

**Alaska Commission on Aging
Special Topics Board Meeting
Statewide Teleconference
June 25, 2015**

APPROVED Meeting Minutes

Call to order: Meeting called to order by Chair, Mary Shields, at 11:00 a.m.

Roll Call: ACoA Commissioners Via Teleconference: Mary Shields-ACoA Chair, Rolf Numme-ACoA Vice-Chair, David Blacketer, Rachel Greenberg, Bob Sivertsen, Duane Mayes, Marie Darlin, and Edna Devries.

ACoA Commissioners not present: Anna Frank, Paula Pawlowski, and Eleanor Dementi.

ACoA Staff Present: Denise Daniello and Lesley Thompson

ACoA Discuss/Take Action on Alaska State Plan for Senior Services, SFY16-19: As per ACoA's statutes, the Commission is required to develop the four-year Alaska State Plan for Senior Services for submission to the Department of Health and Social Services and the U.S. Administration on Community Living to satisfy the federal requirement of all states to receive Older Americans Act funding for senior programs. Marie Darlin and David Blacketer served as Co-Chairs of the State Plan Advisory Committee.

Denise reviewed the state plan document and the components required, per the guidance document from the U.S. Administration on Community Living. She noted the goal section (including strategies and performance measures), regional funding formula, and the signed approval sheets for Commissioner Davidson, Governor Walker, and Assistant Secretary Greenlee.

Denise described the efforts the Commission took to request public comment on the draft state plan that included six sessions held in Fairbanks, Anchorage, Juneau, Mat-Su, Homer, and a statewide teleconference and noted that there was a great deal of comment received which is included in the draft Plan. The ACoA initiated the Plan 18 months ago with needs assessment activities that included six Elder-Senior Listening Sessions, a Senior Survey, and a Provider Survey.

On January 20, 2015 the State Plan Advisory Committee met in Anchorage to review the findings from the needs assessment activities and developed the vision statement and began work on the goals, strategies, and performance measures. The State Plan Advisory Committee, comprised of 34 members representing public and private agencies serving seniors in addition to senior consumers, held several teleconference meetings between January and April to complete work on the goals, strategies, and performance measures. The Committee was unable to complete work on the funding formula in time for the Plan's submission. Work on the funding formula will continue for possible amendment in SFY16. The Committee agreed to phase out the "hold harmless" clause from the funding formula in SFY17 to ensure implementation of a funding formula that accurately reflects the changing demographic growth for each region. Further, the State Plan Advisory Committee decided to retain the current weight factors in the draft State Plan and to hold further discussion about the weight factors in SFY16 for possible amendment. Application of the State Plan's funding formula applies to both federal and state funds received for the Nutrition, Transportation, & Support Services, Senior In-Home Services, and the Family Caregiver Support grant program.

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Duane asked Denise to identify the specific proposed changes to the funding formula. Denise said that the Committee decided to maintain the current weighting factors in the funding formula and to phase out the hold harmless provision in SFY2017. The hold harmless amounts were based on the SFY2011 funding amounts. The Committee may re-examine the definition of rural in SFY16.

Duane asked about the public comments. Denise described the types of comments received noting that a summary of the comments are included in Appendix J of the draft State Plan. We received much public comment from Mat-Su Senior Services, the Coalition of Mat-Su Senior Centers, and the Mat-Su Council on Aging expressing concerns that the funding formula is “double-weighted” by including rural and cost of living adjustment factors that limit the amount of funding needed for regions, like the Mat-Su, that have fast-growing senior populations.

During upcoming meetings regarding the funding formula, the State Plan Steering Committee will re-examine the rural definition. During the State Plan process, the Committee discussed the potential for three categories to define rural with each factor having its own weight:

- Urban: All areas defined as urban by the U.S. Census Borough’s definition.
- Rural (small communities on the road system)
- Remote (off the road system) which receives supplies by air or water transport.

Motion: Rolf made a motion to approve the State Plan for Senior Services FY2016 – FY2019 pending any additional public comments by June 29 when the comment period ends. The motion was seconded by Marie Darlin. Motion carried by 6 yeas and 1 abstention.

Mary stated that the draft Plan is approved for signature with any additional comments through June 29 to be included in Appendix J. Mary also noted that information regarding Veterans in Alaska and the Veterans Advisory Council was added to Appendix G, Program and Service Descriptions as requested by the public comment received from the Veterans Advisory Council.

Nomination for NASUAD’s Recognition: The next item of discussion was to nominate an Alaska Senior for the National Association on States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD) who is putting together a booklet recognizing the “50 Fabulous People from 50 Fabulous States.”

Motion: Edna DeVries moved to nominate Arliss Sturgulewski with a second by Marie Darlin. Motion approved. Mary offered to forward a picture and brief bio on Arliss for the NASUAD booklet. Mary noted that Arliss is a member of the Anchorage Senior Activities Center and was recently honored at their Gala fundraising event.

Update on ACoA September Rural Outreach Meeting: Denise reported that planning is progressing for the September Rural Outreach meeting in Kenai. Denise has been working with David Levy to hold a

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joint meeting on September 17 in Girdwood with the Anchorage Senior Advisory Commission. Commission members discussed travel logistics.

Other Discussion: Bob noted the letter from Commissioner Davidson regarding the Pioneer Homes and the results from the prioritization activity of State programs conducted as part of the Governor's Budget Sustainability Conference held in Fairbanks during the month of June. Bob noted that there have been several studies conducted over the years regarding the cost and sustainability of the Pioneer Homes. The Pioneer Home Advisory Board will review and discuss the Commissioner's letter sent to families of Pioneer Home residents at their next meeting. Bob also noted that there has been some discussion about closing a Pioneer Home to save money but this cannot happen with so many people needing the services. Marie said the group looking at the economy of the state only listed the Pioneer Homes as a lower priority.

Bob said that he welcomes the thought of proving or disproving the cost savings of privatization. If the Pioneer Homes are compared to nursing homes, the Pioneer Homes would fare very well because of the type of care residents receive at a lower cost in comparison. In other states where residents cannot pay for their cost of care, they oftentimes live in less than desirable facilities. Alaskans know that our state will care for them until their very last breath.

Bob suggested that if the State moves forward with a RFP to do a study on the Pioneer Homes, it is important to have a member of ACoA or the Pioneer Home Advisory Board to serve on that committee.

Bob will report back to the Commission after their next Pioneer Home Advisory Committee and share comments heard from other people around the state.

Rachel expressed her appreciation for all of the work everyone did on the Plan and all the comments that were made! She said that this Plan will not just sit on the shelf.

Staff reported that Anna Frank received the "First Lady Award" for outstanding volunteer work. David Blacketer received a statewide award from the Salvation Army recognizing his service work.

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn by Marie with a second from Edna DeVries, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.