

Northeast Michigan Regional Council on Aging
Monday, April 24, 2017 at 1:00 pm
NEMCSA Large Conference Room - Alpena

The meeting was called to order by President E. Corpe at 1:00 pm.

Roll Call

M. Fox, S. Wojnar, A. Lang, D. Huff, M. Newman, E. Corpe, K. Schreiner, J. Johnston, M. Tappan, C. Athan, C. Proulx, D. Burdine, E. Howell, D. Henig, E. Henig, J. Mathis, M. Downs, D. Fay, C. Corwin

Excused: J. Drozdowski,

Unexcused: V. Zygiel

Guests: John Briggs, Dan Doezema, Denise Parrott, Christine Losinski, Lisa Bolen

Aging Staff: Laurie Sauer, Connie McQuarrie, Kelly Robinette, Liz Kowalski, Susan Bowen, Yvette Smigelski and Sara Socia

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by C. Athan with support from D. Henig to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by D. Fay with support from D. Henig to approve the minutes of March 27, 2017. Motion carried.

Nominating Committee

Cheboygan Member-at-Large – D. Fay reported George Guenther has retired as the Cheboygan Member-at-Large from the Council. A motion was made by D. Fay with support from C. Athan to accept his resignation and to send a letter of appreciation for his service to the Council. Motion carried.

Roscommon Member-at-Large – D. Fay reported we received notification that Madaline Hiller has been nominated to fill the vacant position as Roscommon Member-at-Large. A motion was made by D. Fay with support from K. Schreiner to accept the appointment. Motion carried.

Speaker – COA Happenings – Denise Parrott, Director of the Presque Isle COA

Denise introduced her Assistant Director, Christine Losinski. The Presque Isle County Council on Aging was founded in 1973. They are a Council on Aging so they are not under county government but the county does play a fiduciary role with millage dollars and transportation. They have a ten member board of directors, 28 employees, and two fully operating senior centers; one in Posen and one in Onaway. Denise has been the director since 2014 and Christine was hired in February of this year. Presque Isle has a small population of 13,376, 26% of which are age 65 and older. The home delivered meal program is the biggest. Of the 49,000 meals served in 2016, 75% were home delivered meals. They have 4 delivery routes, 2 in Posen and 2 in Onaway. Meals are delivered Monday through Thursday with frozen sent for the other 3 days. Congregate meals are served Sunday through Thursday. The seniors in Rogers City tend to come to the Posen Center. They also

have one satellite site at the Presque Isle Clubhouse that provides a congregate meal once a month. The second satellite site at Huron Beach has opted out of serving meals this year. The COA also provides homemaker, personal care and respite services. They have their own transportation system supported by MDOT and local funds. Three vehicles run Monday – Friday from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. Christine is their MMAP counselor and a new counselor will be trained this summer. Commodities are provided as well as Kinship and PATH programs. The current budget for this year is \$961,000. They have concerns about the federal cuts and their local millage because although they have always had great support from the community, you never know what will happen. 67% of their funds are from the millage. They continue to have repair needs on their buses and both facilities are aging and in need of repairs and updates. In the past, the Posen site was closed for six months due to a lack of funds so the board is cautious about approving improvements. They did recently approve renovations to the Posen Center. The ceiling was raised, new lighting installed and the dining area painted. A Spring Fling Dance was held as an open house for the public to see. Ninety five came for dinner. They would now like to install air conditioning at the Onaway site. Bids have been received and they hope for board approval. They recently upgraded their one home delivered meal vehicle purchasing a 2016 car to replace it. Discussion followed.

C. Proulx - What do you use the buses for? Denise – The buses are for anyone to use. Regular trips are made for shopping, doctor appointments, hair salons, etc. We struggle to get our seniors to use it. Once a month we make a trip to Alpena and this month we only had five take advantage of it. We are always working to increase our ridership.

C. Proulx – What is the function of your Assistant Director? Denise – Although our population is small, there is plenty to do. She does payroll, disbursements, HR duties, accounts receivable and payable, PATH classes, Kinship and MMAP. The COA initially had one director then we went to co-directors then back to a sole director with an assistant director.

J. Johnston – You have a sparse population but a large area to cover, what percent of the budget is spent on transportation? I know our staff puts on an incredible amount of miles. Denise – I don't know the percentage because our transportation expenses are supported solely by MDOT and millage money so the program wouldn't be on the chopping block right away. We also have three bus drivers who work part-time.

E. Howell – Does your county have public transportation? Denise – No.

K. Schreiner – The participants' perception of the service is that it's for those who are handicapped or very old. We run into that in Crawford County also.

C. Proulx – How are your volunteer numbers? Denise – we only have one volunteer. We advertise in our newsletter, etc. but get no response. The Posen site is in farm country and the Onaway site is six or seven blocks from town. Maybe that has something to do with it.

