

Northeast Michigan Regional Council on Aging
April 29, 2019 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

P. Knaus, A. Fischer, A. Lange, D. Huff, V. Zygiel, R. Matelski, E. Corpe, C. Wilder, B. Kaye, T. Dutcher, M. Tappan, E. Ableidinger, C. Proulx, D. Burdine, E. Howell, V. Ward, J. Mathis, M. Downs, D. Fay, C. Corwin, M. Hiller

Excused: None

Unexcused: None

Guests: Tom Pettit, John Briggs, Mr. Kaye and Mr. Wilder

AAA Staff: L. Sauer, Y. Smigelski, C. McQuarrie, K. Robinette, B. Mainville,

Approval of Agenda – A motion was made by A. Lange with support from B. Kaye to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes – A motion was made by D. Fay with support from V. Zygiel to approve the minutes of March 25, 2019. Motion carried.

Nominating Committee - D. Fay reported on a motion passed by the Alcona County Commission on Aging Board of Directors at two special meetings held on April 2, 2019 and April 8, 2019. The motion was to remove A. Fischer as their Member-at-Large to this Council. The motion passed by a majority vote at both meetings. Based on this information, A. Fischer will be removed as the Member-at-Large representing the Alcona County Commission on Aging.

Speaker – Tom Pettit, Director of the Roscommon County Commission on Aging

Tom reported the COA expanded their Houghton Lake site four years ago and just recently moved their administrative office to a new location in Prudenville. The county sold them the old health department building. They remodeled from June to December adding offices and an adult day care center, the Serenity Day Lodge, which opened on February 9th. We are very excited about Serenity Day Lodge. Participation can be slow at times, but that gives us more time to get plans in place. We provided 42 service hours in February for 3 guests and 304 service hours in March for 6 guests. We expect to exceed that in April. We typically have 3 guests all day every day and an additional 3-4 for respite.

The COA also operates three senior centers. Our board is committed to operating all three as long as it's financially feasible. Even though in-home services are most of our budget, the thought is to get the young seniors to come in for meals, activities, and educational classes. This way they become familiar with who we are and then as they age, they'll be comfortable utilizing other services. One of our biggest struggles being in a rural area is transportation. Although Roscommon County Transit is available and provides non-emergency transportation, they don't have a system in place to charge insurance so it's costly. The population of Roscommon County over the age of 60 is 41%, that's more than the population of school age children. Our job is to be there as the community ages. We have to anticipate the need ahead of time as seniors continue to live longer and want to age in place. The influx of baby boomers will change how we offer services. We need to remain viable to provide those services.

We received a millage increase three years ago and rely on those funds to provide services. We are currently halfway through the fiscal year and we're 100% over fund use for homemaking, respite, and personal care. We continue to provide these services because of our millage. Our millage is now our primary source of funding and we are fortunate to have it. Our COA is also very active in providing the Evidence Based programs. We did Matter of Balance, PATH, CCC, and this year, Walk with Ease. We are also doing some capital improvements on two of our centers, improving parking lots and installing generators for two centers and our new location in Prudenville. This makes us more viable during prolonged power outages and we can use the facilities as warming or cooling stations with the ability to provide food. Also, 2 of our providers are attending a BTBQ (Building Training Building Quality) training offered by the Crawford COA. We are also considering having a staff member to become a trainer. We have a 27-passenger bus leaving the Houghton Lake Center at 7:45 am for Older Michiganians Day. We have some seats available, you're welcome to join us. Tom distributed his May newsletter and Serenity Day Lodge brochures.

When we had around 30 employees, a decision was made with our board to no longer provide medical insurance and have them go through the Marketplace. However, we found that took away their motivation to work fulltime. Now that we're approaching 50 employees, we have reinstated agency paid medical insurance. It gives our employees the incentive to work more hours. It is an expense so we do ask for an employee contribution of \$50 per pay. They would have to pay extra for family coverage. It's a good plan through Blue Care Network with a \$500 deductible.

D. Fay – What are the hours and cost for the Day Lodge and do you need a nurse on staff?
Tom – We're open from 7:30 am – 6:00 pm M-F. We have to have a nurse available and the program overseen by an nurse, but they do not need to physically be there during hours of operation. The cost is a suggested donation based on income using poverty level guidelines because it is a grant funded program. Services are not dependent on your ability to pay.

