

**AREA AGENCY ON AGING
LUZERNE & WYOMING COUNTIES
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**
Mental Health & Developmental Services Conference Room
February 16, 2023

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Present – Joanne Corey, Dr. Noah Davis, Donna DePue, Laura Allport Dickson, Charlotte Kitler, Angel Mathis, Phyllis Mundy, Robert Nealon, Henry Pennoni, William Runner, James Sernak, Nancy Thaler, Dominick Trombetta, Deborah Walsh, Don Warren, David Yonki, Joseph Yozviak

Staff Attendance

Sandy Acornley, Jim Cease, Tim Farrell, Mary Roselle, Sheila Rothenbecker, Mary Schell

CALL TO ORDER – Joe Yozviak, Chair

Joe Yozviak, Chair, called the AAA Advisory Board Meeting to order at 12:04 p.m. on Thursday, February 16, 2023 in the Mental Health & Developmental Services Agency Conference Room. The Pledge of Allegiance was then recited.

ROLL CALL – Sheila Rothenbecker

Sheila Rothenbecker, Administrative Assistant to Executive Director Mary Roselle, conducted roll call of the AAA Advisory Board members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Joe Yozviak asked for approval of the December 15, 2022 meeting minutes. There were no corrections requested. Angel Mathis made a motion to approve and Don Warren seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the minutes were approved.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT - Mary Roselle

Board Meeting Informational Packet

Mary began by referencing the Board Meeting Packet. She pointed out the information on tax assistance services for older adults and asked the members to share with anyone in need. Mary also spoke about the Senior Center event pictures and the newspaper article on the local NAACP. AAA Advisory Board Member David Yonki was recently sworn in as Vice President of the Wilkes Barre NAACP and Charles T. Adams Senior Center Director Toni Mathis was sworn in as a NAACP executive committee member, both are pictured in the article. Mary and the board members congratulated David and are proud of him and Toni for the work they do with the NAACP.

June Advisory Board Meeting

There will be a change in the Advisory Board meeting schedule. The meeting that had been scheduled for June 15th will be held instead on June 8th. The information will be updated on the County website and members will be reminded again at the April meeting.

Advisory Board Membership

Joe Yozviak, Advisory Board Chair and Debbie Walsh were appointed to serve on the board for another term by the County Council. Their terms had expired at the end of 2022 and both chose to re-apply for membership. Mary is grateful that Joe and Debbie will continue as members of the Advisory Board and appreciates their many years as advocates for the older adults of Luzerne and Wyoming Counties. A new member to the board was also appointed by the County Council and her name is Mildred Passeri. She will be attending the April Advisory Board meeting and be introduced to everyone at that time. Milly retired from the Aging Agency several years ago and has continued to volunteer and assist older adults of the community. During her time with the AAA, Milly worked as a nurse with the Waiver Unit and later as a Care Manager in the Assessment Unit. Milly's experience will offer a good perspective and Mary is very happy that she will be a member of the Advisory Board.

Salary Restructure

The Executive Committee continues to reach out to the Acting County Manager concerning the Administration salary restructure. Committee members will be attending a County Council meeting and Mary hopes to offer good news about it at the next AAA Advisory Board meeting.

Governor Shapiro Appointments

Advisory Board member Nancy Thaler has been appointed to Governor Shapiro's Transition Team on Seniors and Older Adults. She will be speaking to everyone about it later in the meeting. Mary has also been notified the Governor appointed Drew Popish as the Northeast Regional Director with an office in Pittston. Drew has already reached out to let Mary

know he will be scheduling a one on one meeting with her . Mary looks forward to discussing matters of the Aging Network. Jason Kavulich has been named Acting Secretary of Aging. He had been the AAA Lackawanna County Director and worked closely with Mary. Jason's expertise will certainly be a welcome addition to the Department of Aging and Mary expects great things coming in the near future.

