



LEWIS-MASON-THURSTON AREA AGENCY ON AGING

 LMTAAA.org

 (360) 664-0791

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Advisory Council

Draft Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, June 4, 2025

9:30 AM – 12:00 PM

In Person & Via Zoom

Members Present:

Lewis County: Heidi Buswell, Vice-Chair; Debbie Aust; Tim Wood; Nikki Storms.

Mason County: Glenn Harper.

Thurston County: Cat McGaffigan, Chair; Michele Horaney; Anna Schlecht.

Members Absent:

Becky Cronquist; Greg Rohr; Willie Merryman; Eileen McKenzieSullivan.

Staff Present:

Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director; Jemma Williamson, Deputy Executive Director; Donna Feddern, Chief of Programs and Services; Lisa Bachmann, Senior Executive Assistant; Carrie Petit, Chief of Contracts and Planning; Chrissy Franklin, Advisory Council Liaison; Kyle Sanchez, Planning Director; Julie Dasso, IT Director.

Visitors Present:

Liz Hicker, former Advisory Council member.

Tribal Land Acknowledgement, *Cat McGaffigan, Chair*

Welcome and Introductions, *Cat McGaffigan, Chair*

Cat McGaffigan, Chair, welcomed everyone and introductions were made.

Approval of the June 4, 2025, Draft Agenda and May 7, 2025, Draft Minutes

A motion was entertained to approve the June draft agenda and May draft minutes by Cat McGaffigan, Chair. The motion was approved by Glenn Harper, seconded by Heidi Buswell, Vice-Chair and passed unanimously.

Agency's Role in WA Cares, *Kyle Sanchez, Planning Director*

Kyle Sanchez, Planning Director, shared a PowerPoint presentation about the WA Cares Fund which ensures all working Washingtonians have the opportunity to earn access to long-term care. Kyle explained how to qualify for benefits and the agency's role in WA Cares. LMTAAAA was chosen to participate as one of two Area Agencies on Aging to pilot the program. Kyle also shared the current timeline of the pilot. Kyle opened the floor for questions. Advisory Council members asked if there is a limit on how many may participate in the pilot. Yes, four hundred will be the statewide limit once the application process starts. There will be an application process that will take place including in-home assessments. There will be over the phone assessments available for certain applicants. An Advisory Council member asked how long the

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pilot will take. The pilot will be three to four months long. Kyle stated that the timeline is being worked out based on when the process starts. An additional question: when will applicants start to receive their benefits. As soon as the application is approved applicants have access to benefits. Those that start services during the pilot will not lose access after the pilot is completed. Advisory Council members asked how they can help advocate for WA Cares and how it will help caregivers for family members. Kyle stated that there are benefits with WA Cares that give the client an option to use their benefits for caregivers. Advocacy is needed to educate the community on the benefits of WA Cares as a long-term benefit. Local community stories are very important to share as we advocate the importance of the program. Kyle explained that the providers of services will need to register (contract) to provide those services. Family members will need to register for Eligible Relative Care to receive benefits. Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director, stated that W4A and the WA Cares team are working on forthcoming details for caregivers.

Executive Director Report, Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director

Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director, reported that there are several staff members that will be attending the USAging 50th Anniversary at the Answers on Aging Annual Conference in July. LMTAAAA is honored to receive two Aging Innovations Awards for the fourth year in a row. Kyle Sanchez, Planning Director, received an award for “Demystifying Long Term Care” for creating a game to display at outreach events explaining WA Cares and was recognized for outreach efforts. Becca Frisch, Communications Manager, received an award for “Our Shared Connections” recognizing the wonderful work she does to highlight the agency through social media and other outlets. We will also have the honor of having Kyle do a presentation on our Leadership Academy and Nicole will present on WA Cares.

The Leadership Academy graduation is on Friday, June 13th and Advisory Council members are welcome to attend the celebration.

Regarding funding, Nicole reported that Carrie Petit, Chief of Contracts and Planning, is working with Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA) and the Aging and Long-Term Support Administration (AL TSA) on Medicaid Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN), which is a new program offering supports to eligible clients. The HRSN funding will be influx of a one-time thirty million dollars for Medicaid-eligible clients over a three-year cycle. After three years we will have to try to renew the funding.

We are very happy to report that some of the state budget cuts to programs didn't happen; thank you to Advisory Council for the advocacy work that you do. Lisa Bachmann, Senior Executive Assistant, gave a State legislative update. Case Management had a \$6.7 million dollar cut which may result in a ratio increase. The agency has put a hold on hiring Case Management

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Leads until we know more about the funding. The Health Homes program didn't get cut and we will continue to collect data on how important the program is for the next legislative session. Washington Association of Area Agencies on Aging (W4A) has started working on the next legislative session. We will continue to provide data on how important it is to continue to support Dementia community members. We will also continue to advocate for Senior Nutrition funding. Nicole encouraged everyone to sign up for the W4A newsletters.

Nicole gave a Federal legislative update. Bob Blancato, Executive Director of the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs and Ellie Hollander, President and CEO of Meals on Wheels are meeting with Senator Patty Murray to continue to advocate for senior nutrition needs. There are no proposed cuts to The Older Americans Act (OAA) but if the funding doesn't increase programs will have to be cut across the country. Some Senior Centers across the country are closing due to not having enough funding. We do have concerns about cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). During this time the agency has continued to work on a contingency plan to help with savings that included reclassifying some positions and we are happy to report there have been no layoffs. We are also looking at funding reserves to see how long the agency can go without certain funding. Carrie shared that the Contracts Department is working on the next release of our request for proposals for OAA services and getting providers contracted for the next four years.

Community Announcements & Updates

Heidi Buswell, Vice-Chair, reported that in May she and Advisory Council member Debbie Aust read the Older Americans Month Proclamation at the Chehalis City Council meeting, the Napavine City Council meeting, and the Toledo City Council meeting.

Liz Hicker reported that the Winlock Senior Center has received new paint and siding. The site leader is doing a great job as more community members have been coming into the center.

Anna Schlecht reported that they will be speaking about senior issues at a rally on Saturday, June 14th in downtown Olympia.

Updates - Chrissy Franklin, Advisory Council Liaison reported that there will not be an Advisory Council meeting in July. We will start to schedule the By-Law Committee meetings. We ask that members start to look through the By-Laws and take notes of recommended updates.

Housing Committee – Anna Schlecht reported the focus right now is Lewis County housing. Donna Feddern, Chief of Programs and Services, Debbie Aust, and Anna continue to meet and discuss the housing forum for Lewis County housing needs. Currently, we are continuing to work on connecting with community leaders.

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SCoA Meeting Report - Glenn Harper reported he was not able to attend the meeting. He did get meeting minutes and stated that they spoke about Older Americans Month Proclamation.

Socialization & Engagement Committee - Donna Feddern, Chief of Programs and Services and Glenn Harper reported we have not received an update from Senior Services on how the Mon Ami program is going but will provide an update at the next meeting. Glenn shared that the Olympia Area Village is having the Aging and End of Life Community Roundtable on Wednesday, August 6th 6pm to 8pm at South Sound Manor in Tumwater and that the agency will be there.

Adjournment

A motion was entertained by Glenn Harper to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Tim Wood, and it was unanimously decided to adjourn the meeting. The next meeting will be on August 6, 2025.

Minutes taken by

Chrissy Franklin, Advisory Council Liaison