



# LEWIS-MASON-THURSTON AREA AGENCY ON AGING

🖥️ [LMTAAA.org](http://LMTAAA.org)

📠 (360) 664-0791

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Lewis-Mason-Thurston Area Agency on Aging

## Meeting of the Council of Governments

Meeting Minutes via Zoom Teleconference & In Person

**June 18, 2025, 10:00 am**

### Members Present:

Commissioner Sharon Trask, Chair, Mason County; Commissioner Rachel Grant, Thurston County

### Members Absent:

Commissioner Sean Swope, Vice-Chair, Lewis County

### Staff Present:

Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director; Carrie Petit, Chief of Contracts & Planning; Donna Feddern, Chief of Programs; Sabrina Dean, Chief Financial Officer; Jemma Williamson, Deputy Executive Director; Mary Beth Mercer, Chief Human Resources Officer; Lisa Bachmann, Sr. Executive Assistant; Chrissy Franklin, Office Manager; Lynette Richardson, Case Manager

### Guests Present:

Heidi Buswell, Advisory Council Vice-Chair; Karen Anderson, CCS HEN Housing Program Manager; Dan Swedlow, Attorney for LMTAAA.

### Call to Order:

Commissioner Trask called the meeting to order at 10:03 am

### Opening /Introductions:

Introductions were made by everyone in attendance in person and virtually. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### Approval of Draft Agenda & Minutes:

Commissioner Grant moved to approve the June 18, 2025, draft agenda and January 23, 2025, draft minutes. Commissioner Trask 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. There was no discussion. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

### Public Comments:

Commissioner Trask asked each of the guests individually if they had any comments. Karen Anderson responded she will submit her comments in written format later. There were no additional comments or questions.

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

Heidi Buswell, Advisory Council Vice-Chair, provided an update on the Advisory Council's activities. They have focused on advocating for the agency, including the reauthorization of the Older American's Act. During Older American's Act month, the group reached out to various city county councils to explain the importance of the act. The Housing Committee has regrouped and is focusing on Lewis County, with Donna Feddern's assistance, to create a coalition, similar to what Thurston County is doing. The Lewis County Coalition will focus on issues unique to that county. The Mon Ami phone reassurance program is now established in Thurston County and is going well, with plans to extend to Mason and Lewis Counties. She explained she is bringing a motion to amend the language of one of the bylaws today. The Advisory Council plans to look at the remaining bylaws to see if any additional wording should be amended. There is a need for more members to represent Mason County.

## **Motion – Amendment to Advisory Council By-Laws:**

Commissioner Grant made the following motion: "I move that upon the recommendation of the Lewis Mason Thurston Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council to approve the suggested new language for Article III, section 4 of the Lewis-Mason-Thurston Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council By-Laws." The proposed wording is as follows: Regular voting members may serve up to three (3) consecutive terms on the Advisory Council unless additional terms are approved by the respective local Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). Filling a midterm vacancy does not count toward the regular consecutive term limit. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Trask. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

## **Executive Session**

Commissioner Trask announced that there would be an executive session per RCWs 42.30.080 and 42.30.110(1)(i) that would start at 10:13 am and end at 10:43 am. The Executive Session ended on time at 10:43 and was not extended.

## **Executive Director Report – Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director**

Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director, shared that for the 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row, the agency is receiving awards at the USAging Annual Conference. Kyle Sanchez, Planning Director, has received an Innovation Award for "Demystifying Long Term Care" and Becca Frisch, Communications Manager, received an Achievement Award for "Our Shared Connections." Kyle has been going out into the community to share about WA Cares. He created a game to make it easier to explain the information and learn about the program. Becca has done great work with getting the agency's name out on social media.

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Nicole provided a recap of some great advocacy wins. The Agency was facing cuts in the Health Homes, Nursing, and Care Transition programs, which thankfully did not come to fruition. There are Case Management cuts, which may cause potential challenges with funding and higher case load numbers. This is discouraging news since we have worked hard to lower the ratios. The agency has a projected increase in caseload numbers, which will help counter receiving less money per client. The contingency plan we have created has helped us plan for any potential cuts. For the nutrition ask, we received less than was requested but we do not have a need for any wait lists at this time. We are thankful for our Advisory Council members, who do such a wonderful job for us, advocating. Nicole referenced the Advocacy Tracker from USAging. Commissioners Grant and Trask requested that any updates to the tracker be sent to them. The Agency Policy Team has been sending out letters, making calls, attending meetings and providing testimony to advocate for our priorities. We are now waiting to see if there will be any Medicaid cuts. Older American's Act (OAA) funding may stay at the same level, which we look at as a cut due to increased costs, but still good news at this point. The Association for Community Living (ACL) was disbanded. Commissioner Trask shared that they are willing to help out by signing letters to our representatives and senators. Commissioner Grant added that she is already discussing the Health Homes program with Senator Bateman for funding for next year.

## **Fiscal Report - Sabrina Dean, Chief Financial Officer**

Sabrina Dean, Chief Financial Officer shared the included balance sheet. Implementing the Sage financial program has been her main focus. She has also been updating the fiscal policies and procedures to help make sure we are staying compliant. We are ready early for this year's audit. Once this is complete, the agency will be able to utilize Sage completely.

