



Community Advisory Council March Meeting Minutes

AuSable River Center, Roscommon, Friday, March 29, 2019

Attendance: Betty McClintic, Jim Tucker, Terry Tody, Debra Looney, Rose Mary Nelson, Rick Houchin (staff), Persis Sopariwala (staff), Susan Bowen (staff), and Kevin Murphy (CNCS).

The meeting began at 10:45 a.m.

Project Director's Report

Survey - Susan provided copies the Region 9 Area Agency on Aging Needs Assessment survey and encouraged everyone to complete it and share with others. The survey is part of the Multi-Year Plan and is conducted every 3 years. Information gathered is used in development of the plan for senior services.

Office move - The Roscommon office will be moving at the end of May and will be located at the Roscommon County COA as of June 1. Rent is \$150, but the Roscommon COA will accept \$100 and the remaining \$50 will be used as in-kind match. This will be a big savings as the current space rent is \$350/month. The phone number will remain the same and the office will have a separate entrance from the main public entrance of the COA.

Data and MOUs - The annual Performance Progress Report Lite was completed for both federal project grants in January. The timeframe it covers is July 1-December 31. As a result of the difficulty in getting output/outcome data that was necessary for the report some changes will be made to the Memorandums of Understanding as they come up for renewal or new stations sign on. The MOUs will clearly spell out the expectations of the information to be provided by the station to the sponsor. The MOU will use a data agreement that will include tracking tools and dates for reporting.

Funding – Funding for the Senior Corps programs (RSVP, FGP, SCP) usually faces cuts each year in the federal budget. For the third year in a row, the President's budget proposes to eliminate the funding for Senior Corps programs and provide only enough funding for an orderly shutdown of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), which is the main funding source for RSVP. Also facing elimination is the Community Services Block Grant, which is used for the required program match. On March 28, Congressman Bergman was in Alpena and visited the NEMCSA Annex. Staff spoke with him about the importance of the senior programs and the value they bring to the lives of vulnerable populations. He was provided with informational handouts that were created to educate legislators about the programs. Staff are not able to "lobby" for funding, but providing educational information on the importance of programs is allowable and we try to do it as often as possible.

A portion of program funding comes from the State of Michigan through the Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA) of the Department of Health and Human Services. Heidi Powers joined a couple of other Senior Corps directors and volunteers to provide testimony on the value of senior volunteer programs to the Senate Appropriations Committee at the state capitol in March. They will be doing this again in April with the House Appropriations Committee.

Older Michiganian's Day (OMD) – This year OMD will be held on May 15 at the state capitol and advisory group members are encouraged to attend. Often it's more impactful for legislators to hear directly from the volunteers and program participants rather than staff so you are encouraged to attend. If you are interested, both Roscommon and Crawford COAs will be taking buses and advisory council members/volunteers are welcome to ride along, but you'll need to call the COA to reserve space. Please let Susan know you want to attend so we are able to request enough lunch tickets.

Community Engagement Fellowship – Rick has been selected to participate in the inaugural fellowship sponsored by the Michigan Community Service Commission. It is a year-long program that will provide him access to monthly webinars and access to online tools and templates to help build our volunteer program.

CNCS Changes at the State

Kevin Murphy, Program Officer with CNCS, updated everyone on the changes that are taking place with the restructuring of the agency. The state offices will be eliminated in favor of a regional office structure. The Detroit office, from which Kevin works, will be closing June 1 and he and other staff will then have home offices. The regional offices will be open February 2020 and portfolio managers will replace program officers. He expects most communication will be via email and phone, with minimal visits onsite.

Program Updates

Volunteers and Stations – A handout was provided that detailed the activity of staff for the months since the last meeting in October 2018. Outreach included presentations with service groups, and radio and TV appearances. Ten volunteer stations were added, with a few more in the process of signing on. New partnerships with the programs of the Region 9 AAA were forged with recruitment of volunteers for the Long Term Care Ombudsman program and signing up current Medicare Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAP) volunteers into the RSVP.

Veteran's Event in April – Persis Sopariwala talked about the upcoming event to be held on April 27 at the Roscommon Airport. It will be a family-friendly event with a luncheon being served and a program that will be provided on veteran benefits.