NeighborWorks NEPA

On January 20th, Mary Roselle and Mary Schell attended a press conference at NeighborWorks NEPA in Lackawanna County. Senator Bob Casey made the announcement that he and Representative Matt Cartwright were able to secure a one million dollar grant from the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to help older adults fund safety upgrades and home improvement projects to allow them to remain in their homes. Lackawanna, Luzerne and Wayne counties will benefit with additional funding and services. Mary explained that our AAA already allocates a portion of the budget to environmental modifications, however the additional funding helps more individuals to qualify and receive services to help them Age in Place.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Program

Mary recently met with Representative Tina Pickett and Wyoming County Office of Human Services Director John Alunni, regarding a program to support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) in Wyoming County. Grandparents Raising Grandchildren covers residents of both Luzerne and Wyoming Counties. Each year a GRG Conference is held in Luzerne County offering education, available resources and interaction. Wyoming County will be holding a GRG conference on March 20th at the Dietrich Theatre in Tunkhannock. During the conference, Mary will be participating on a panel along with AAA Caregiver Support Supervisor Cynthia Sutton who oversees the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren program. AAA Care Managers will be available at a resource table to offer information about services. Luzerne County Drug & Alcohol Administrator Ryan Hogan will be speaking about harmful drugs being used currently and share information with grandparents on signs and awareness. Narcan training will also be offered at the conference. Cyber security will be discussed along with legal assistance services. Luzerne County has an advocacy fund and Wyoming County is hoping to start a similar fund for grandparents in need of legal help.

Aging Well Agreement

An official agreement has been reached with Aging Well and AAA will continue to perform level of care determinations, attend appeals hearings and disenrollment hearings. Aging Well contracts with the Department of Human Services and AAA Contracts with Aging Well. The contract covers three years with two one-year renewals. Additional revenue will be received and increased each year. A separate amount is set for the level of care determinations and for the hearings.

Emergency Food Boxes

AAA has contracted with the Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO) to continue providing emergency food boxes to agency home bound consumers as well as those individuals who attend the Active Adult Centers and want to receive them. The contract will go through the end of the fiscal year, ending on June 30, 2023.

Active Adult Center Issues

A few of the Active Adult Centers were having problems recently with broken pipes, water leaks and water quality. While working with the issues, members were still able to receive meals and join some activities following caution and safety guidelines. Senior Center Director Sandy Acornley will speak more about it during her report.

Alzheimer's Association

Mary and Sheila met with the new Alzheimer's Association representative Kristen Martin regarding sponsorship opportunities for the October 14th walk. Team Aging holds bake sales and fundraisers each year to donate for the Alzheimer's cause. They also participate and volunteer at an agency resource table which offers information during the walk event. Mary invited the board members to join with Team Aging in attending the walk.

Center for Rural Development

Mary Roselle and Mary Schell will be meeting with the Center for Rural Development on Friday, February 17th. The center has received a grant for the research project Caring for Pennsylvanians with Dementia and Related Disorders. Mary Roselle and Mary Schell will be providing information on surveys to assist with the grant.

Wyoming County Commissioners

Mary Roselle will be meeting with the Wyoming County Commissioners on February 21st, regarding transportation issues. They will discuss the possibility of expanding transportation services in Wyoming County. Mary will offer more information to the Advisory Board members at the April meeting.

Pennsylvania Council on Aging

The Pennsylvania Council on Aging meeting will be held on Thursday, February 23rd at the Irem Temple club house. Dr. Noah Davis will host the meeting and provide lunch. The council (PCOA) is looking for new members. Mary told the AAA Advisory Board members that anyone interested may contact Noah. He will share his experience with the council and hopes to have more AAA representation.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES REPORT - Tim Farrell

Mature Worker Program

The Mature Worker Program continues trying to gain ground with participant levels. Some participants are leaving the program to find jobs and others are finished with their time in the program. Program Director Denise Stalica is still working on recruiting with advertising efforts including mailing post cards in Luzerne and Wyoming Counties, along with television and radio ads. The National Council on Aging (NCOA) budget for the program was reduced this year by 58 thousand dollars which is slightly less than last year. NCOA Director of Program Operations Liz Burke, was in town for site visits this week. Tim had a chance to meet with Liz and Denise. Liz explained the Mature Worker Programs have been struggling across the state. She feels the contributing factor is that Pennsylvania offers a lower wage than other states.

