

Minutes of the
Lake County Senior Citizens Advisory Panel
Tuesday, November 18, 2025
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.

Mr. Sterk called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m. and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present:

Members: John Hamila, Emily Koenig, Jenna Bing, Greg Giegerich, Larry Sterk, Lyle Shull, David Bennett

Staff: Alyea Barajas, Cristen Kane

Public: Joseph Tomsick, Lake County Council on Aging

Approval of the September 2, 2025, minutes:

Ms. Bing moved to approve the minutes of the September 2, 2025; Ms. Koenig seconded the motion to approve.

Vote: "All Ayes"

Motion carried.

Public Comments: None.

Correspondence: None.

Nomination of 2026 Officers:

Mr. Sterk indicated he would accept nominations from the Board for the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

Mr. Giegerich nominated Mr. Sterk as Chairperson, Ms. Koeng seconded the nomination.

Vote: "All Ayes"

Motion carried.

Mr. Sterk nominated Ms. Koenig as Vice-Chair, Ms. Bing seconded the nomination.

Vote: "All Ayes"

Motion carried.

Volunteer Services Coordinator – Lake County Volunteer Network (LCVN)/AmeriCorps Update:

Ms. Kane provided an update on the AmeriCorps RSVP grant. Due to the recent government shutdown, there had been limited activity on the federal grant, and federal funds were being managed cautiously amid uncertainty regarding AmeriCorps funding. It has now been confirmed that AmeriCorps is included in the Continuing Resolution, allowing remaining grant activities to move forward. The grant fiscal year runs from April 1 through March 31.

The Annual Volunteer Recognition Celebration was held at Captain's Stadium on September 3, 2025, and was a great success. The weather was excellent, the hot dogs were very popular, and parking arrangements, including the Laketran shuttle and free parking at the City of Eastlake lot, worked smoothly.

LCVN has been actively assisting the United Way of Lake County with multiple emergency food distributions in response to SNAP benefit issues. Volunteers have responded generously and with minimal notice. September focused on honoring the Mobile Pantry volunteers, who concluded five years of dedicated service. The Mobile Pantry program has received multiple awards since its inception in April 2020, including the 2020 Lake County Development Council Impact Award, the 2021 Ohio Public Transit Association's Collaborative Excellence Award, the 2022 Lifeline Community Partnership Award, the 2025 Friends of Laketrans Mille Waterman Award, and Special Recognition by the Lake County Council on Aging in 2025.

Looking ahead, a meeting with EMA Director Joe Busher led to plans to recruit more volunteers for the Lake County Citizen Corps by hosting a collaborative volunteer training with the Medical Reserve Corps in March 2026.

Senior Services Manager Updates:

Ms. Barajas provided an update on the Senior Services Strategic Plan and Gap Analysis. The Osgood Group (TOG) is leading an analysis to understand where seniors are currently engaged and to identify gaps in services. As part of this effort, TOG has reviewed data from all senior centers and the Council on Aging, with this phase now nearly complete. In December, TOG will field a survey to a representative sample of seniors and adult children of seniors to gather additional insights. Results from both the data analysis and survey are expected in January.

TOG will conduct interviews with each panel member over the next few weeks to discuss individual experiences with the Advisory Panel and perspectives on senior services. A sign-up sheet was made available during the meeting, and Adam will follow up with meeting links and details. Beginning in January, TOG will also conduct stakeholder interviews with more than 50 community members whose work directly or indirectly impacts senior services. Findings from these interviews will be shared in March. The panel continues to meet with TOG weekly to stay updated and advance the project. The 2026 meeting dates were included in the meeting packet, with an additional meeting scheduled in June to coincide with the completion of the study.

Ms. Barajas then discussed the 2025 Lake County Caregiver Forum, which welcomed over 150 attendees and 35 vendors. Attendees completed evaluation forms, and the feedback was excellent, including recommendations for 2026. Due to limited space, a larger venue may be considered for next year. A copy of the program was included in the meeting packet.

Finally, the panel reviewed the 2026 levy requests. Prior to the meeting, each member received a packet containing all requests for senior levy funds, along with a spreadsheet summarizing historical information, the 2026 requested amounts, and staff funding recommendations. A total of \$5,344,389 was requested by 20 different agencies, and \$4,667,549 was allocated for funding. Ms. Barajas reviewed the spreadsheet and noted that all allotted cash carryover has been spent, resulting in reduced awards, and that projected revenue has decreased by \$130,580 due to increases in the homestead exemption and owner-occupied credit. Ms. Barajas then briefly reviewed each applicant's request, followed by discussion and questions by the Panel regarding the recommendations.

Ms. Bing made a motion to approve the senior services levy recommendations as presented with the exception of the request from Western Reserve Community Development Corporation, Mr. Hamila seconded the motion.

Vote: "All Ayes"
Motion carried.

Ms. Bing made a motion to approve the senior services levy recommendation as presented for Western Reserve Community Development Corporation, Mr. Hamila seconded the motion.

Vote "Ayes": Ms. Koenig, Ms. Bing, Mr. Shull, Mr. Giegerich, Mr. Sterk, Mr. Hamila

Vote "Nays": None

Abstain: Mr. Bennett

Motion carried.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

General Discussion: Joe Tomsick provided an update on the snow plow project with the City of Mentor.

Adjournment:

Mr. Giegerich moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:36 p.m. and Mr. Hamila seconded the motion.

Vote: "All Ayes"

Motion carried.

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, March 10, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.