

**AREA AGENCY ON AGING  
LUZERNE & WYOMING COUNTIES  
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
(Microsoft Teams Meeting)  
June 17, 2021**

**MEETING ATTENDANCE**

**Present** – Patricia Besermin, Dr. Steve Broskoske, Joanne Corey, Laura Allport Dickson, Charlotte Kitler, Angel Mathis, Phyllis Mundy, Robert Nealon, Henry Pennoni, William Runner, James Sernak, Dominick Trombetta, Deborah Walsh, Don Warren, Joseph Yozviak

**Absent**

**Dr. Liza Behrens, Noah Davis, William Lewis, Nancy Thaler, David Yonki**

**Staff Attendance**

**Sandy Acornley, John Alunni, Jim Cease, Timothy Farrell, Mary Roselle, Sheila Rothenbecker, Mary Schell, Denise Stalica**

**CALL TO ORDER** – Joseph Yozviak, Vice Chair

Joseph Yozviak, Vice Chair, called the AAA Advisory Board Meeting to order at 12:02 p.m. on Thursday, June 17, 2021 by joining into the 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**

Joseph Yozviak asked for approval of the April 15, 2021 meeting minutes. Angel Mathis made a motion to approve and Joanne Corey seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the minutes were approved.

## **WELCOME DENISE STALICA – Mature Workers Program (MWP) Project Director**

Joseph Yozviak welcomed meeting guest Denise Stalica, Project Director of the AAA Mature Workers Program. He told the board members Denise started working for the agency in 2008 and has been in the MWP Director position since 2015. Denise thanked Joe and the board members for including her in the meeting. She then gave information about the Mature Worker Program, which is known nationally as the Senior Community Employment Program (SCEP). It is a federally funded training program administered through the Department of Labor and Industry under Title V of the Older Americans Act. Denise told meeting members the program began approximately 50 years ago in the Area Agency on Aging to benefit Luzerne and Wyoming Counties older adults and is a stepping stone back into the work force. Many program participants are eager to train and learn new skills. To qualify for the program a person must be at least 55 years old, a resident of Luzerne or Wyoming counties, and meet federal low-income guidelines. The program offers on-the-job training, additional classroom training (if appropriate), and referrals to employers in the community who are seeking the skills the participant has or will acquire in the program. It will also offer assessment, testing and counseling if desired or needed. On-the-job training means the participant will be assigned to train at a government or nonprofit agency site for 15 to 20 hours per week for a maximum of 48 months. There are currently 70 training sites including some of the AAA Active Adult Centers. Enrollees will be paid the minimum wage by the program for the time spent in on-the-job training, attending approved classes, program meetings, or otherwise engaged in authorized training activities. Denise is very proud of the Mature Workers Program participants and enjoys watching their progress and success.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT – Mary Roselle**

### **Interstate Funding Formula**

During the last Advisory Board meeting, there was discussion about Pennsylvania Department of Aging Secretary Robert Torres being tasked with changing the Interstate Funding Formula throughout the network. For some AAAs this will mean more funding, for Luzerne/Wyoming Counties, it will mean less. The CARES Act Funding and FFCRA funds will help to offset this reduction in funding for the short term. In addition, the American Recovery Act dollars will bring more funding over the next 3 years. The changes and formal plan will be finalized soon.

### **Enrollment**

Mary thanked the board members for their support with the letter to the Governor regarding the e Enrollment process. The ability for AAAs to continue to perform the assessment function is in jeopardy if the AAAs are not awarded the enrollment bid.

## **Foster Grandparent Program**

Mary Lou Zerfoss, Foster Grandparent Program Director, will be retiring at the beginning of August. After discussions with Lynn Hill, Dave Pedri, County Council, FGP Board and participants, and the federal grant agency - AmeriCorps, a decision was made for the AAA to continue administering the program through March 31, 2022. At that time, a transition to a new provider will hopefully be in place. AAA will contract with Mary Lou Zerfoss to work for the program 15 hours per week through March 31, 2022.

## **APPRISE Program**

APPRISE is a Medicare counseling service program. The state has decided to re-brand the program and the new name will be PA MEDI which stands for Pennsylvania Medicare Education Insight. The new staff titles will be PA Medicare Counselors and PA Medicare Regional Coordinators.

