

**AREA AGENCY ON AGING
LUZERNE & WYOMING COUNTIES
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
(Microsoft Teams Meeting)
February 17, 2022**

MEETING ATTENDANCE

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

Absent - William Runner

Staff Attendance

Sandy Acornley, Jim Cease, Sean Davis, 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 12:02 p.m. on Thursday, February 17, 2022 for those joining in by Microsoft Teams Meeting.

ROLL CALL – Sheila Rothenbecker

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Joe Yozviak asked for approval of the December 16, 2021 meeting minutes. There were no corrections requested. All members were in favor and the minutes were approved.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT – Mary Roselle

Advisory Board Officers 2022

Mary started the meeting by recognizing the Advisory Board Officers for 2022, Joe Yozviak - Chair, Angel Mathis - Vice Chair and Noah Davis – Secretary. She thanked them and all the board members for their service and support of the Area Agency on Aging.

County Directives

Mary updated everyone on the County COVID directives which had recent changes concerning visitors and masking. Visitors will be permitted into Luzerne County buildings and are not required to wear a mask. Employees have a choice of wearing a mask and may decide what is best for them at this time. Active Adult Center staff and members are not required to wear masks, however they are encouraged. Symptom questionnaires, distancing and temperature check procedures will stay in place.

Meeting Information Packet

The meeting information packet sent to all Advisory Board members with the Microsoft Teams invite was reviewed. The packet included the December Advisory Board meeting minutes, the February meeting Agenda, Virtual Family Council guides, resources and slides for those with loved ones residing in Assisted Living, Personal Care and Nursing Facilities. Also attached were the 2022 AAA Advisory Board meeting schedule public notices, which appeared in the Citizens Voice and Wyoming County Examiner. The schedule was also posted on the County website, Area Agency on Aging's page and will be updated when necessary.

Agency Position Vacancies

Luzerne County Human Resources and AAA continue to try and fill vacant positions with qualified candidates. A job fair will be held on March 8th at the Luzerne County Courthouse. Social Services staff of AAA will be available at a table in the rotunda, to speak with any interested individuals. The Social Services team members will explain the mission and services of the agency, answer any questions and offer informative pamphlets.

Administrative Waivers

Mary has been a part of discussions with other Area Agencies on Aging throughout the state and Secretary Robert Torres regarding staffing issues, which are a problem statewide. Secretary

Torres has encouraged agencies to apply for administrative waivers to help. Mary will be requesting a waiver for Protective Services, moving a Care Manager 2 with experience in that unit to a Care Manager 3 position to assist with cases. She also requested and was approved for a thirty day waiver to allow telephonic re-assessments for individuals who receive only home delivered meals. An Aging Case Aide and an intern will be assisting with those calls, since the person who had done them previously has left the agency.

Aging Team Contracts

Team members of the AAA Management Staff were recently approved for a pay raise. Luzerne County Human Resources Department followed a formula process with percentages which included reviewing performance evaluations. The management staff is appreciative of the raise. As of January 1st, the Meet & Discuss group which includes agency supervisors and managers of the Active Adult Centers, received a rate increase. The rank & file union contract expired on December 31st and negotiations continue. Some points of discussion include health benefits, salary and on-call coverage.

Enrollment

Pennsylvania Association of Area Agencies on Aging (P4A) and the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services have started negotiations on the enrollment process. There was no final decision, however at this point AAA's will continue their portion of the process and Maximus will maintain their current portion.

Foster Grandparent Program

Mary is reaching out to Americorp for their decision on extending the Foster Grandparent Program to the end of June. If the extension is approved, the new administrator would take over on July 1st for a smooth transition which assures no Foster Grandparent would be displaced. Currently, Mary Lou Zerfoss is working in the capacity of a consultant for the program.

Emergency Kits

The Fiscal Unit is in the process of getting prices and quotes for emergency kits which will be distributed to all AAA homebound seniors. The state had recommended CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) money be used for those type of kits that will include gloves, hats, hand & foot warmers, slipper socks, blankets, flashlight, battery operated radio, batteries, whistle, first aid box, lip balm, tissues, a magnetic refrigerator board to list medications and cooling items. The kit content may be used year round. Mary commended the AAA Fiscal Unit for their hard work on the Emergency Kit project.

Genetti Hotel Fire

Dozens of people have been displaced after the deadly fire in January at Genetti's Hotel in Wilkes-Barre. AAA is working with community partners, especially Keystone Mission to provide services to those affected. Shelters have been opened to the displaced at the Restored Church. Some individuals with special needs were provided hotel rooms through the mission. AAA Care Managers were available for assisting those affected with completing housing applications and offering agency program information.