**Motion 1:** Commissioner Grant moved to approve the motion to approve the accounts payable. Commissioner Trask seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Commissioner Trask stated, "I move to approve the consensus motions dated February 20<sup>th</sup>, March 12<sup>th</sup>, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, and May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025." The motion passed unanimously.

**Motion 2:** Commissioner Grant moved to approve increasing the fund balance. Commissioner Trask seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Commissioner Trask stated "I move to approve the increase to the Assigned Fund Balance – Contingency Fund from \$950,000 to \$4,000,000. The motion passed unanimously

## **Human Resources Report - Mary Beth Mercer, Chief Human Resources Officer**

Mary Beth Mercer, Chief Human Resources Officer, explained that Bamboo HR has streamlined so much in the agency for both Human Resources and payroll. The staff can now complete weekly meetings between staff and supervisors in the program, which allows them to track

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everything discussed and both parties can add to it. This is a great tool and adds accountability. The program also does payroll, allows you to upload signed policies, keeps track of training records, and assists with annual reviews. It provides access to the agency handbook and uses AI to help staff find answers to policy questions.

The Agency just had an I-9 audit, which included training and makes the agency completely compliant. The Front Office staff went through a training course to help them prepare in case ICE Officers come to one of our buildings.

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

Jemma Williamson, Deputy Executive Director, shared that she is looking at different software for the agency. The State frequently provides new products and some of these features are free, allowing the agency to eliminate some software that costs. She is also ensuring that accounts for programs that have a cost are still being utilized. Another project is working on call routing. We want to make it easy for callers to reach the best person to assist them. Other priorities are records management and emergency planning. We are piloting a home safety checklist for our Case Managers to help them know of potential risks before arriving for in-home assessments. The entire staff went through the verbal portion of the Management of Aggressive Behavior Training (MOAB). Some also chose to complete the physical portion. We have two staff that are now certified to train. Due to new Older American Act (OAA) regulations, we have approval to reset our area plan dates one year earlier so that we have time to prepare for these new changes. Commissioner Grant expressed concerns about local emergency response for community members with memory issues. Donna Feddern let her know that we have staff trained in this and can provide assistance.

## **Programs and Services Report - Donna Feddern, Chief of Programs and Services**

Donna Feddern, Chief of Programs and Services, shared that part of her role is to be the agency Tribal liaison. At the last All-Staff Meeting, she presented a Power Point focused on how to work with our tribes. We have 7.01 plans with five local tribes and go to their lunches and health fairs so want to make sure agency staff are aware of how to work with them. The Mon Ami telephone reassurance program is now being used for well checks by Senior Services for South Sound. There is a good ratio of callers to volunteers wanting calls. The goal is to expand soon to Lewis County.

Donna explained that Case Management ratios continue to be maintained at the 75:1 ratio. This allows enough time to assist clients and help prevent any staff burnout. The agency is looking for ways to help if this ratio has to go up. For the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) there has been a great response. Mason county is out of cards for the first

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time. Lewis county only has eight cards remaining with thirty for Thurston. The Commissioners were all provided one the agency's new Resource Directories. This version has a larger font and is color coordinated. Dementia Conference – our staff helped plan and were there with a table.

## **Contracts & Planning Department Update – Carrie Petit, Chief of Contracts & Planning**

Carrie Petit, Chief of Contracts & Planning, shared that the contracts team is very busy, renewing about fifty Medicaid contracts that are due June 30. This year, and every 4 years, the agency does a Request for Proposals for OAA programs. This was opened June 1 and proposals are due by July 31. Carrie also explained that the agency was one of two Area Agencies on Aging in the state to be chosen for a WA Cares Pilot. Kyle Sanchez, Planning Director, is heading this up. We are working on lining up providers and getting them contracted. There is also lots of outreach regarding the program and what it is. We have received funding for the pilot and will be hiring one new contracts position to help with the contracts for new providers. The network portion of the pilot will be October of 2025 through February of 2026phas. Phase two, which includes recruiting participants to apply and select services, will run January through April of 2026. The agency anticipates hiring more staff for work related to WA Cares for intake and in-home assessments. There are a lot of meetings and coordination happening with the state.

Carrie discussed a workgroup that she and Nicole are participating in called Health Related Social Needs (HRSN). The program will be available for people that need assistance with nutrition, housing, home care or home modifications like ramps on houses. These are needs that if not met, could affect the health of the participants. The program may bring in new clients and potentially more providers. It is through a partnership with the Health Care authority, Department of Health and Social Services and Area Agencies on Aging. Nicole added that these two programs increase the agency's revenue by \$2.5 million this year. We are partnering with counties to help get more providers added, especially for rural areas. There was an interest in more information about the WA Cares Pilot Program, and it was suggested that Kyle Sanchez provide a presentation for the Commissioners.

## **Adjournment:**

Commissioner Trask ended the meeting at 11:40 pm

Minutes submitted by:

Lisa Bachmann, Sr. Executive Assistant

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