## **ECHO Grant**

The state has started to offer Elder Cottage Housing Opportunity (ECHO) grants. A cottage will be placed on the property of a family member or friend for an older adult to live there. The older adult is still independent, yet close enough for assistance and support services. A few cottages have been placed across the Commonwealth so far. AAA Luzerne/Wyoming County has signed up for the next phase to get an ECHO home placed in our area and see how it will work out.

## **Elder Abuse Awareness Month**

June is Elder Abuse Awareness Month. AAA has done some campaigning and newspaper advertising, billboard displays and post cards.

## **August Meeting Survey**

An Advisory Board member suggested meeting in person for the August meeting. A survey will be sent to each member checking on how many may be interested in meeting in person or continue virtually with Teams. Spacing and safety accommodations will be considered.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES REPORT – Tim Farrell**

### **Fiscal Unit**

The Fiscal Unit is now at full staff as Zachary Cwikla started with the AAA Fiscal Unit as Accountant 1 on May 24<sup>th</sup>. Tim is pleased and feels that Zach is intelligent, learns quickly and will be a great addition to their team.

### **Time Studies**

Times Studies were held from the end of April until the beginning of May. The studies are used to set up allocation schedules for the upcoming budget year.

### **Mature Workers Program Budget**

The Fiscal Unit is currently working on the National Council on Aging (NCOA) and the Title V budget for the Mature Workers Program.

### **County and State Budgets**

The County budget process for calendar year 2022 will begin in August. The budget and allocation for the next fiscal year will be coming soon from the PA Department of Aging to be completed by the Fiscal Unit.

### **Advertising Campaign**

AAA Advertising campaigns for television, Google and Paper Clicks with information on agency programs will be running from July through December 2021. Billboard advertisements will take place from July 2021 to June 2022.

### **Provider Contracts**

Contracts for service providers for the period of July 2021 through June 2025 have been sent out. The Fiscal Unit is utilizing a company call Sysoft, which is a contract management provider. Returns started coming back in the beginning of June and they should all be back by the end of the month.

### **CARES Funding**

Approximately \$700,000 dollars of CARES (Corona Virus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) funding will be deferred to the 2021 -2022 Fiscal Year.

## **Health & Wellness Funding**

Some of the Health & Wellness funding slated for evidence-based programs will be returned. The money, which totals \$10,000 dollars, cannot be used before the end of the fiscal year. The state has been asked to do a budget transfer and give the money to another AAA who needs it.

### **Vacant Positions:**

#### **4 Vacant Full-time Positions:**

- Aging Care Manager 3 – re-posted (no viable candidates with last posting)
- Aging Care Manager 2 – posted on June 10<sup>th</sup>
- Aging Care Manager 2 – on hold due to decrease of consumer volume
- Clerk Typist 2 – candidate hired and will start on June 28<sup>th</sup>

#### **No Vacant Part-Time Positions at this time**

#### **3 Vacant Alternate Positions:**

- Food Service Worker (Wyoming County) – re-posted (no candidates yielded from 2 previous postings)
- Senior Center Manager 1 (Mountain Top) – candidate recommended
- Senior Center Manager 1 (Lee Park) – posted on June 15<sup>th</sup>

## **SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT – Mary Schell**

### **Vaccinations**

The Social Services Unit has been busy scheduling vaccinations for seniors in need. There was a very high volume of calls from older adults asking for help to schedule since they did not have access or knowledge of technology. AAA Intake Unit staff scheduled over 200 appointments from March to May. Matt Vough helped to arrange transportation for those who needed it and the agency is grateful for his assistance. Mary Roselle, Mary Schell along with Care Management Assessment Supervisors, went to area high rises to assist individuals with scheduling and paperwork. Arrangements were also made for the homebound who wanted to receive a vaccination. AAA worked with Emergency Management Services (EMS), paramedics and visiting nurses to get 136 homebound older adults their first COVID-19 vaccination.

## **Aging Team Members**

Ann Marie Hirko has recently returned to the Aging Agency as a Care Manager 2 in the Care Management Unit. She had worked in Family Caregiver Support Unit a few years ago and is glad to be back. Jim Smith, Assessment Supervisor, shared his resignation and will be leaving the agency on July 1<sup>st</sup>. A decision was made not to replace Jim and distribute the work throughout the administrative staff while still managing effectively.

