



# Lewis - Mason - Thurston Area Agency on Aging

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Area Agency on Aging

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## Advisory Council Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, May 5, 2021 9:30 – 12:00 p.m. Via ZOOM

<https://zoom.us/j/97034336885?pwd=cHc2V1EyRUpkakdLMWFITVMxVG52Zz09>

By phone: (253) 215-8782; Meeting ID: 970 3433 6885; Passcode: 102525

### ***Members Present***

Lewis County: Elizabeth (Liz) Hicker; Heidi Buswell; Cindy Clark; Ronda Chumbley; Amy Turnbull; Ellie Outwater;

Mason County: Glenn Harper (Chair); Bill Bezanson; Janeen McLaughlin; Diane McLean; Jamie Queen;

Thurston County: Judy Stratton; Howard Burton; Eileen McKenzieSullivan (Vice-Chair); Michele Horaney; Angela Hock

### ***Members Absent***

Lewis County: N/A

Mason County: Debra Jamerson

Thurston County: N/A

### ***Staff Present***

Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director; Joy McBride, Contracted Services Director; Valerie Aubertin, Contracts Manager; Alison Lord, Contracts Manager; and Lisa Bachmann, Administrative Secretary

### ***Guests***

Lynn Ford, Chair SCoA; and Sheila Johnson-Teeter, Interim Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman

### ***Welcome & Introductions***

Glenn Harper called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. This was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Attendance was taken and introductions were made. Glenn asked our new members to provide a short introduction.

### ***Approval of Minutes & Agenda***

Glenn Harper, Chair, entertained a motion to approve both the April 7, 2021 draft meeting minutes, as well as the draft agenda for the May 5, 2021 meeting. Eileen McKenzie-Sullivan made a motion to approve both. Bill Bezanson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

***Celebrating Older Americans Month: Communities of Strength – Glenn Harper (This item was taken out of order)***

Glenn Harper, Chair, shared that the theme of the month is Strengthening Communities. He showed a video from the Administration for Community Living which can be found at: StrengtheningCommunities@ACL.Gov. The main point is that it saves money and makes people happier to stay in their homes instead of a long-term care facility. This is what most of our services help support. Nicole Kiddoo later explained that the Administration on Community Living (ACL) is part of Department of Health and Human Services. It was established under the Older American's Act and administered by the Administration on Aging.

***Community Updates/Announcements – Various Council Members***

Eileen McKenzieSullivan, Thurston Co., shared that the Remote Thurston Hunger walk was last Sunday. They raised \$65,000 which will be divided between the Senior Nutrition Program, Thurston County Food Bank and the Community Dinners. This is the best they have ever done.

Lynn Ford, Chair SCoA and Judy Stratton, Thurston Co., took the Thai Quan Chi "Better Balance" class through a scholarship from the Department of Health. This is an evidence based program out of Oregon that helps with balancing and how to correct yourself if you do fall. The class is currently taught only on Zoom. Eventually this will go back to being taught in person. Email Lynn for information. They are looking for instructors.

Liz Hicker, Lewis County, shared that we need to increase our socialization in the senior centers. She has been meeting with seniors, some who just want to socialize at the centers and they are asking when the yard will open. People are hungry not just for food but for socialization. They are hoping the senior centers will be opening soon.

Bill Bezanson, Mason Co., is on the board of directors at the Shelton Senior Center. People are wondering why they can't get together without masks at the senior centers if they are vaccinated? He is unsure what to tell them since the governor has not said anything. Glenn Harper agreed that we are looking for direction from our state and agencies. The president has said if we are vaccinated we are allowed to meet outdoors without masks. It would be nice if there was a single policy we could all point to.

***Advocacy & Legislative Committee – Michele Horaney & Nicole Kiddoo***

Michelle Horaney, Thurston County shared that she attended the first day of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (N4A) Policy Summit in mid-April. The topic that day was advocacy, one of the main missions of any AAA. She shared the importance of speaking up and letting our legislators know these topics are important, using your stories to build your advocacy case. Also discussed was the difference between lobbying and advocacy, reminding us to be careful that we are advocating and not lobbying. Michele explained that when we are advocating that it is very important to not discuss a specific bill or we cross the line into lobbying. It is best to share in general terms that we need more funds to help meet these needs for seniors in our area for this reason.

Nicole Kiddoo added that the three day Washington Association of Area Agencies (W4A) conference was very productive. This year the conference was virtual, via Zoom and although

there was not the opportunity to meet with the federal legislators or be a part of the March on Capitol Hill, it meant Michelle could take part on the Advocacy Day. We were successful this year on one of our priorities which was no budget cuts, probably in part due to the stories that were told. These stories are especially helpful when the legislators can relate.