Yvette – Can you comment on your expansion of the Houghton Lake meal site because you took a different approach? Tom – Our Houghton Lake Center went from a gym style building with no windows and a very small kitchen to an expansion of 5,500 square feet, most of which was dining room, kitchen and three offices. The dining room is restaurant style and looks like upscale dining with a chandelier in the middle of the ceiling and lots of large windows. There are round and square tables in various sizes. We eliminated the booths because the participants were not utilizing them. We did away with the serving window and now serve the meals from a buffet line. The expanded serving time is noon to 1:00 pm to serve more people. We also refer to our sites as centers, not senior centers. I can't say for sure that the renovations caused an increase in meal participation but the atmosphere is different. I invite you all to come down and see it. We also rent it out for weddings, parties, etc. to help offset costs.

C. Corwin – It's hard to tell if it was the dining room because we've had an increase in meals in all three centers.

M. Downs – Do you take reservations? Tom – We ask for them when possible so we know how much to serve but in general, we know roughly how many congregate meals are needed for the day.

C. Proulx – Are there activities at the adult day center? Tom – We have a ping pong table, chair volleyball, ring toss, basketball hoops and various exercises. Our goal is to have therapeutic exercises without being obvious. A lot of these are good for eye hand coordination, it keeps you moving.

Laurie - Do the majority have dementia? Tom – Yes, or some form of cognitive deficit. Chuck - They can't be left alone at home.

M. Hiller – There is also a shower available which is really nice.

C. Corwin – We are providing BTBQ so we know what tasks our staff are able to perform.

Director's Report

Community Education – Laurie reported how important it is to keep reminding your community about what you do. Tom is right, you need to get the word out there far in advance of asking for a millage. May is Older Americans Month. This is a good time to start a strategy for your millages. Materials for Older Americans Month are available in last week's Aging Newsletter.

AARP Safe Driver Course – A full day course from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm will be offered on July 26th at our annex office in Alpena. Cost is \$15 for AARP members and \$20 for non-members. You are also asked to bring a lunch. If interested, let Connie know. Some insurance companies will give you a discount for attending so you may want to check into it.

Older Michigianians Day – It's coming quickly. Handouts were distributed. Laurie currently has 3 signed up for Oscoda, 5 for Iosco, and 3 for Roscommon. Our region has 45 lunch tickets available. It's always a great day. This year's platform includes: Rebalance Medicaid Long Term Care, Support the Direct Care Workforce, Support AASA In-Home Services, and Promote a Dementia Capable Michigan. We need the support of our legislators because the governor's budget recommends an \$8.3 million reduction in MI Choice funding and the Silver Key Coalition is requesting a \$6 million increase for in-home services.

2020-2022 Multi-Year Plan – This is our busy time of year. We have completed the needs assessment process and are working to have the draft plan available for May 6. We are a bit behind schedule this year due to a shift in job positions and focus on complaint investigations requiring a lot of extra time and monitoring efforts.

NEMCSA Retirements – We have Jim Robarge, CFO retiring in September and Karen Kelsey, Accounting Director retiring in July. They've each been with NEMCSA over 40 years. The agency is now in the process of getting a finance process optimization bid to look at our accounting operations before hiring replacements.

AAA Staff – We currently have a Case Manager position open in West Branch and Cheboygan.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) Training – All program participants will attend a training tomorrow provided by the Alpena MI Works! The agenda includes; online job search, resume writing and references, interviewing skills, and what employers expect from employees.

P. Knaus - Is this to give them skills? Laurie – Yes, participants must be 55 and older, unemployed, and meet 125% of poverty income guidelines. They work at non-profit host agencies who agree to provide job training. Participants work up to 20 hours per week at minimum wage which is subsidized by us through grant funds.

P. Knaus – Can Alcona get this? Connie – Alcona is not a targeted county for us. You can check with the AARP-SCSEP.

Best Practices Conference – It has been cancelled again this year. It is unlikely we will continue this effort going forward.

Volunteer Programs – All Senior Corps Volunteer Program grants were submitted on time. The RSVP had two grants for Crawford and Roscommon plus the expansion grant was able to merge into one grant this year. RSVP Service Coordinator Rick Houchin was selected to participate in the first Community Engagement Fellowship of the Michigan Community Service Commission. The intent of the program is to provide volunteer managers with professional development training and technical assistance that allows them to more effectively support and engage volunteers. As a Fellow, Rick will receive a one-year membership with VolunteerPro, as well as a year of training and mentoring. Rick also wrote and received a grant for \$935 to provide another Veterans Coffee Hour, this one will be in Alpena. The RSVP office in Roscommon has moved to Tom's new building in Prudenville. Anyone planning to attend the Foster Grandparent Program Recognition on May 14th needs to let Heidi Powers know as soon as possible.