Ways & Means Committee

Tim met with the Ways & Means Committee on January 19th to explain the 2022-2023 budget. Noah Davis, Phyllis Mundy and Rob Nealon were in attendance. They have approved the contracts and budget.

Fiscal Audit

The Fiscal Audit draft was received and it went very well. Tim will now have to submit the Management, Discussion and Analysis (MDA) information and another successful audit will be in the books.

Vacant Positions:

13 Vacant Full-time Positions:

- Aging Care Manager 3 – 3 vacancies (2 will be filled by end of February)
- Aging Care Manager 2 – 7 vacancies (1 will be filled internally)
- Clerk Typist 2
- Aging Case Aide 2
- Accountant 1 (interviews were recently held)

1 Part Time Position:

- Senior Center Manager 1 – Lee Park Active Adult Center

2 Vacant Alternate Positions:

- Food Service Worker – Wyoming County Active Adult Center (continuous posting)
- Senior Center Manager 1 – Plymouth Active Adult Center

SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT - Mary Schell

Caregiver Support Program and Protective Services Audits

Mary discussed the Caregiver Support Program and Protective Services Unit audits that had taken place in December. The findings were to be received the week of the December Advisory Board meeting. Mary gave an update about the results of the audits at today's meeting. Both units did very well with an overall rating for the Caregiver Support Program of eighty-nine and Protective Services received a rating of ninety. There were a few minor infractions such as an unchecked box for Protective Services and a receipt that was blurry after scanning for the Caregiver Support Program. However, no Older Adult was left at risk with Protective Services and there were no quality care issues by Care Managers or the caregivers of the Caregiver Support Program. Mary is pleased with the news of good staff work and audit results.

Protective Services Training

The Protective Services Unit has started the Interview for Decision Making Abilities (IDA) training. The IDA Program was pioneered through Weill-Cornell Medical Center and the University of Pennsylvania. IDA is an evidence based tool for care managers to determine if an individual has decision making abilities to decide on their own care. If the person does not have the ability, the care manager will better understand the baseline and follow up of referrals to a medical professional. Staff certifications are expected to be complete by the end of March.

Social Services Quarterly Meeting

On February 22nd, the entire Social Services staff will be participating in a Quarterly meeting. A speaker from Telespond will be talking about some of their new services including the Advocacy Center. In order for an older adult to be admitted to the Advocacy Center, the individual must go through the IDA process. There will also be team building exercises during the meeting and a lunch in appreciation of the staffs continued hard work.

Elder Abuse Task Force

There was a brief hiatus of the meetings for the Elder Abuse Task Force due to staffing issues of the Protective Services Unit. Since the Protective Services staff is rebuilding, the task force will be reconvening, starting with a kick-off meeting in March. Mary and Brian McAdarra are reaching out to new legislators and their staff, hoping they will participate.

Legislative Report

After the swearing in of new legislators, the house was adjourned and there is not much movement. Mary did give an update on Senate Bill #137 which amends the act of December 4, 1996 commonly known as the Do Not Call list. The new act states the Attorney General will

establish ongoing communication with the Department of Aging in order to assure consumers who are at least 60 years of age, have access to information regarding the prevention of potential patterns of financial exploitation. The act also states the Attorney General will coordinate with the Secretary of Aging to determine the most efficient manner the information shall be shared, in order to protect seniors. The bill has been referred to the Aging and Youth Committee. Mary will continue to follow the bills progress. Also Representative Eddie Day Pashinski will be attending the Grandparent Raising Grandchildren Symposium in Wyoming County in March. He hopes to gain support for House Bill #2858 with the goal of creating a legal service fund allowing non-profit organizations to apply for grants to provide legal assistance to kinship families.

ACTIVE ADULT CENTER REPORT - Sandy Acornley

Active Adult Centers

The Active Adult Center staff is in the process of completing a virtual training for a new program being offered called Bingocise. The program incorporates Bingo with components of exercise and nutrition. The Bingocise kits have been received along with special prizes. Sandy hopes to kick-off the program in the beginning of April.