Wyoming County Active Adult Center

On February 3rd, Mary had a meeting with the Wyoming County Commissioners concerning the Wyoming County Active Adult Center. The Commissioners are interested in improvements for the center members. Wyoming County Active Adult Center offers activities, meals, crafts, speakers and is very well attended. The Commissioners have a few good options to benefit the members and Mary will be meeting with them again soon.

Department of Aging Funding

Mary recently joined with other Area Agencies on Aging and the Department of Aging Secretary Robert Torres, virtually for the Governors address. Afterwards Secretary Torres had discussions with the AAA Directors and all were glad to know there were no major funding changes from the PA Department of Aging for the agencies.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES REPORT – Tim Farrell

Foster Grandparent Program

Mary Lou Zerfoss (FGP Contracted Coordinator) has been working on two projects in addition to the day to day activities. One project is assisting Americorp with the grant application to be sure all the information needed is included and understood. She is also organizing the program recognition lunch scheduled for Friday, March 25, 2022 at the Woodlands Inn. Mary Lou is busy arranging transportation, meals and gifts for the Foster Grandparent Program participants. Currently there are 70 active and 23 inactive program participants. Mary Lou continues to hold monthly in service meetings for the participants.

Mature Workers Program

Participants for the Mature Workers Program continue to be scarce. In January, Mature Workers Program Director Denise Stalica reached out to Rooster Creative about additional television advertising. A total of 456 ads were added during an 8 week period from January 24, 2022 to

March 20, 2022. Advertisements had been running on WBRE and WYOU television stations. The DIY Network, AMC, Golf, History and Discovery channels were added for the additional time span. The National Council on Aging (NCOA) held a monitoring recently. Liz Burke of the NCOA was escorted by Denise to seven of the Mature Worker Program training sites. Liz was able to meet and speak with the program supervisors to understand what the organizations are providing to the community. Tim also met with Liz to discuss the Mature Workers Program and lack of new enrollment participants. Permission was given to increase program participants hours from 24 to 29 through June 30, 2022. Tim hopes with an increase of advertising and hours, the program will get back to the usual participant numbers. During the program discussion, Liz emphasized the outstanding job Denise Stalica has been doing. At the NCOA offices, Liz refers to Denise as the best example for other program directors.

PA Department of Aging Budget

On January 12, 2022, a budget revision was received from the PA Department of Aging. Changes included the reallocation of CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act) funding and the Senior Center grants. Each Active Adult Center had been asked to submit a list of needs for using the grant money at their center. The revision was completed and uploaded to the PA Department of Aging on February 10, 2022.

Emergency Kits

The Fiscal Unit has submitted bids to the County Purchasing Department for Emergency Kits. As Mary mentioned in her report earlier, the kits will include items that can be used in emergencies year round. The kit purchases should be finalized within the next few weeks.

Vacant Positions:

15 Vacant Full-time Positions:

- Aging Care Manager 3 – 4 vacancies (3 posted and 1 on hold)
- Aging Care Manager 2 – 4 vacancies (posted)
- Aging Care Manager Supervisor 1 – 2 vacancies (both posted)
- Aging Care Manager Supervisor 2 – posted
- Aging Case Aide 2
- Clerk Typist 2 – 2 vacancies (1 candidate and 1 on hold)
- Senior Center Manager 1 – Pittston

1 Part-Time Position:

- Aging Case Aide 2 (Health & Wellness Program)

2 Vacant Alternate Positions:

- Food Service Worker (Rose Tucker Active Adult Center)
- Senior Center Manager 1 (Plains Active Adult Center)

SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT – Mary Schell

Staff Cross Training

The staff has been working hard and cross training as they assist with other units due to several agency vacancies. Sean Davis (Program Analyst 2) continues to support the Assessment Unit by overseeing the Functional Eligibility Determinations, which decides if an older adult is Nursing Facility Clinically Eligible (NFCE) or Nursing Facility Ineligible (NFI) after an assessment has been done by an agency Care Manager. The Care Management Supervisors are overseeing the Needs Assessment Tools (NAT) to determine an older adults need for the Options program. Another Assessment Care Manager has been helping the Protective Services Unit. Mary Schell has oversight of all the Social Service units and assures that needs are being met.

Statewide Report

A statewide report came out in January determining the average case times and breakdown of face to face determinations for the Protective Services Unit. Luzerne & Wyoming Counties AAA was well above the state average in responding to incoming reports. Mary is very proud of all the workers in the AAA Protective Services Unit.

Care Management

The shortage of available home health aides continues, however a slight improvement was noticed as the waiting list is not as long. Consumer choice is offered by AAA and some older adults are willing to wait for the provider they want or best fits their schedules. Many families are assisting with care also.

