

Minutes of the
Lake County Senior Citizens Advisory Panel
Tuesday, September 22, 2020
2:00 p.m.

The Lake County Senior Citizens Advisory Panel hereby finds and determines that all formal actions were taken in an open meeting and that all deliberations of the Senior Citizens Advisory Panel, which resulted in formal action, were taken in a meeting open to the general public, in full compliance with applicable legal requirements of Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Chairperson, Mr. Dreher, opened the meeting at 2:05 p.m.

Present-

Members: Tom Dreher, Ken Gauntner, Frank Doberdruk, Spence Kline and Lyle Shull

Staff: Alyea Barajas and Jason Boyd

From the Public: Mr. Joe Tomsick from Council on Aging

Public Comments

There were no public comments at this time.

Approval of February 19, 2020 minutes:

Mr. Shull moved to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2020, Mr. Doberdruk seconded the motion to approve.

Vote: "All Ayes"

Motion carried.

Correspondence –

A request for information was received from Ms. Lois Orosz and Mrs. Barajas stated that she has responded and provided the information Ms. Orosz requested. A copy her request was provided to the Panel.

Strategic Initiative:

Mr. Boyd gave an update on the meetings he and Mrs. Barajas have had with consultant, Mr. Ben Fierman. He noted that the data and study was hindered due to the Covid-19 pandemic. He stated that they were able to get approximately 2 months of data from the senior centers before shut downs began to occur. Prior to the senior center shut downs, the information gathered was going to be used to identify gaps in service and duplication of services and the future units-based funding model. Once the Covid cases increased, they continued with mapping and demographic studies to the best of their abilities and the information will prove to be beneficial. He briefly discussed the volunteer component through Council on Aging, RSVP and the number of volunteers that are intermingled throughout the senior centers. He also stated that senior center budgets had already been approved for the year and that there were discussions regarding a possible 20% reduction in the center budgets due to the closures of the centers. Mr. Boyd sent an email out to all the centers advising them that should there be a drop-in property tax payment, they (the centers) may be asked to reduce their budgets by 20%. Mr. Boyd and Mrs. Barajas had discussions regarding requested reimbursements from the centers and the Governor's orders.

Senior Center Re-Opening:

Mrs. Barajas explained that the Senior Centers that are able to meet the re-opening guidelines provided by the State have been permitted to open. She stated that even though the Senior Centers are allowed to open they are not required to do so. The States compliance requirements include limited capacity, spacing requirements, sanitization procedures, facial coverings, pre-screening via telephone prior to participant visits, and they are required to follow sector specific guidelines for congregate meals, fitness centers, entertainment, etc. The largest undertaking is the testing requirements, she explained that all staff and volunteers must be tested on a bi-weekly basis. Strategic testing of participants is required regardless of whether the participant is displaying symptoms or not, those at high risk, or those with suspected exposure to COVID-19.

As of today, Lake County General Health District Commissioner, Mr. Ron Graham, has indicated that it would be his recommendation to delay re-opening until January 2021.

Mr. Shull asked who would fund the Covid testing for the centers and their participants. Mrs. Barajas stated that there is no clear answer at this time. They discussed the issues that are still being experienced with trying to get people tested and the increase in cases that has been trending since Labor Day.

Mr. Shull commented that it appears Fairport Harbor Senior Center is open. Mr. Boyd responded that they are holding outdoor activities more or less as a community center. He feels that there have been very good open conversations with the Senior Centers and their Finance/Fiscal Directors, RSVP and Council on Aging with regard to what future funding may look like and what reimbursements they may request during the time of shutdown.

Mr. Boyd stated that they will be wrapping up with Mr. Fierman over the next month and begin to take a look at the west end of the County centers.

Senior Services Coordinator Updates-

Mrs. Barajas stated that she has received requests for funding from all centers except Willowick and Kirtland. She explained that the City of Willowick has laid off their Senior Center Director and the Recreation Director has stepped in to handle any correspondences. The City of Kirtland has also laid off their Senior Center Director and the Mayor's assistant is handling the senior correspondence for them.

Levy Funding Status: 2020:

Mrs. Barajas stated that in early June, a letter was emailed to the finance directors of all the senior centers and RSVP requesting their agencies to provide a plan that would enable the centers and RSVP to provide services with up to a 20% reduction in revenue should the economic climate warrant such reductions in the second half of 2020. She explained that at this time, the Board of Commissioners has made the decision not to cut any funding. She does anticipate a decrease in funding requests as various programs or services have been suspended or scaled back. With these programs and services being suspended or modified the result would be a lack of eligible expenses for which to request reimbursement. Requests for reimbursement will be closely monitored to ensure they are appropriate, as will any additional requests for budget modifications.