Michelle reiterated that W4A has encouraged us to jump in and to advocate. It was exciting that Glenn received a response from an aide to Jessica Bateman, Representative for Thurston County regarding the three different spending areas we are focusing on for seniors. Nicole shared she was thankful for the funding we received for Case Management and the COLA to help homebound seniors with their basic needs. Although we did not receive any funding for COVID from the state, we did receive about \$68,000 in Federal funding to help with that. Nicole added that N4A released their policy priorities on the legislative side. The link is: [https://www.n4a.org//Files/n4a\\_2021PolicyPriorities\\_27April2021.pdf](https://www.n4a.org//Files/n4a_2021PolicyPriorities_27April2021.pdf)

This was followed by a viewing of the Power Point: "Let's Advocate! How to Build Relationships, Share Important Stories and Information and Make Change that Matters", created by Michele Horaney & Howard Burton. They have also created a short script that will be shared at a later date. Howard added that all their experiences advocating have been very positive since everyone can relate in some way. Make sure to leave messages if you cannot reach someone directly because those are counted as well. They are both happy to help with the process.

### ***Socialization & Engagement Committee - Eileen McKenzieSullivan***

Eileen McKenzieSullivan, Thurston County shared that the committee met on May 3, 2021. They discussed the GrandPads, which is a pilot program to get iPad type technology into the hands of some of our isolated seniors. LMTAAA is helping to fund these. Glenn Harper is overseeing the use of two of these and reports that the users are enjoying them. Angela Hock, Thurston County, has agreed to connect with the other three individuals so they have administrators as well. Participants are filling out surveys on their use. The GrandPads are easy to navigate, but the participants are somewhat hindered by their fear of using them and because they are sometimes blocked from sites due to the built-in safety features. These features also block spam or unrecognized emails.

Glen Harper added that besides the safety features for emails coming in, the user also has to have an administrator approve and enter in any emails they want to send out. This can be frustrating. The users he is assisting enjoy accessing the news, weather, games and music which helps some with isolation. One great feature is called Transportation. This program works in conjunction with Lyft which can provide emergency transportation for users. Glenn also shared there is also a less expensive product from the same company called the Connect Pad, which is less restrictive for seniors with more technical ability.

Eileen McKenzieSullivan explained the committee has concerns that the senior centers are not open yet and the effects of social isolation now and after the pandemic. Lynn Ford from SCoA shared that SCoA is creating an ad hoc committee to work on this. They are creating a White Paper. This report will talk about the issues in Washington State. Eileen would like to see the Socialization and Engagement Committee use the findings of this report in our three counties. Glenn added that it would be great to see if programs like Matter of Balance could be offered on Zoom to help with isolation.

Joy McBride added that we are now providing Powerful Tools for Caregivers via Zoom. The information is on our website. In addition, Alison Lord will be working to get Matter of Balance available again via Zoom for now and later, in person.

**SCoA – Lynn Ford**

Lynn Ford emailed her full report prior to the meeting. She shared that because this is Older American's Month, the State Council on Aging members are sending letters to the editors of the local newspapers or proclamations to their county. Participants then go to the county court house on the day the proclamation is issued, say a few words and receive the signed proclamation. She is representing Lewis County and is hoping that a council member from Thurston or Mason County would be interested in participating. Let her know and she will send sample wording. Lynn also shared the committee was relieved there were no budget cuts. She is still looking for a successor for her position that will end this September. The commitment is currently a Zoom meeting once a month on a Tuesday. Prior to COVID this entailed one night per month at the Radisson Hotel in Seattle with all costs, including mileage included. The term is for six years and Lynn shared she really enjoyed it and learning about issues and happenings statewide. They report concerns to the Governor.

**Ombudsman Program – Sheila Johnson-Teeter**

Sheila Johnson-Teeter, who is the interim Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman for Lewis, Mason & Thurston Counties, shared that she had an article published in the Lewis County Chronicle and the Mason County Journal on Volunteerism. The article is also posted the LMTAAA website and in some of the local senior facilities. This has helped her bring in two new volunteers, one who is in process of becoming certified. With the pandemic they went from twenty to seven volunteers and have need of volunteers in all three of our counties. This has affected the rest of the state as well. The volunteers are advocates for seniors living in adult family homes, assisted living facilities and skilled nursing facilities. If a senior has a complaint they are encouraged to be their own advocate but if they cannot then the ombudsman for that facility will assist. They also work with the administrators of the facilities with the goal of solving issues before they turn into a formal complaint. Sheila also shared that DSHS is starting to go back into the long term care facilities providing inspections again.