Michigan Health Endowment Fund – The AAA Association of Michigan received a grant to implement Connected to Care for the development of technology to receive electronic notice when clients enter hospitals, nursing homes, etc. It's a good opportunity for all of us.

P. Knaus – The Alcona COA does not have a HIPAA compliant computer system. A grant was written and approved and the new computer system will be implemented within a month. These electronic notices will come to you? Laurie – Yes, and we will disseminate the information to others. Paul will send information on the grant through Microsoft if anyone is interested.

MMAP – Region 9 received the SMP McBearlock award for the third quarter of fiscal year 2019. This award is for the most unduplicated number of Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) interactions. SMP strives to empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries and families to prevent, deter and report fraud, errors and abuse.

Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA) – Advocacy efforts are needed to address the reauthorization which expires on September 30, 2019. The OAA is the foundation of our aging services.

Social Security – The government warned last week that it won't be able to pay full benefits by 2035. As a result, every retired American will have a 20% cut in benefits if nothing is done and Medicare will only be able to afford to pay 89% of what has been promised to pay hospitals.

Crawford COA – Congratulations on being chosen as the 2018 Organization of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce.

Program Reports

Legal Services Board – Jim reported he has been our representative on the board for several years. Because the majority of the board are attorneys and democrats so it's hard to have a voice or feel your opinion matters. Having a financial background would also be helpful as a representative to this Council. Their meetings are held on Saturday mornings and most of the discussion items are regarding finances. He would be willing to continue but is offering the position to anyone else who may be interested or feel we could be better represented. There were no interested Council members. Jim will continue on the board.

V. Ward – What does the Legal Services Board do? Jim – Mostly they have funding for attorneys to provide free legal services to seniors. Laurie – They get a small amount of grant funds from us to help seniors with simple cases and advice. We will contact Dave Bisgrove of Legal Services of Northern Michigan and see if he is available to speak to this group at our next meeting.

Region 9 Directors Report – Merianne reported the COA directors are meeting this Wednesday in Alpena. She will have a report next month.

Ombudsman Program Reported – Sara is out on a complaint. Laurie reported the new state tracking system shows Sara's time is mostly spent on complaints 25% with another 25% related to autonomy of residents. Care concerns make up another 8% of her time.

P. Knaus – I am very concerned how one person can advocate for all the nursing home residents and respond to complaints in the region and then have her hours cut so she cannot effectively do her job. How can this agency be supported when the need is so great and the support so few? It concerns me that the older population is increasing and there are fewer and fewer supports for them. Laurie – Funding is always threatened with cuts, that's why advocacy is so important. Sara is trying to recruit more volunteers to assist her.

P. Knaus - What about those who aren't in a facility? Laurie – There is a Consumer Advisory Group through the MI Choice Waiver, as well as MSAC and the State Advisory Council.

P. Knaus – What can I do to help? I want to help Sara and her program. Laurie – Become an ombudsman or advocate.

MMAP Program Report – Kitty reported she has been busy entering the needs surveys for development of the multi-year plan. She reviewed the survey results which included a total of 518 responses plus those received today. The last survey we conducted was just over 400 so we got a very good response this year. 22% of respondents said they were not familiar with region 9, but I suspect they may have taken the online survey; 80% were age 60 and older with the majority age 70-89. 7% were age 90 and older. Two thirds were female, 43% live alone and 43% live with a spouse. Others live with friend, etc. Congregate meals are very important at 89% and 92% for home delivered meals. For those where services were not important, they indicated they lived with family and their needs were being taken care. Adult Day Services 89% very and somewhat important. Health and wellness 91%. Evidence Based Programs the largest percent was in Matter of Balance at 38%. Caregiver programs, very few respondents participated in. 53% provided care to someone with dementia or Alzheimer's. Chore services, 91% feel the service is important and 93% feel transportation is important.

Highlights of the comments submitted on the survey include: A need for transportation, and respite over the weekends, shortage of caregivers, the need for a handy person to install grab bars, fire alarms, etc., and lack of affordable housing. Overall the survey results confirm the need for services. The survey results will be published soon.

M. Downs - How often is this done? Laurie – Every 3 years.

C. Corwin – Will the results be given to us. Laurie – Yes, and by county to each COA director.

Special Projects Coordinator Report – Brooke is out of the office so Yvette reported on the Caregiver Conference held at the Apex in Alpena. It was well attended with good speakers and vendors. D. Huff - I enjoyed the whole conference except the first speaker. I didn't feel we got the information she was supposed to give. Next year the conference will be held in a new

location to spread the exposure around the region. Brooke has been master trained in Matter of Balance and leader trained in Diabetes PATH and Chronic Pain PATH. She is providing DDD presentations in Ogemaw and Arenac. Creating Confident Caregivers (CCC) refresher trainings will be offered in Alpena, Otsego and Roscommon. They are scheduled but so far we have no registrants.