The Panel discussed with Mr. Boyd and Mrs. Barajas the details of what they will be looking into when the reimbursement requests come in. Mr. Dreher requested more information on the reimbursements.

General Discussion:

Mr. Tomsick explained to the Panel that Council on Aging has reduced the Meals on Wheels deliveries to 3 times per week and are delivering approximately 5,000 meals per week which is up approximately 35% from pre-Covid. He stated that they were fortunate enough to have received a \$100,000 grant from Meals on Wheels America. They are to use \$ 25,000 for shelf stable meals and products and \$ 75,000 for the purchase of up to 19,000 meals. This grant and the CARES Act dollars received from the Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging will make a great impact on the seniors that they can serve during this time. He also said that they were able to replace two refrigerators that recently broke utilizing the MOW grant. Mr. Tomsick addressed the Eastlake Senior Center issue stating that they have had conversations on how they can best handle the meal program that Eastlake runs out of the current location. They also did a site tour of the Willoughby Senior Center and a potential Eastlake Senior Center location. Mr. Tomsick gave an update on the Homemaker Services and the new protocols they are following. As of September 14th, they were able to begin sending their Social Workers back into the field.

Levy Funding Status: 2021:

Mrs. Barajas stated that she is currently working on the 2021 levy applications and hopes to have them completed and mailed out by the first or second week of October. She plans to implement a few conditions and limitations for what the levy funds can be used for. In the future, the method of reimbursement will be based upon units of service. Mrs. Barajas also explained that agencies will only be paid based on the actual number of units they deliver but she does not anticipate this happening until sometime in 2022 and 2023. She stated that competitive bids for the Non-Medical Home Healthcare Program have been requested to be received by September 30th, 2020. The contract breakdown is for one year and the option for 3 additional one-year renewals.

Mr. Boyd mentioned several topics that he and Mrs. Barajas discussed with the Mayors and Fiscal Officers regarding levy dollars and what they can be used for.

Mr. Boyd stated that there are a few follow-up meetings scheduled to discuss topic of volunteering and the west end facilities to complete the study.

Panel Vacancy

Mrs. Barajas stated that the terms of Mr. Tom Dreher and Mr. Frank Doberdruk will expire on September 30th, 2020 and that Mr. Dreher has requested to be re-appointed to the Panel. Mr. Doberdruk has respectfully declined renewing his term on the Panel. On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, she thanked Mr. Doberdruk for the time that he has served on the Panel and all of his efforts over the last 8 years. The Board of Commissioners will consider applications for the open seat. Mrs. Barajas reviewed the Panel terms:

Ken Gauntner – 09/30/21

Spence Kline – 09/30/21

Lyle Shull – 09/30/22

Vacant Seat – 09/30/2023

Old Business – Mr. Dreher asked the status of the Painesville Senior Organization and whether any decisions have been made. Mr. Boyd responded that the *Painesville Area Agency* is housed at the Lake County General Health District under Health Commissioner Ron Graham. They are not receiving any senior funding at this time and he is unaware if they will request funds in the future. He briefly explained a program within the Health District called '*Motivate Lake County*' and believes the former Painesville Senior Center Director is assisting with this program. Mrs. Barajas stated that many of the Painesville Center members joined Fairport, Perry or Mentor Senior Centers. Mr. Dreher and the Panel voiced their

concerns for the Painesville Senior members that have not joined centers elsewhere as well as where Painesville stands and what may happen when centers begin to reopen.

Mr. Shull asked if there were an update on the monetary request from Council on Aging. Mr. Tomsick stated that due to the pandemic that haven't been able to begin any of the work planned but gave a description of the work that will be done. Mr. Boyd suggested that he, Mrs. Barajas and Mr. Tomsick discuss other funding options, possibly through CARES act dollars.

Mr. Doberdruk asked for an update on the Volunteer Guardian Program through the Probate Court. Mrs. Barajas stated that it is going well but that they have seen a bit more employee turnover than expected. Mr. Boyd stated that the Housing Program and Adult Protective Services has seen a drastic increase since the pandemic began and that they are handling everything very well.

New Business: -none.

On behalf of the Panel, Mr. Dreher thanked Mr. Doberdruk for his years of service and that he will be missed. Mr. Doberdruk expressed his gratitude for having the opportunity to serve on the Board and that he is proud of all of the work they have been able to accomplish.

Adjournment:

Mr. Kline moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:02 p.m. and Mr. Gauntner seconded the motion. Discussion: none.

Vote: "All Ayes"
Motion carried.

*The next meeting will be held Wednesday, October 28, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.