**Executive Director Update – Nicole Kiddoo**

Nicole Kiddoo thanked everyone for the wonderful job they do and shared how much she looks forward to these meetings and working with everyone. She was especially thankful for all the hard work everyone has done advocating to mitigate budget cuts at the state level. Everyone was motivated to assist her in this and should be proud of the outcome. Now it is time to shift the focus to the federal side. About \$4 million has come to the agency from the COVID-19 appropriation and relief package from the federal government over the past year. This has helped us to work with our community partners to meet the needs of our seniors. N4A supports our work nationally and legislatively by speaking on behalf of Area Agencies around the country so it is important that we partner with them. There are thirteen Area Agencies in Washington State. While we do have one lobbyist for the state, the legislature wants to hear the stories from their constituents as well because they are the ones living it and working in the field.

We will get the N4A policy priorities out to the council members as part of our responsibility is to advocate for this. We not only need the Older Americans Act to be reauthorized, we still have to fight for the appropriations that need to happen each year. We will do a training on this in the future. Sometimes when the requests come in to help advocate there is very little time to respond, so the more ready we are, the better. Senator Cantwell's office has requested information from us on the GrandPads and some of the social isolation work we have been doing. Her office is also interested in expanding telehealth. We have been reaching out to Representative Derek Kilmer, Senators Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray and our new Lieutenant Governor Denny Heck and look forward to speaking with our new Representative, Marilyn Strickland.

Nicole Kiddoo reported that our agency is still working on filling more open positions but are making headway in this area, adding five new case managers and conducting interviews for some of the other positions, including the Community Supports Director and Executive Assistant. Joy McBride, Contacted Services Director shared that this would be the last meeting she will be attending because she is retiring the end of June and unable to attend the meeting on June 2. She thanked all the committee members for their commitment to the agency and the people we serve. She let the new council members know that there will be an upcoming orientation with her to provide more information on what LMTAAA does and Advisory Council's role in the community.

**LMT COVID-19 Vaccination Update – Rebecca Holmes, Vaccination Coordinator**

Rebecca Holmes shared that she previously worked for LMTAAA and now works part-time for the Washington Association for Area Agencies on Aging. As the vaccination coordinator her role is to look at how individuals who are serviced by LMTAAA are able to access vaccinations and if there are any barriers keeping them from becoming vaccinated. She has been reaching out to community partners to find out if they have had success getting what they need and what they need help with. Lewis County, which has a lower vaccination rate than both Mason and Thurston Counties, reports that the reason most people are not getting vaccinated is hesitancy or refusal not access. At this time about 52% of eligible adults in the state have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

Rebecca shared they are reaching out to seniors who are homebound for medical or other reasons and the caregivers who assist them. They are referring them to the County Emergency Management Departments. At this time there is not a program set up in our three counties to bring vaccinations to those who are homebound.

Rebecca is also working to inform the staff at LMTAAA of updates and be a resource by answering questions. Our goals are to be a good partner for our community based organizations; to work within the chain of command that has been set up by the State and Local Departments of Health; and that we can improve upon areas that need help. These measures are important not just for our current situation with COVID-19 but also to help prepare for future potential disasters. The future plan is to provide more targeted efforts using the Department of Health's Immunization Information System (Washington ISS). This will tell us who has had a vaccination so we can focus on contacting those who have not, asking if they are interested and if so assisting with that. If someone says no, that will be noted, but there will not be any pressure to change their mind. Effort will also be put into finding out if lack of technology is the reason that the people in the household have not been

vaccinated. This information will be reported back to the counties along with any details that may be helpful for first responders.

Glenn Harper asked Rebecca if Meals on Wheels Program was going to be involved in bringing vaccines to people they service by having qualified vaccinators do a ride along. Rebecca shared that at this time community partners have been sending out information and connecting with seniors to see if they have been vaccinated or need assistance in getting vaccinated. Senior Services for South Sound has a hotline assisting with this. Lewis County has an arrangement with Twin Transit where people can call and their vaccine and ride to the appointment will be scheduled for them. Flyers have been going out explaining this with all the home delivered meals. The current focus has been helping the seniors get to where they can receive their vaccination. The next phase will use the information that is being gathered now to assist individuals who cannot leave their homes. Vaccination materials are available in a number of different languages to help accommodate those with a potential language barrier in our three communities. Rebecca ended by saying how helpful and forthcoming everyone in the health community has been and encouraged the council members to thank those they have contact with.

***Next Advisory Council Meeting***

Advisory Council meetings will continue via teleconferencing until further notice. The next scheduled meeting will be on Wednesday, June 2, 2021, at 9:30 a.m., via ZOOM.

***Adjournment***

Glenn Harper called for a motion to adjourn. Cindy Clark made a motion to adjourn. Bill Bezanson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:42 p.m.

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**Submitted by: Lisa Bachmann, Administrative Secretary**