Advocacy Reports

MSAC – Ann Lange reported she and Violet attended their first meeting this month. There were about 25 people in the group discussing three main topics. It is a lot to comprehend and both felt the other members were very dedicated and experienced. They talked about roads and no-fault insurance. A lot of people purchase personal insurance protection which isn't worth what you pay for. Many don't understand the policy and are very under insured. The group also discussed the Silver Key Coalition which is asking for \$6 million more for in-home services for 2020. The waiver program is the way of the future to stay at home. There is a projected \$850,000 increase to provide meals to an additional 1,194 more seniors in 2020. Violet reported the meeting was very informative. Transportation is a big issue for rural areas. A letter was sent to the subcommittee to support a \$3.9 million increase in funds. The focus is on door-to-door service, private vehicle use, physical assistance when necessary, and group appointment options. Also the ability to lease and use specialized vehicles. The Silver Key Coalition is a strong advocacy effort to keep people at home. It is proven that they live longer and happier lives. Violet also feels MSAC is too much for one person, she feels going as a group to legislators would be more beneficial.

Laurie - Typically with MSAC, you spend a lot of time with the group to learn about the issues. That comes with time. I think you'll be more comfortable with time.

A. Lange – You meet in the morning for discussion and then they give you a handout to leave with the legislators. It was hard trying to learn the issue and then speaking on that with legislators. I would suggest making appointments with their aides ahead of time.

P. Knaus – I feel very strongly about giving a voice to those that don't have one.

C. Proulx – It is a lot of information, my problem was getting it condensed to present it. I didn't feel comfortable to express that to strangers. I needed to educate myself before speaking. I felt inferior at the meetings and felt there was no room for different opinions.

C. Wilder – Would it be helpful to get the information prior? C. Proulx – That was the problem, I couldn't open the emailed information. V. Ward – You definitely need to have more knowledge on the subjects to talk to people.

State Advisory Council – Chuck Corwin reported they met on April 19th in Lansing. The primary focus was on transportation, direct care staff, and policies and programs to minimize neglect and abuse. They are scheduled to meet again next month.

State Updates

State Commission on Aging – John Briggs reported the Commission met in April. They discussed the same advocacy areas as the State Advisory Council. Dan was also there to update them on the requirements added to the Multi-Year Plan. They also acted on some reallocation of RSVP and SCSEP funds. Ferndale is the newest applicant for a Community for a Lifetime. AASA is still searching for a new Executive Director. Scott Wamsley is acting. It would make

sense for him to take it. The federal funding budget looks flat. The state budget is expected the end of May. Senior programs could see some moderate increases. Our saving graces are the COA millages and fundraisers. Also, housing is difficult to find for those on a moderate income or above. Advocacy is extremely important, go talk to your legislators when they visit your community. You can get on their mailing list so you'll know their schedule. Our next meeting is next month in Negaunee. I also attended the Caregiver Conference and thought it was great.

Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA) – Dan Doezema reported the multi-year plan format is now approved. He and Kitty attended the AASA All Star meeting in Lansing last week. Dan is the lead for the state office for Adult Day Services. Starting and running one is not easy to do.

Local Updates From Council Members

E. Howell – All of our counties are working very hard to provide services. I looked into housekeeping in Florida. When the wait list is open, the cost is \$18 per hour with a two hour minimum. I think we need to pat ourselves on the back for the good work we do and services we provide.

C. Proulx – Can we get a speaker on different types of dementia? Laurie – Sara will be able to provide that.

B. Kaye – I received a complaint about a RSVP volunteer delivering meals who is not getting their checks on a timely basis. They would also like to see an increase in the reimbursement rate. Laurie – I will relay that to Susan. Payment is dependent on when the mileage sheets are turned in.

C. Wilder – NEMCSA pays every two weeks, maybe it's a matter of education on due dates.

C. Corwin – Today's mileage will get paid in two weeks. RSVP comes at the end of the month that I submit the voucher in. Laurie – I will check into it and get a response back to you Barbara.

Action Items

None

Question or Comments

Nothing further

Adjourn

Our next meeting will be held on Monday, May 20th with a public hearing on the multi-year plan as part of it. Your attendance is crucial for support. A motion was made by D. Huff with support from B. Kaye to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm by Chairman E. Corpe.