



Lewis - Mason - Thurston Area Agency on Aging

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Advisory Council **Meeting Minutes for December 11, 2023** **9:30 AM – 11:30 AM** In Person and Via Zoom

Members Present

Lewis County: Heidi Buswell, Liz Hicker, Tim Wood, Debbie Aust, Greg Rohr
Mason County: Glenn Harper, Vice-Chair, Tamra Ingwaldson, Becky Cronquist
Thurston County: Eileen McKenzieSullivan, Chair, Cat McGaffigan, Ellen Wendt, Michele Horaney, Angela Hock, Anna Schlecht.

Members Absent:

There were no members absent

Staff Present: Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director; Becca Frisch, Communications Manager; Donna Feddern, Community Supports Director; Jessica Hodges, Senior Executive Assistant; Sabrina Dean, Chief Financial Officer; Jemma Williamson, Deputy Executive Director; Valerie Aubertin, Contracts Management Supervisor; Carrie Petit, Contracts Director; Hannah Sheets, Case Management Supervisor; Emily MacFarland, Case Management Director; Lisa Bachmann, Executive Assistant.

Welcome & Introductions: Eileen McKenzieSullivan brought the meeting to order at 9:35 AM. She led the group in sharing recognitions, reflections and successes for 2023.

Approval of Minutes and Agenda: Glenn Harper made a motion to approve the November draft minutes and December draft agenda. The motion was seconded by Heidi Buswell. Debbie Aust requested the minutes be amended to say “virtual forum for all counties” under Community Updates. The draft agenda and minutes were approved with that change.

Presentation of the 2024 Slate of Officers; Nominating Committee

Becky Cronquist shared that Cat McGaffigan has shown interest in running for Chair and Heidi Buswell for Vice-Chair. It was then asked three times if there were any other members interested in running. The members had also been asked via email. There were no other members interested in running for office. The ballots were then passed out. The Nominating Committee; Angela Hock, Becky Cronquist and Tim Wood counted the ballots, and the count was verified by three LMTAAA staff members; Lisa Bachmann, Chrissy Franklin & Janet Michaels.

Heidi Buswell requested information on how the Planning Committee assists with the Area Plan. Nicole shared that it is the chair of that committee plans meetings and that the committee assisted by reviewing the survey & providing feedback. The majority of the work on the plan is completed by LMTAAA staff. In the January meeting the survey results will be shared.

Framing of Legislative Priorities, Nicole Kiddoo

Nicole shared that there are still minor changes being made on the one-pagers for advocating with our legislators for our two priorities, which are nutrition and case management. The

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framing for these asks is centered around the “Why?” Why do we need more money? and “What” is the importance of the programs that we are asking more money for?

Senior Nutrition, Carrie Petit and Valerie Aubertin;

Carrie & Val shared a PowerPoint presentation about Senior Nutrition. It explained that LMTAAA receives some funding through the Older American’s Act (OAA) for congregate meals, home delivered meals and nutritional education for both of those. These services are contracted out to other organizations in the community. Congregate & home delivered meals provide a nutritious meal, nutritional education & socialization. Anyone over the age of 60 is eligible for congregate meals regardless of income. For home delivered meals, a person also has to be assessed as “home bound.” These programs help seniors financially by reducing their food cost. Seniors who participate require less services, which saves on funding long term. Studies show up to 50% of seniors are at risk for malnutrition, which increases hospitalizations, length of stay when hospitalized and chronic health conditions. Nutritional risk assessments are provided to ensure dietary restrictions can be accommodated. We provide an annual monitoring of all contracted providers as well as monthly date collection & check-ins. In 2024 the plan is to resume drop in visits to ensure the food is the correct temperature, menus are followed, and participants are satisfied. Nicole added that we will spend more time on this topic to prepare for advocating.

Case Management, Emily MacFarland & Hannah Sheets;

Emily & Hannah shared a PowerPoint presentation which gave an overview of the duties for a case manager. They monitor care plans; schedule & conduct annual reviews and change of circumstance assessments; and collaborate with PCP’s, vendors and others. By lowering the caseloads, case managers can create a more successful care plan for the clients and care providers. We provide services to Medicaid participants living in the home and DSHS provides services to those living in long-term care facilities. One current issue that case managers face is that there is a shortage of caregivers, so many clients do not have anyone to provide the assistance they need. This results in case managers spending more time per client to make regular calls or visits for wellness checks, assist with technology, acquire equipment and coordinate care.