D. Henig – How many do you get on Sunday? Denise – Sunday is actually our best day. Onaway serves at 1:00 pm and get 40-50 people and Posen serves at 4:00 pm and gets approximately 40-45. During the week they get 12-15 and Onaway a bit more. We even tried offering free transportation to the meals and got no response. It's something we constantly work on.

J. Briggs – Presque Isle has a lot of people in need but they won't tell you they need help. Part of the challenge is they are very independent people. Laurie – Presque Isle was one of the first COAs NEMCSA helped to get incorporated with a \$600 grant and help with writing the incorporation papers.

Miscellaneous Information – E. Corpe congratulated Yvette on completing a 2 ½ day intensive leadership training in Washington DC. He also welcomed new AAA staff member, Liz Kowalski.

Director's Report

AAA Staff – Laurie reported that Kara is retiring as of May 5th. She will leave a big hole in Aging when she leaves and will be missed. Laurie introduced Liz Kowalski who will be taking over for Kara. Liz moved to Michigan over the summer from Washington State where she worked in case management at an Area Agency on Aging, so she is not new to the world of aging. Last week she completed the MOB leader training and is scheduled to take the Master Training in June and the Master Training for the Creating Confident Caregivers in August.

Older Michiganians Day – Handouts distributed. We have not received a lot of response regarding attendance to date. Laurie has 45 tickets for lunch. We need to know who is going so we can utilize all of them. The event will be held in Lansing at the Capital on Wednesday, May 17th. There are a lot of important topics on the platform. The more advocates we have the bigger the impact we will have. One of the platform issues for advocacy is the lack of direct care workers. This is an issue across the state mainly due to the low wages paid. We really appreciate all the in-home workers in our region for the work they do. Other platform issues include: Protecting Medicaid, Rebalance Michigan's Long Term Care Spending, Prevent and Respond to Elder Abuse, Increase Dementia Care and Support, Approve the Home Accessibility Tax Credit and Improve Transportation Programs. The format is a little different this year. Legislators will come to us to meet so there will be a lot less walking. So far Laurie has heard from Ogemaw, Presque Isle, Montmorency, Iosco, Crawford and Roscommon Counties. Alpena is also planning to send a few. Roscommon has a 12 person bus going if Crawford would like to arrange to ride with them room permitting. Please let Laurie know as soon as possible if your county plans to send someone.

Federal Budget Update – Laurie reported we have no news to date. We are funded until this Friday. We'll keep on doing what we're doing. We have our state funds. NEMCSA could potentially lose more than \$6 million overall and the AAA could lose CNCS Volunteer Programs, MMAP, and the Senior Community Service Employment Program along with cuts to other programs. We hope the cuts won't be so extensive. If they block grant Medicaid, it is not clear what would happen to the Waiver Program. Laurie called Senator Stabenow's office this morning but she was unavailable. Senator Bergman was in Gaylord and Escanaba last week. It sounds like the meetings were pretty interesting. For those who are interested, Senator Stabenow will give a presentation on the floor today at 4:30 pm, not sure what the topic is, followed by a vote at 5:30 pm. You can watch both on C-SPAN. E. Corpe distributed a handout of the proposed cuts to NEMCSA and urged everyone to take the information back to their COAs and make people aware of these cuts. There are 100% cuts proposed in several of NEMCSA programs. We need to send letters to our representatives in Washington. This will impact NEMCSA big time.

State budget – The Silver Key Coalition continues to advocate for the \$3.6 million for in home services. The House has voted for lower amounts and the Senate hasn't released their position yet. Other items the legislature is considering are income taxes, the outcome and potential impact of Section 298 report and auto insurance reform.

AIP – Susan is working on this year's Annual Implementation Plan. A public hearing on the plan will be held as part of our meeting next month. Please be sure to attend.

Pre-Bidders Conference – The Pre-Bidders Conference for the 2018 one-year contracts is scheduled for Thursday, May 4th at 10:00 am here in the large conference room at NEMCSA. It will be followed by an AAA/COA Directors meeting in the afternoon.

Alpena Senior Center – Congratulations to the Alpena Senior Center for receiving a \$200,000 grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund (MHEF) to fund a Student Gourmet Project. This is normally not something they fund. A. Lange reported the project is labor intensive and they are moving very slowly in implementing it. The center will work with high school students through Aces Academy to provide them with everything they need to know to work in a professional kitchen, including a mobile garden. There will be an article in the newspaper soon.

MiCafe – The AAA has a MiCafe event planned for May 16th at the Lincoln Senior Center. Seniors interested in applying for food benefits can contact Kelly Robinette to be screened for eligibility and appointments will be scheduled. The screening process will also screen for State Emergency Relief, Healthcare, Medicare Part D Extra Help, the Home Heating Credit and the Homestead Property Tax Credit.

Best Practices Conference – Will be held on May 19th at the McMullen Conference Center in Roscommon.

