

COMMISSION ON AGING
ATTENDANCE

FEBRUARY 9, 2022

~via ZOOM video conferencing~

COA BOARD MEMBERS

Pam Shernuk, Chair
Paula Hurt, Vice Chair
Dale Warman
Rob Givens

John P. Smith
Dale Warman
Cynthia Schendel
Cindy Green

Robert Cantu
Carol Feaker
Kim Mann
Chris Talarico

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS LIAISON

Shirley Allenbrand

AGING & HUMAN SERVICES

Megan Laha, Interim Aging & Human Services Director

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

Jay Leak, Deputy Director
Angela Pelger, Program Services Manager
Carol Colnar, Operations Manager
Stephany Ikpe, Nutrition Program Manager
Jill Zink, Administrative Assistant

GUESTS

Janee' Hanzlick, BOCC
Becky Fast, BOCC
Joe Connor, Assistant County Manager
Chris Osborn, CEO, Evergreen Living Innovations

ABSENT

Jarrold Ousley
Andrea Leavitt

COMMISSION ON AGING

MEETING MINUTES

FEBRUARY 9, 2022

~via ZOOM video conferencing~

OPENING AND WELCOME

- Call to Order 9:00 AM

INTRODUCTIONS, COA CHAIR – PAM SHERNUK

APPROVAL OF MINUTES, COA CHAIR – PAM SHERNUK

- Cindy Green moved to approve January 2022 minutes. Cynthia Schendel seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER LIAISON - SHIRLEY ALLENBRAND

- Commissioner Allenbrand stated that a BOCC vote was made to return to in person meetings.
- Comm'r spoke with Assistant County Manager, Maury Thompson who stated Kansas House bill #2543 would likely be amended to determine if it would advance.
- COVID cases are decreasing. BOCC will be revisiting health order February 17.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PRESENTATION

BOCC - JANE' HANZLICK, BECKY FAST, SHIRLEY ALLENBRAND

- Jane' Hanzlick, Becky Fast and Shirley Allenbrand presented information on their committee's affordable housing study and the problem of homelessness in Johnson County. Their goal is to identify and implement strategies to assist vulnerable populations and cost-burdened renters/homeowners find shelter and affordable housing throughout Johnson County. While researching housing insecurities and meeting with local community leaders, transit and housing staff, the study identified resources or a lack thereof available to these populations including elder adults. County programs are limited including assistance in home repair and homeless shelters. Recommendations include collaborating with the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) on fund investment opportunities to sustain housing solutions. Also suggested was developing a Housing Trust Fund to assist in building more affordable housing and provide additional shelter for the homeless. Accessing affordable housing is a challenge to lower-income families and seniors. The current cost of land and constructing homes is a factor in this ongoing problem. There are many adults and children without homes. Work is being done to partner with elected officials, non-profit leaders and citizens to support capacity building. Advocacy is needed to fund home repair, strengthen transit and better educate vulnerable populations and better connect them to human services, jobs and permanent housing resources. Pam Shernuk stated the senior population is expected to skyrocket over the next decade, projected to be 170,000 or more. She questioned if there was any plan to expand the Homestead Act. Commissioner Fast stated the KS legislature is working on expansion of the Homestead Act and SAFESR which is a property tax relief fund for low-income seniors. Making progress towards more affordable housing in Johnson County is in the early stages but will remain a continued effort.

AREA AGENCY ON AGING (AAA) – DEPUTY DIRECTOR, JAY LEAK

- Jay Leak, Deputy Director has been communicating with other KS AAA's. An area of concern is the introduction of Kansas House Bill #2543 which may have a significant impact on the AAA. Although a fiscal note is still in progress, the bill suggests funding assistance for early onset Alzheimer's patients through the Senior Care Act (SCA). Provisions of service for this group of people are needed however the concern was raised that this will pull much needed funds away from the senior population and open up the current legislation for amendments. In addition, if passed the assignment will be given to the AAA's which could bring a heavier workload to the group. Pam Shernuk followed up with Jarrod Ousley that the bill has not been scheduled yet. She emailed the committee expressing she was opposed to the bill and if it is moved forward for a hearing, written testimony from the COA opposing bill should

be passed along. Cindy Green questioned if the County's lobbying firm will engage in the opposition. Megan Laha replied that the County will wait until bill moves further along before addressing. The AAA currently serves Alzheimer's clients.

- Jay also informed the board the State is requesting tracking at nutrition centers on how many use the "grab & go" option at these centers. The goal is to make sure the elder population is socializing amongst each other.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- John P. Smith reminded members to continue advocating to our KS legislature on current issues.

REPORT FROM THE COA CHAIR, PAM SHERNUK

- Talking points for House Bill #2543) will be sent to all board members. Pam reminded members that these talking points are from the Kansas Association of Area Agencies on Aging (k4ads) and not from the County.
- Pam also confirmed congregate meal sites are scheduled to open February 28th.

OLD BUSINESS

- The Legislative breakfast and the Peg Deaton award will be moved to the Fall. A nominating committee will be appointed in the Spring of 3 board members. The committee will present the intended officers for a vote in July. The new officers will assume their positions at the August meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- A discussion took place on the decision to have the potential BOCC Chair candidates speak to the COA. The deadline for candidates to file is June 1. According to the COA by-laws, it is prohibited that the commission endorse or give favoritism to any political candidates. The county managers office is also concerned of such an event taking place on county property. Due to the projected increase in the senior population, COA chair Pam Shernuk expressed her thoughts on the importance of knowing where each candidate stands on senior issues and suggested this type of forum be hosted off site. Alternative locations included Lake View Village and Tall Grass Creek. Interim Director, Megan Laha voiced her concern on holding such an event, being aware of state laws and the line between information and advocacy. Other comments included the option to attend informational sessions with other local groups as individuals and not as a representative of the COA. Cindy Green commented that holding this event could lead to other groups using the COA as a platform during elections. A question was raised on how such a county position would impact future legislative breakfasts. A final decision on this will be made at next month's meeting.

ASSISTANT COUNTY MANAGER - JOE CONNOR

- Joe Connor updated the board that the panel interview date for the Aging & Human Services Director position is scheduled for Friday, February 25th. He questioned the board if they prefer meeting through Zoom or in person. The board unanimously decided to have review the candidates in person. Safety protocols such as social distancing and masking will be in place.

OPEN FORUM/PUBLIC COMMENTS

- None at this time

ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting adjourned at 10:37AM

Next COA meeting ~Via ZOOM~
Wednesday, March 9, 2022 @ 9:00 AM