

Minutes of the
Lake County Senior Citizens Advisory Panel
Tuesday, September 12, 2023
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. Shull, opened the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

Present:

Members: Thomas Dreher, Lisa Manning, and Lyle Shull; Ken Gauntner and Ellen Foley Kessler joined by video conference.

Staff: Alyea Barajas

Absent: None

Public: Joseph Tomsick

Public Comments: None.

Approval of the May 23, 2023 minutes:

Mr. Dreher moved to approve the minutes of the May 23, 2023; Ms. Manning seconded the motion to approve.

Vote: "All Ayes"

Motion carried.

Correspondence: None.

Spence Kline – WRAAA Executive Board Update:

Mr. Kline shared several updates from the Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging (WRAAA) board. Regarding the State of Ohio budget (2024-2025), WRAAA put a lot of energy and time into advocacy. They met with about 10 state elected officials via Zoom from both sides of the aisle. Mr. Kline expressed he felt that WRAAA's requests were heard and the discussions helped raise awareness of topics and WRAAA. Some of the successes from the State budget include:

- Increase in reimbursement rate for PASSPORT (Aging) and Ohio Home Care (Medicaid). This will allow a higher rate of reimbursement so provider organizations can pay staff more in an effort to retain and hire workers.
- Gained support for Area Agencies of Aging (AAA) across Ohio. Strong support to keep AAA's involved with service delivery via MyCare Ohio and PASSPORT.
- Senior Community Services/Healthy Aging grants to Boards of County Commissioners. Lake County is projected to receive \$447,953.
- Increase in funding for Adult Protective Services. This still falls short, however, of what is needed to protect some of our most vulnerable citizens.

Mr. Kline indicated WRAAA is fiscally sound and continues to build an annual surplus to put into the WRAAA Foundation. WRAAA is facing staff shortages like many other organizations and are paying a bonus to service coordinators (direct service staff) to take on additional cases to help make up for staffing shortage. Finally, the Aging & Disability Resource Center is top in the state in most metrics.

Senior Services Manager Updates:

Ms. Barajas shared information on the Lake County Caregiver Forum scheduled for October 5 at University Hospitals TriPoint. She asked the Panel to help spread the word about this important event. Ms. Barajas indicated that a larger venue would be considered next year depending on how turnout is this year. Ms. Barajas explained that this year's event includes a keynote speaker and two lunch and learn sessions. Fourteen agencies will be setting up vendor tables with information. University Hospitals is providing lunch at no charge and Laketrans and Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging are also event sponsors. There was no cost to the senior levy for this event.

Ms. Barajas provided a flyer on the Support Our Seniors Pancake Breakfast scheduled for September 16 at the Kirtland Senior Center. There are 17 sponsors for this event.

A draft of 2024 Senior Services Levy application was presented to the Panel for review. Ms. Barajas explained that applications are scheduled to go out by Friday, September 15 and are due back Friday, November 3. Requests will be presented to the Panel at the November 14 meeting. Ms. Barajas explained a few changes for 2024 to the format and indicated each organization will be required to complete one application narrative but must complete a program profile and budget request for *each* program for which they are applying for levy funds. The budget request also includes space for calculation and justification. Ms. Barajas indicated that often organizations are not fully completing the application. However, this year incomplete applications will be returned for completion. Additionally, in 2024, if the awarded amount exceeds \$100,000 and the budget request is greater than a 10% difference between the award and the request, agencies will need to submit an updated budget reflecting the awarded amount prior to an agreement being issued. No additional suggestions or changes to the application were made by the Panel.

Ms. Barajas provided a worksheet on the current funding status on each levy recipient. Mr. Dreher questioned why some organizations have yet to request levy funds given it is the 3rd quarter of 2023. Ms. Barajas explained that levy recipients are not required to submit requests for reimbursement in any particular intervals. She explained that organizations may not request levy funds prior to the first disbursement, which is typically in April of each year. At that point, they may only request up to 50% of the awarded amount. They may request the remaining 50% upon the second disbursement, which is usually in August. Mr. Guantner asked if there is a deadline by which recipients must request their annual funds. Ms. Barajas indicated that organizations have until the first Friday in February by which to request the previous year's funds. Ms. Foley Kessler asked if regular intervals to request reimbursement should be instituted. Ms. Barajas responded that the current system is not cumbersome and gives the organizations some flexibility.

Ms. Barajas provided a brief AmeriCorps Seniors update in the absence of Ms. Kane. Ms. Barajas indicated Lake County was selected for a monitoring review. As part of this review, several grant related policies and procedures were sent to AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps' goal is to review all their grant recipients at some point. The review is seen as a proactive activity and meant to be helpful to ensure grantee policies and procedures are set up appropriately. After review, AmeriCorps will send a corrective action plan should anything need to be corrected.

Ms. Kane recently submitted the annual AmeriCorps Progress Report. The report outlined some of the current challenges, partnerships, and accomplishments as a result of the grant. It also highlighted a few personal volunteer stories. At this point, Lake County is on track to meet our goals for the program. Ms. Barajas mentioned that about 17 volunteers have been referred to Council on Aging for Meal on Wheels

as a result of the gift card incentive. Mr. Tomsick commented that this has been very beneficial in helping to alleviate the number of deliveries on certain routes.

Ms. Barajas reminded the Panel that the Volunteer Recognition, in collaboration with the Council on Aging, is scheduled for September 27 at Painesville Township Park and that there are currently 176 volunteers registered for the event.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

General Discussion: Joseph Tomsick, CEO of Council on Aging, provided an agency update. Mr. Tomsick indicated Council on Aging has signed a three-year lease with Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities/Deepwood for their Mentor Meals on Wheels kitchen. There will be a ribbon cutting in December. Mr. Tomsick was able to secure \$194,000+ in ARPA funds through WRAAA for the purchase of three commercial ovens to be used at the site and one as a replacement option. The Council on Aging recently completed their WRAAA monitoring visit and were found to be 100% in compliance by the Ohio Department on Aging. Mr. Tomsick also mentioned applying for County CDBG dollars to replace the front doors at the Eat Avenue office. Lastly, Mr. Tomsick informed the Panel of the Council on Aging annual meeting and awards ceremony scheduled for October 12 at Pine Ridge.

Adjournment:

Mr. Dreher moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:53 p.m. and Ms. Manning seconded the motion.

Vote: "All Ayes"

Motion carried.

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.