Protective Services

A new Protective Services chapter was recently introduced and will take effect in late March. The chapter is a case directive on standard operating procedures. There are changes in the new chapter and cases that needed to be closed in 14 days will now be required to close in 10 days once it is turned over to a supervisor. The care management of a consumer by the Protective Services worker will end after 45 days now instead of the 60 day previous limit. Brian McAdarra, Protective Services Supervisor has been holding small unit meetings with staff in preparing for the expectations and changes. The entire Protective Services Unit will then present the changes to the rest of the Social Services staff.

Legislative Update

House Bill # 2325 will establish retention bonuses for long term care facilities which have been struggling with staff shortages. The bill has been referred to the Committee on Aging and Older Adult Services. Nationally Senators Bob Casey and Tim Scott have introduced a bi-partisan bill called the PACE Expansion Act. Pennsylvania was used as the model for the bill which coordinates oversight for individuals who need Medicaid and Medicare services. The Wavier program is an example and its impact may increase eligibility.

ACTIVE ADULT CENTER REPORT – Sandy Acornley

Active Adult Centers

Sandy was happy to report the Active Adult Centers are continuing with their programs and adding new activities all the time. Participation has been very good and thankfully there have been no cases of severe COVID. The County has lifted the mask mandate, however masks are recommended.

Snow Day

The centers were closed for a snow day on February 4th. Closings are announced on WBRE and listed as Active Adult Centers for Luzerne & Wyoming Counties. Sandy is glad to have that option in getting the word out to the center members.

Shelf Stable Meals

Community on Economic Opportunity (CEO) is still providing emergency shelf stable meal boxes for each center member. Also being provided by CEO are monthly commodity boxes for those who qualify financially. There has been a noticeable increase in the numbers over the last few months, because the participants now sign up through the PACE Program.

Active Adult Centers Grant Money

As Tim Farrell spoke about earlier, the Active Adult Centers have received grant money from the state. Sandy has asked all the center managers to send a request of the items specifically needed at each center.

Tax and Rebate Forms

All of the Active Adult Centers have received Property Tax and Rent Rebate forms. This is a great convenience for those seniors who will need them. There is no free tax preparation at the

Active Adult Center sites, however CEO has sent envelopes to the centers for seniors to submit their tax information. The older adults can drop off the envelope at the CEO office on Amber Lane in Wilkes-Barre. When the individual's taxes are ready, they must pick them up at the CEO office.

Red Cross Certification

Sandy is in the process of arranging Red Cross Certification for the Active Adult Center employees. On March 22nd, thirty-six agency staff will be training in First Aid, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Automated External Defibrillator (AED). The training will take place virtually and a kit containing materials needed and an inflatable practice manikin are included. Mary Roselle will also be participating.

Health & Wellness Classes

Sandy has scheduled a few workshops for A Matter of Balance training. The workshops will take place in the Spring at the Pittston Active Adult Center, the Hazleton Active Adult Center and possibly at the Pittston YMCA.

National Nutrition Month

March is National Nutrition Month and will be recognized by the Active Adult Centers. This year's theme is "Celebrating 50 Years of Senior National Nutrition Programs". The center directors have been coming up with ideas and some include nutrition puzzles, trivia, smoothies and food drives. Bobbie Shendock (AAA Senior Nutrition) will be collecting recipes from members at the larger sites. Fifty of those recipes submitted by members will be used to create a recipe book. The book will be shared with center members at all sites.

Active Adult Center Member Staff Changes

On February 28th, Jean Spindler who worked at the Kingston Active Adult Center for many years will be retiring. Sandy is thankful for Jean's years of service to the center members and wishes her well. Maria Linso previously worked at the Pittston Active Adult Center and will now be working as the Assistant Senior Center Operator at Charles T. Adams center in Wilkes Barre. Sandy is in the process of filling the Pittston AAC Assistant Senior Operator position and a candidate has accepted. A candidate has also been recommended for the Aging Case Aide position at the State Street Office and will be starting soon.

ADJOURNMENT

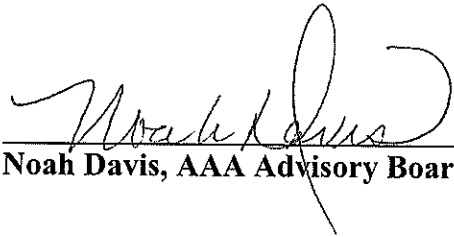
Joe Yozviak asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Henry Pennoni made the motion and Angel Mathis seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 12:46 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

There were no new business items.

NEXT MEETING

The next AAA Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for April 21, 2022 and the location will be determined.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Noah Davis", is written over a horizontal line.

Noah Davis, AAA Advisory Board Secretary

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

