.

### ***Chief Financial Officer's Fiscal Report - Sabrina Dean Chief Financial Officer:***

Sabrina Dena, Chief Financial Officer, shared the financial report included with her memo. She is caught up on billing through October of 2024. Sage, the agency's new financial software program, has launched and it provides beautiful reports and will make information easier to access and monitor for departmental leads. The audit for 2023 is complete and there were no findings, which is rare. We are now current on audits and the 2024 one is scheduled for May.

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She gave a brief review of the process for our consensus approval: these go out by email via DocuSign around the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month, with a retroactive motion for approval at the quarterly meetings.

### ***Motion – Approval of Consensus:***

Commissioner Grant made the motion that based upon the recommendation of the Executive Director, the Lewis Mason Thurston Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging to approve the consensus motions dated November 12, 2024, and December 18, 2024. Commissioner Swope seconded the motion and Commissioner Trask called for the vote. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

### ***Motion – Approval of Voucher Batches:***

Commissioner Swope made the motion that upon the recommendation of the Executive Director, he moved to approve the vouchers as noted above from December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, through December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024, in the amount of \$242,394.25, a detailed listing is attached. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grant and Commissioner Trask called for the vote. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

### ***Motion – Approval of 2025 Area Plan Budget***

Sabrina Dean, Chief Financial Officer, shared the agency's 2025 budget and organizational chart included in the packet. Commissioner Swope made the motion that upon the recommendation of the Executive Director, he moved to approve the Lewis Mason Area Agency on Aging's 2025 Area Plan budget in the amount of \$15,558,252. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grant and Commissioner Trask called for the vote. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

### ***Deputy Executive Director Report - Jemma Williamson:***

Jemma Williamson, Deputy Executive Director, reviewed the Agency's successes from 2024 and shared some of what is to come in 2025. There is a focus on training for the staff, with monthly opportunities that cover a variety of topics such as mental health. We have a new training software called Absorb that will help us keep our trainings organized and make it easier to track who has taken what courses. We are working on updating policies and making them more accessible, archiving documents, cleaning up our office areas and evaluating our space. With updates for the Older Americans Act, we are working on our emergency plans and making sure we are up to date. We will also be doing a two-year assessment this year of our Area Plan.

### ***Chief of Human Resources Report – Mary Beth Mercer:***

Mary Beth Mercer reported that the agency just updated our handbook for 2025. BambooHR

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now allows us to put our handbook in program and then AI will help the staff find specific policies as well as view their annual reviews. We have a new benefits carrier, Berg, which saved the agency a lot of money. The medical insurance changed from Kaiser to Regence with the same dental and vision. There is a portal we can use to access documents or get resources.

### ***Contract Director's Report – Carrie Petit:***

Carrie Petit shared that we are working on renewing contracts with our partners. Our Older American Act (OAA) contracts are on a four-year cycle which are up for procurement this year and so we are getting out requests for proposals. The regulations in the act are also getting updated. This had not happened since 1988 and went into effect in March of 2024. We have until October of 2025 to suggest any changes. This gives up time to review the state plan and see how that lines up with our agency Area Plan.

### ***Chief of Programs and Services Report– Donna Feddern:***

Donna shared that part of her role is to be the agency housing specialist. She is working with local partners and the Advisory Council Housing Committee on plans for a Lewis County Housing Forum this spring. She is also working on approval for a program called Blooming Health, which is an automated communications system for clients that provides translation services.

### ***Community Supports Director's Report - Valerie Aubertin:***

Valerie Aubertin shared a bit about the teams she oversees. The Aging & Disability Resource Connection Team (ADRC) does a lot of outreach and answers calls. The Family Caregiver Support Program staff (FCSP) are trained to lead the Power Tools course which is for the families of unpaid family caregivers and provides an opportunity for them to share some of the unique challenges they face. They have been working on updating the look of the LMTAAA Resource Directory, with the help of Becca Frisch, the agency's Communication's Manager. It will have a larger sized font and will be color coded by section to match what is in the updated website.

### ***Case Management Supervisor Report – Emily MacFarland***

Emily MacFarland shared that one of the reasons it is important for our case ratios to remain lower is for clients that need extra assistance. They had one client recently that needed support for housing. It took several staff two days just to help get one person into a home. It is because of scenarios like this that we need to keep advocating for our clients.

### ***Adjournment:***

Commissioner Grant moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Trask. The meeting adjourned at 3:23 pm.

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**Minutes Submitted by:**

Lisa Bachmann, Sr. Executive Assistant

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