Tax Preparation Services

Sandy referred to the meeting packet which contained tax preparation service information. The taxes are not prepared at the centers, however Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO) Tax packages are available there. The center members can take a packet and then deal with CEO directly for details on getting assistance with tax preparation. Appointments can also be made by calling numbers listed for Good Shepherd Church in Wilkes-Barre and Kirby Library in Mountain Top. Many of the local state representative offices are offering to come into the centers and assist with Property Tax and Rent Rebate forms too.

Active Adult Center Staff Meeting

An Active Adult Center staff meeting was held on February 1st. Sandy asked everyone attending to share some ideas that had been successful at their sites. Many sites said the exercise programs have been very valuable for their members. Rose Tucker center staff told a story of success with the evidence based Walk with Ease program. The members of the program, walk together from their center to the town square, which is approximately half a block. They then walk around the square a few times and return to the center together. A gentleman who decided to join the group was walking his first day and had to stop several times to sit on benches and rest. He continued to walk with the group each day and by the end of the program, the gentleman was doing laps around the square with no problem. The man then joined other exercise programs in the center and is doing very well. More Walk with Ease workshops will be provided once the weather improves. Staff from other sites mentioned their members are asking about more craft and crochet projects. Many members enjoy making items and donating them to community organizations. Some centers have shared their members are very competitive with games.

Sandy is hoping to get back to scheduling the shuffleboard travel tournament when members can visit other sites to compete.

Active Adult Center Water Damage

Mountain Top Active Adult Center is located in an apartment complex. Due to water damage, the center was closed and several apartments on upper floors had to be gutted along with the center activity room because the damage was severe. Meals and activities could not take place and it will take several weeks until the building is ready. In the meantime, the Mountain Top center director distributes bag lunches and salads in the lobby. The Kingston Active Adult Center had water damage in the reception and activity room areas. The repair work was completed and that part of the building was opened this week. During the repair time, the rest of the center was kept open for meals and activities. The Butler Township Active Adult Center water had been found to be contaminated in the Fall. The township is supplying water for the center and meals have been re-instated using disposable utensils and bottled water. The water system will be replaced by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Sandy has been told they are evaluating the process to begin the project.

Misericordia Student

On February 6th, Sandy met with an occupational therapy student from Misericordia University. The girl runs a student group that does volunteer and community service work. The group would like to help at the AAA Active Adult Centers by doing activities with the senior members. The students are not certified yet and will not be offering physical therapy. They will play games and give presentations. The student group will start off at the Dallas Active Adult Center which is close to their campus.

Center Valentine Parties

Many of the Active Adult Centers hosted Valentine's Day parties. The parties included live entertainment, snacks, games and dancing. Center directors have stepped up to make the events very enjoyable for the members. Sandy noted there has been a noticeable surge in attendance at the parties.

Upcoming Center Projects

The Active Adult Centers are organizing a couple of upcoming projects using grant money. Surveillance cameras will be installed in the centers and can be beneficial for access during certain situations. Updates, replacement and new signage will be placed at the Active Adult Centers. Many of the current signs are old and faded. The new signs will be more visible to the members and the community.

State Street Office Renovations

The AAA State Street office renovations were recently completed. Work included painting and installing carpet in all offices. Sandy and the other State Street staff are pleased with the new look and are moving their items back into place.

NANCY THALER – Governor Shapiro Transition Team on Seniors and Older Adults

Nancy Thaler told the meeting members she was very pleased to serve on Governor Shapiro's Transition Team on Seniors and Older Adults. The team is managed by members of the governor's staff and a consulting group. The transition team members meet once a week working towards making Pennsylvania an aging friendly state and creating a foundation which will make it easier for older adults to live in the communities with available services. Nancy feels the AAA Advisory Board members would appreciate the leadership roles and recommendations being made in shaping the teams document. She is also looking forward to confirmation by the senate of Jason Kavulich as Pennsylvania Department of Aging Secretary and glad he is from the local community.

NEW BUSINESS

There were no new business items.

ADJOURNMENT

Joe Yozviak asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Henry Pennoni made the motion and Joanne Corey seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next AAA Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for April 20, 2023 in the Mental Health & Developmental Services Agency Conference Room.



Dr. Noah Davis, AAA Advisory Board Secretary

Respectfully Submitted by: Sheila Rothenbecker
Administrative Assistant
Luzerne-Wyoming Counties Area Agency on Aging