A Day of Training – The AAA held a training for AAA staff, COA staff, and other AAA partners on Wednesday, April 19th at the Forwards Conference Center in West Branch. Topics included Human Trafficking by Trooper Devine, Protect Yourself from Bugs and Other Pests by Kathy Armbruster of Rose Pest Control Services and Meaningful Interactions: Communications in Dementia by Sara Socia. Approximately 80 attended with 37 being AAA staff. Very good information was shared. Thank you to all the COAs that sent staff. C. Corwin – The staff we sent are very enthusiastic about the information they received. They're still talking about it.

MASC – The Michigan Association of Senior Centers is advocating for \$2 million in funding to reinstate senior center funding. It is getting some legislative support. We need your help in advocating for these funds.

Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging – The Commission will be in Alpena on October 20th for a public hearing and monthly meeting. More details will follow once arrangements are finalized.

Program Reports

Legal Services Board – Jim Mathis reported they haven't met but emails have been exchanged discussing the federal budget cuts.

Region 9 Directors Report – Merianne reported the directors are scheduled to meet next month.

Ombudsman Program Report – Sara reported the Best Practices Conference is scheduled for May 19th and includes a mental health forum. Sara attended the state quarterly Ombudsman training last month. Involuntary discharges were discussed. A nursing home can give 30-day notice to a resident for non-payment, if another resident is at risk by that person or if the nursing home can no longer provide the care that is needed. Many homes are not giving the 30 days. There are processes we can go through to stop the discharge. It can be a complicated process involving contract review,

resident for non-payment, if another resident is at risk by that person or if the nursing home can no longer provide the care that is needed. Many homes are not giving the 30 days. There are processes we can go through to stop the discharge. It can be a complicated process involving contract review, hearings, level of care issues, etc. Sara is also working on the Elder Abuse Conference planned for August in Otsego County. The PREVNT surveys are coming in and we finished filming our training video which we plan to show you at a future meeting. Also, Sara will present on senior bullying at the Mental Health and Aging Conference in Lansing next month.

MMAP Program Report – Susan reported the fiscal year for the program ended March 31st. program had a total of 5,676 client contacts, an increase of 945 from last year, 861 with disabilities, an increase of 173, 3,814 were low income, an increase of 935 and 6,154 total counseling which is an increase of 1,173 from last year. 99% were white, non-Hispanic. The majority of contacts made were by people between the ages of 65-74 followed by those age 75-84. 72 people identified a language other than English as their primary. These are all unofficial numbers. A new MMAP counselor training will be held in Alpena June 13-15. May 2nd is the deadline to enroll so they have time to complete the required online portion of the training prior to the classroom training in June. Susan thanked Dan Doezema for doing a fantastic job with the AIP document updates. We only have to collect any new information. It makes the process much easier and we really appreciate it. Currently the 54 SHIPs in the nation are funded at \$52 million, the proposed cut is \$49 million. That would be the end of the MMAP. Susan is working with Region 10 AAA staff, Joe Murphy, State MMAP Director and some AASA staff to formulate a game plan to increase funding for the program. Perhaps use state funds to supplement the federal funds. We did receive a 12 month contract but the funding only goes through July. Susan will also attend the national conference in July. She applied to present on volunteer and team building along with the state trainer. Discussion followed:

D. Henig – We’re getting more MMAP clients but they want to cut the funds. Susan – Yes, the amount of funds they want to cut would pretty much eliminate the program. Part of the problem is that MMAP used to be under the CMS and then it was moved to ACL which has a very small budget compared to CMS.

K. Schreiner – One of the benefits of MMAP is that we as counselors are impartial as to which insurance program you choose. If you talk to an agent from a specific company, they will try to sell their product which may or may not be the best choice for the client. I don’t think people at the federal level understand that. Our counselors explain the various programs. We make sure they understand their options.

C. Proulx – Can you send this material to be printed in a senior magazine or newspaper where local people can be made aware of this issue. Susan – Yes we can. Sometimes we don’t do enough of that type of outreach. Laurie – It’s a fine line between educating and lobbying. We can’t lobby.

Special Developmental Projects Coordinator Report – Liz Kowalski will report next month.

Advocacy Reports

MSAC – K. Schreiner has no report this month. Their next meeting is this Wednesday.

State Commission on Aging – J. Briggs missed the last meeting due to knee surgery. The Commission is looking at a new meeting format to better incorporate both the Commission and Advisory Council meetings.

NEMCSA – Lisa reported that NEMCSA is not allowed to lobby but would appreciate if you could advocate for us regarding the proposed federal cuts. The handout is a good tool to educate yourself on NEMCSA programs.

Local Updates from Council Members

C. Proulx – MCCOA will have a community garden this year. Seeds were donated and we will try straw bale gardening. The process was explained and the end results will be like having raised gardens with no weeds. There will be 12 bales at the Atlanta Senior Center.

Action Items

None

Question or Comments

Our next meeting will be May 22nd in conjunction with a public hearing on the 2018 Annual Implementation Plan. We encourage your attendance to keep the process moving forward.

Adjourn

A motion was made by D. Henig with support from E. Henig to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 2:26 pm by Chairman E. Corpe.