Announcement of Officers, Eileen McKenzie Sullivan

The Officers for 2024 will be Cat McGaffigan, Chair and Heidi Buswell, Vice-Chair.

Reports

Community Updates & Announcements

Lewis County: Liz Hicker shared that the Winlock Center has a new site leader and is doing really well. There was a Thanksgiving dinner sponsored by the Evaline School students and parents as well as a silent auction & ham bingo. The Lewis County Assessor has been reaching out to Lewis County seniors to make them aware of income-based programs available that assist by reducing property taxes.

Mason County: Glenn Harper shared that there is a Death Café this Wednesday, 2:00 pm at the Olympia Senior Center and one at 7:00 pm on the 20th at the Green Lady Dispensary in their coffee shop.

Thurston County: Anna Schlecht shared that the Olympia Senior Center will be getting a new mural on the wall closest to where the congregate meals happen. Interested seniors can assist with the mural. At noon on the 12th at the Olympia Senior Center and the 14th at the Lacey Senior Center there will be readings for the plays: A Child’s Christmas in Whales & A Cup of Christmas Tea. There was a Hanukah meal with delicious food and Ugly Sweater Bingo at the Olympia Senior Center on the 16th.

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SCoA – Michele Horaney

Michele shared that the priorities for 2024 are supporting the W4A request for funds to reduce caseloads to 55:1 and the hunger & nutrition ask for additional funding across the state. They plan to work towards gaining support and getting out information on senior centers. The state does currently not have any information on senior centers, what they do, funding, etc. They are also supporting the Dementia Action Collaborative, ALTA & mitigating isolation among seniors. Info is needed to assess, study and then make recommendations to the Governor.

Housing Committee & Charter – Anna Schlecht

Anna is working on an annual report for 2023.

Socialization & Engagement Committee – Angela Hock

Angela shared that the Olympia Senior Center is going to be bringing back their Phone Path program that they had during COVID. She will be on the committee to assist with that. Glenn added that the main focus of this committee has been the Village-to-Village concept which is neighbors helping neighbors. This corresponds with the Elderhood Senior Alliance which also encourages seniors to step up and help each other. He would like to have regularly scheduled Zoom meetings for those who cannot make it in person to senior centers.

COG Report – Glenn Harper

Glenn shared that Nicole reported on our legislative asks. Donna reported on the Information & Assistance Program, which is now called Aging & Disability Resource Connection or ADRC. There was discussion about her staff providing WA Cares presentations to help the public with understanding the program. Also, more discussion on caregiving support and resources for them. There is progress on starting the Hospital Transitions program at Providence which will assist patients when leaving the hospital back to their homes. She also assists with the Thurston County Affordable Housing Board. Glenn also shared that Emily MacFarland reported to the Commissioners on meeting the 75:1 ratio for number of clients to case managers.

Village to Village – Michele Horaney

Michele shared that they are continuing their research on this concept. They have met with two out of three promising candidates that are interested in sharing information. Each Village-to-Village group is different. It typically takes 2-4 years to get going but there is a huge need. Gen X turns 60 next year and so the number of seniors will increase. This newer group of seniors will be looking for something different than just senior centers.

Advocacy & Legislative Committee – Michele Horaney

Michele shared that they will be focusing on nutrition and case management at the upcoming legislative session. She is watching for bills to drop. This will pick up on January 1.

Executive Director's Report – Nicole Kiddoo

Nicole shared that at the next meeting she will have a formal report to give from the USAging meetings she just participated in. She will also share more about the WA Cares program. The legislative session starts on January 8.

Adjournment:

A motion was entertained to end the meeting at 11:30 for the appreciation luncheon. The motion was made by Anna and seconded by Heidi. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Ellen and seconded by Anna. The formal portion of the meeting was adjourned at 11:36 am.

Submitted by: Lisa Bachmann, Executive Assistant