



Lewis - Mason - Thurston Area Agency on Aging

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Advisory Council Meeting Minutes for January 17, 2024

Members Present

Lewis County: Heidi Buswell, Vice-Chair, Debbie Aust, Tim Wood, Greg Rohr

Mason County: Becky Cronquist

Thurston County: Cat McGaffigan, Chair, Ellen Wendt, Angela Hock, Anna Schlecht, Michelle Horaney & Eileen McKenzieSullivan

Members Absent - none.

Staff Present

Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director; Jemma Williamson, Deputy Executive Director; Carrie Petit, Contracts Director; Sabrina Dean, Chief Financial Officer; Becca Frisch, Communications Manager; Jessica Hodges, Senior Executive Assistant; Lisa Bachmann, Executive Assistant.

Welcome and Introductions, *Cat McGaffigan*

Cat welcomed everyone & thanked them for the opportunity to serve the group as chair.

Approval of the January 2024 Agenda and December 2023 Minutes

Eileen made the motion to approve the January Agenda and December Minutes. The motion was seconded by Heidi. Nicole noted that the meeting agenda was changed to virtual only. The vote to approve the revised agenda and minutes was passed unanimously.

2024 Committee Assignments, *Cat McGaffigan*

Cat will email the council members a list of all of the committees' positions that are available and asked they let her know which committees they are interested in joining for this year. Some committees require a member from each county, so if no one volunteers she may need to place members in a committee to meet that requirement. She read through the current committee assignments and vacancies. Greg asked what the purpose of the committees are and do members all work on items for all counties or just in their county? Cat explained that they do research, survey, advocate and then share with the larger group. There is information for this in the By-Laws. Ellen added that each group is a little different on how they run and what the participation looks like. Michele suggested that the members learn more about the different counties and have opportunities to go to events as a group. Michele also shared that the council sends a representative to the State Council on Aging (SCoA) each year, which reports to the Governor. There are representatives from around the state that come together via Zoom to share what is going on in their areas, which is valuable info for our council. Jessica emailed the members a document showing the current assignments and brief description of each committee during the meeting. Most committees meet via Zoom. Heidi added that the Advisory Council is not tasked with reviewing all activities, but to offer general advice and make recommendations. Eileen offered to look into borrowing the van from the Senior Services of South Sound if members want to go as a group to see locations in the different counties. Debbie reminded the group that

there has been some desire to spend some time with the staff and learn more about what they do. Cat agreed and said this is something that is being worked on. There were additional questions and comments regarding the role of the members, and it was suggested that in order to have time to cover everything on the agenda, that for questions that are more in-depth or for items that are off topic, to connect with Nicole outside of the meeting. This will allow time for her to respond in full and provide any needed clarification or additional information.

Process for Reappointments to Council, Lisa Bachmann

Lisa shared that she reached out to the three counties to learn what the process was for reappointments and to inform our Commissioners of any available positions on the council we need filled. The process for each county is slightly different. Thurston County requested that new applications be filled out by any members needing to be reappointed. This was not happening during COVID, so the process may be new to some. The applications have been emailed to any applicable members. Lisa also informed the members that due to the meeting being held virtually she would mail the printed documents and magnetic name badges to the members tomorrow.

Review of Proposed 2024 Area Plan Draft & Motion of Support, Jemma Williamson & Sabrina Dean

Jemma shared a power point with an overview of the Area Plan. She recapped information about the surveys and forums. She reminded everyone that there were items we did not get to in the last plan due to COVID, so some of those have been added to our new goals. The plan is now posted on the LMTAAA website. These are some of the areas the plan includes: mission and values; how we prioritize our funding; info on our target populations; what the projected growth is in some areas; the agency organizational chart, staffing plan & department descriptions; emergency response plan; the role of the advisory council; and accomplishments from the previous plan. It includes the issue areas and themes of our goals and objectives for the next four years. Jemma then gave a brief overview of the three themes and their goals and objectives. The themes are healthy aging; expanding and strengthening services and supports that delay entry into the long-term services and supports of Medicaid; and person-centered home and community-based services. Also presented were the key tasks for each of these themes that were created from the feedback the agency received from the forums and surveys. There were several questions and comments about the survey. One item that was suggested was to have an independent or professional evaluation of the programs and services in each county and then compare that with the feedback we have received from the surveys and forums.