## **Protective Services**

The Protective Services Unit remains extremely busy and a new position was created to help. An Intake Worker position was filled by Nathan Litsch, who started two weeks ago. He will be taking Protective Services calls, Reports of Need (RON) and assisting with investigations daily. This will free up the PS Investigators from the phone and give them more time with their caseloads. Nathan had interned with AAA in the Protective Services Unit a few years ago and is excited to come back and do the work he loves.

## **Legislative/Advocacy Update**

House Bill #464, which is an amendment to Family Caregivers Support Act, passed on June 11<sup>th</sup> and was presented to the Governor. The bill will take effect in sixty days and expands support for caregivers of those with chronic dementia, clarifies some definitions and increases services for adults from the ages of 18 to 59 with a non-dementia disability residing with a disabled caregiver over 60 years old.

House Bill #1430 amended version is under consideration with the Aging and Older Adult Services Committee. This bill expands the current Older Adult Protective Services Act including an extended chapter on Financial Exploitation, definitions and provisions for financial crimes. When the law passed in 1987, there were no computer crimes against the elderly, so changes in the law are needed.

There is pending legislation in the Aging and Older Adult Service Committee. The Lottery Law enhances directives for prescription assistance through the PACE Program. The bill is currently in the House and Senate so it should be passing soon.

## **ACTIVE ADULT CENTER REPORT - Sandy Acornley**

### **Active Adult Centers**

AAA Active Adult Centers have opened at full capacity as of June 1<sup>st</sup> and have also resumed activities. Center Directors are busy scheduling entertainment, speakers, special bingos and other pre-COVID-19 activities. Sandy reached out to all center directors this week to

see how things are going after restrictions were lifted. She was told the center members are thrilled to be back with their friends, be without masks and are really enjoying being able to participate in their favorite activities.

### **Exercise Classes**

Exercise Classes are back to in-person participation. A few instructors are using a hybrid method to teach those that show up in person along with continuing Zoom for others who prefer. A few directors noticed some of the older adults had decreased mobility since they had no access to Zoom for exercising during the center COVID-19 shut downs.

### **Congregate Meal Count**

The congregate meal counts are slowly beginning to rise. Over the past year, center members were offered 7 frozen meals that were picked up each Monday. The meal pick up continues for those who still prefer that option instead of coming into the centers.

### **Active Adult Center Grant Money**

Items for centers ordered from grant money, have started to come in. New furniture, steam tables, shuffleboard, foosball tables, televisions, karaoke and juke boxes are some of the new things being enjoyed by the center members.

### **Serve Safe Certification**

On May 12<sup>th</sup>, ten Active Adult Center directors participated in the Serve Safe training class and received certification. More staff will be attending the class at the end of July. Bobbie Shendock, Nutrition Project Manager, was notified by the state that Serve Safe certification will be a requirement in the new Aging Program Directive.

### **Lee Park Active Adult Center**

Paul Davies has recently been hired to fill the center director vacancy at the Lee Park Active Adult Center site.

### **Farmers Market Voucher Program**

The Farmers Market Voucher Program is in full swing and going very well. Sandy gives credit to Karen Pietraccini, Administrative Assistant, who is new to her position and yet has the program running smoothly with great organization and efficiency. Agency staff and volunteers have been assisting and so far, a total of 15,640 vouchers have been distributed.

**Health & Wellness Program**

Two center directors have recently completed Healthy Steps for Older Adults virtual workshops. This month at the Rose Tucker Nanticoke Active Adult Center, a Healthy Steps in Motion class will be held. Bill Runner shared that he and his wife Joanne, have been participating for several months in the Zoom Chair Yoga classes offered by the Area Agency on Aging. The classes are held 2 times per week with approximately 30 participants. Bill gives credit to the instructor, Donna Fetzko and feels she is an expert who is always patient and makes the classes a lot of fun. Sandy said she has been getting calls about the exercise classes after older adults have seen the agency advertisements on television. They are asking for the program schedules and how they can sign up to participate.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Joseph Yozviak asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Debbie Walsh made the motion and Henry Pennoni seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 12:47 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next AAA Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for August 17, 2021 and the meeting location will be decided.

  
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**Phyllis Mundy, AAA Advisory Board Secretary**

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