MLK Jr. Day of Giving Wrap-up – Persis reported on the RSVP service project, held in conjunction with Martin Luther King Jr. Day. "Cheer bags" were packed by 17 volunteers (and staff) with items including playing cards, tablets, ink pens, puzzles, hot cocoa, and lip balm. The packing was done at the Sunrise Side Lifelong Learners office in Iosco County (a volunteer station). On the observed day of Martin Luther King Jr. drivers for the Home Delivered Meals programs in Iosco and Crawford counties delivered the bags on their meal routes. Persis organized the successful event, including raising funds, purchasing the items and recruiting volunteers to assemble the bags.

National Service Recognition Day – April 2 is National Service Recognition Day and Rick Houchin provided a report on the planned activities. Rick has organized a "Be a member for a day" campaign to publicly thank RSVP volunteers. The public has been invited to serve alongside RSVP volunteers and pack food boxes at the NEMCSA warehouse. The boxes will be distributed through the agency's commodity foods program. The event will be covered by the media and the Mayor of Alpena will present a proclamation recognizing the day at a City Council meeting April 1.

Volunteer Appreciation Week – Rick said small envelopes of Michigan wildflowers will be labeled with the message "Thanks for helping northeast Michigan bloom!" and will be delivered to volunteer stations in April for distribution to volunteers throughout the month. The small gift will be environmentally friendly in a bio-degradable envelope and the seeds that are native to Michigan will produce about 40 flowers.

Old Business

Recognition Luncheon – Susan asked for input on holding a recognition event and proposed holding two events in different counties of the service area to make attending easier for people in the expansion counties. Deb mentioned that the past ice cream socials were a big hit and people liked the opportunity to socialize. Terry mentioned that previously they discussed offering mileage to those wanting to attend, but due to a very tight budget that will not be possible. Staff will work to plan two events in September in the counties of Crawford and possibly Alpena.

New Business

2019-2020 Grant Application – A request was made by NEMCSA to have the Crawford/Roscommon grant and the Northeast Michigan expansion grant be combined and it was granted. This will end the duplication of writing two grants, two budgets, two mid-year progress reports, etc. The work plan will be combined and allow for streamlining of performance measures.

Budget/Mileage – The current year budget is almost spent out in the mileage line item. Susan provided a comparison of amounts spent in the last full grant year and to date in the current grant. The Crawford/Roscommon volunteers have a 50 mile/\$23 cap on mileage each month. Volunteers in the expansion counties have a cap of 163 miles/\$75 per month. The monthly average of mileage paid this year has been \$1,866. If spending continues at this rate, the budget could be overspent by about \$5,500 at the end of June. Susan suggested lowering the cap in the expansion counties as soon as possible, but not without first notifying the volunteers.

For the next grant year, she proposed only paying mileage to volunteers serving at stations that are within the focus areas and contributing to the performance measures. It was explained that funding received by NEMCSA is based on the number of unduplicated volunteers serving in performance measure area that are approved by the grantor. The consensus of the group was to eliminate the mileage to those serving outside of the focus areas. This may cause some people to no longer volunteer, but we can refer them to the FGP and SCP if they qualify.

Staff are looking at other ways to cut costs including sending the newsletter out electronically and only mail to those who do not have email. Current costs for production/distribution each time the newsletter goes out is about \$165. The rent savings will help in the coming year, as well.

Bylaws and Advisory Council – The bylaws have not been updated since 1992 and are outdated. Susan provided a copy of bylaws with proposed changes and pointed out some of the items of concern. She asked members to review them before the next meeting and bring them back for more discussion. Also brought up was the need to recruit new council members for representation from the expansion counties. Kevin also stated the expectation that councils have committees and take a more hands-on approach with directing the program and raising funds.

April Meeting – The scheduled date of the April meeting coincides with the Region 9 AAA Caregiver Conference. A meeting will be scheduled in May or June and council members will be notified.

Other

Rose Mary shared with the group that advertising in “The Voice” publication/paper has created interest in the Baby to Toddler Closet. She has been contacted by people in other counties (Oscoda, Montmorency) who would like to donate or set up similar closets in their communities.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.