Sabrina shared the Area Plan budget with the council. She highlighted the expected revenues for 2024 and where those funds will come from. Nicole and Carrie added additional details about these funding sources and some of the programs and services that benefit from them. It takes funding from all of these sources to administer the agency as well as provide oversight. Sabrina also shared what the main budget categories are for the 2024 Expenditures.

Cat McGaffigan requested that a motion be made for a show of support for the 2024 Area Plan from the council members. Eileen moved to accept the 2024 Area Plan and Heidi seconded the motion. There was discussion about the motion before the vote was made. It was asked if a vote means you are approving the plan. Nicole explained that a vote for the plan means that the members are in support of moving the plan to the COG to review. Nicole shared that it is the COG that approves the plan and then it goes to the state for final approval. She elaborated that the COG is typically supportive of what the agency includes in the plan. The state would only request a change if we were out of compliance in an area. A few council members shared the concern of voting on the plan when they had only seen the summary, not the complete plan. Other members shared that they were comfortable with just knowing the key points and did not need to know all of the details. Nicole shared that the staff has put a lot of time into preparing the plan and understands that some of the

members would like more details but there is a tight timeline in our approval process. She reminded the members that a vote of support is not voting for approval of every detail, it just provides the opportunity for the COG to review and vote on it. Tim shared that it is not a lack of confidence in the staff or a concern with anything specific, only that he did not have the opportunity to review the entire plan. Debbie agreed with support for the staff but shared the concern that with her vision it was hard to see all of the details of what was shared today. Cat asked for a vote to be made for a show of support of the 2024 Area Plan and to move it to COG for review. The motion passed with a majority vote.

Advocacy, Nicole Kiddoo, Michele Horaney & Jessica Hodges

Cat referenced the W4A Advocacy Training that was held yesterday and the great tips they shared. Nicole updated the team and explained it is a short session this year. There are several bills and hearings that we have been able to support and share testimony on, including our two budget requests for nutrition and Case Management ratios. The foundation has been laid and so now it is time for the council members very important help with advocating. W4A will take over after that. Michele added that this is our opportunity to meet our Representatives and share our needs and requests. The ask is to maintain our funding in nutrition and add Case Managers so that we can keep the ratios at 75:1. These items are not bills, they are asks that will supplement our regular budget. We have meeting times set up for next week to meet with our Representatives and Senators or their staff. There are one-page documents, created by W4A, that we can provide for their review as well as to assist with our talking points when advocating. She explained that in these meetings, there is a quick intro, we share the request, let them know we will follow up with more info and take any questions. If you don't know the answer to a question it is okay, just let them know that you will follow up and email the information. We have allies for both of the programs we have asks for and they will help make sure they move forward. Michele reminded the group that we are constituents, not lobbyists and that we do not have the sole responsibility for the outcome, just to do our part to reach out. Nicole explained the nutrition ask is not for new money, it is for money to sustain the current program that allowed us to provide services to additional seniors during COVID. With the Case Manager ratios, we have many clients who do not have a caregiver. These clients take additional time and care from the Case Managers, so a smaller ratio of clients is needed. Michele will provide times to meet on Monday to further prep the council members. Jessica shared her spreadsheet which included information about the upcoming appointments as well which council member she hopes is willing to lead each visit. It is best if the lead is a constituent from that district. There will also be staff present at the visits as well as Nicole or Kate Tudor Dixon. Michele reiterated that the first time may feel weird, but to not stress about it as one meeting will not ruin the chance of an ask being approval. Nicole added that Jessica will be sending out information on the parking. Heidi mentioned the free Dash shuttle that takes you from different locations downtown to the capitol building as an option.

Community Updates & Announcements

There were no updates to share at this time.

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Tim and the motion was seconded by Ellen. It was unanimously decided to adjourn the meeting.

Minutes taken by

Lisa Bachmann, Executive Assistant