

Minutes of the  
Lake County Senior Citizens Advisory Panel  
Tuesday, May 14, 2024  
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 2:01 p.m.

Present:

Members: Lyle Shull, Ellen Foley Kessler, Tom Dreher, Emily Koenig and Larry Sterk; Ken Gauntner attended virtually

Staff: Alyea Barajas, Cristen Kane, Commissioner Richard Regovich

Public: Joseph Tomsick CEO of Council on Aging, Gloria Majeski and David Reichelt as representatives from Willoughby Hills

Public Comments: None.

Approval of the March 5, 2024 minutes:

Ms. Foley Kessler moved to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2024; Mr. Sterk seconded the motion to approve.

Vote: "All Ayes"  
Motion carried.

Correspondence: None.

Nomination and Election of 2024 Officers:

Ms. Foley Kessler moved to nominate Mr. Gauntner as Chairperson, Mr. Sterk seconded the nomination.

Vote: "Ayes"  
Motion carried.

Ms. Foley Kessler moved to elect Mr. Gauntner as Chairperson, Mr. Sterk seconded the motion.

Vote: "Ayes"  
Motion carried.

Ms. Koenig moved to nominate Ms. Foley Kessler as Vice Chair, Mr. Shull seconded the nomination.

Vote: "Ayes"  
Motion carried.

Mr. Shull moved to elect Ms. Foley Kessler as Chairperson, Ms. Koenig seconded the motion.

Vote: "Ayes"  
Motion carried.

Spence Kline III, Esq., Treasurer, Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging (WRAAA) Board of Trustees:

Mr. Kline provided a report on the happenings at WRAAA. He indicated WRAAA is currently involved in a strategic planning process with the consulting firm, "Tomorrow's People". WRAAA is still struggling with hiring and retention of staff. The agency is finding new and creative ways to attract staff that are seeing positive results. Mr. Kline stated there has been a home health care shortage that has existed for some time now. Pay rate increases were approved in the last Ohio budget to allow providers to pay workers more but it is expected to be a long-term challenge. Mr. Kline will be chairing the Community Services and Supports Committee on the WRAAA Board. Mr. Kline continued by providing a brief public policy update that touched on the areas of housing, MyCare Ohio, and the recent Healthy Aging Grants from the Ohio Department of Aging.

Willoughby Hills 2024 Request:

At the March 5, 2024, Senior Panel meeting the Panel voted in favor of reconsidering the 2024 funding request of Willoughby Hills for the Senior Room. Ms. Barajas refreshed the panel on the budget request, which totaled \$113,206. Mr. Dreher asked why the original request was denied and Commissioner Regovich provided explanation as to the denial. Ms. Barajas reminded the Panel that the senior levy brings in approximately \$4.5 million each year and all of those funds are allocated annually. Approximately one quarter of those annual funds are invested in nine area senior centers. Ms. Barajas continued that the Board of Commissioners needs to continue to look at the more complex and pervasive needs of older adults, such as housing. Ms. Foley Kessler asked whether or not there is a current study that is looking at the needs of older adults. Ms. Barajas responded that the Board of Commissioners is currently working with the Center for Community Solutions to help examine the needs as well as some innovative ways other communities have addressed those needs. Ms. Foley Kessler asked if the Board of Commissioners were planning to allocate the additional \$50,000 for each senior center in 2025. Ms. Barajas responded that was not something currently being considered. Mr. Dreher asked Willoughby Hills representatives how many people attended the group. Ms. Majeski indicated that the senior room has approximately 200 paid members but that they hope to expand their membership. They generally have about 45 people attending their monthly luncheon where they have special speakers, etc. Mr. Reichelt stated that while he understands there is some trepidation about funding another center the difference is that the Willoughby Hills senior room has been functioning since 2010 and that they are the only one that is not currently receiving senior levy funding. Discussion continued amongst the Panel and Ms. Majeski regarding details of the activities and operations of the senior room. Ms. Koneig asked if there is a specific funding formula for senior centers. Ms. Barajas responded that the funding is still based on history in most cases but that with the addition of the *MySeniorCenter* software, the team is working toward finding an equitable formula by which to allocate funds.

Mr. Dreher made a motion allocate \$25,000 for the remainder of 2024 to the Willoughby Hills senior group. No second to the motion was received. Motion failed.

Mr. Shull made a motion for Willoughby Hills senior group to re-apply for levy funds for 2025 fiscal year. Mr. Sterk seconded the motion.

Vote: "Ayes"  
Motion carried.

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

Ms. Kane provided an update on the AmeriCorps Senior Demonstration Grant (SDP), which is scheduled to end on June 30, 2024. The SDP final report is due on July 31, 2024. Ms. Kane indicated the projects

are on track to meet all the grant outcome measurements, with the exception of Phone Pal. Ms. Kane indicated it has been a challenge to find older adults who self-identify as feeling lonely and want to participate in the program. The budget was adjusted this past January to allow for social media marketing and News Herald print advertisements for both the Phone Pal and Meals on Wheels (MOW) program recruitment. There was a strong response to the MOW volunteer recruitment as a result. Ms. Kane reported out the following data:

- 31 volunteers have been referred to Council on Aging MOW since April 2023 that have started delivering meals once a week.
- In just over a year, the Phone Pal program has served 38 participants with 33 volunteers, and has made 1,441 calls for a total of 689 hours.
- The final round of Mobile Pantry participant surveys is currently being conducted and the results continue to show that older adults are relying more and more on the produce distribution with food prices rising.

Ms. Kane provided information on the Volunteer Recognition Event, in collaboration with the Council on Aging, that is being held on Wednesday, September 18, 2024, at Painesville Township Park. The theme is "VOLUNTEERS SPREAD THE MAGIC". Senior Day at the Great Lakes Mall will be held Tuesday, May 21. Ms. Kane will be facilitating a Family Feud game on the main stage which will be followed by the annual Outstanding Senior Awards. JoAnn and Robert Gwinn will be honored this year as the LCVN Outstanding Volunteers at Senior Day.

#### Senior Services Manager Updates:

Ms. Barajas presented the Panel with a request from Lake-Geauga Habitat for Humanity for their Aging in Place project. \$95,000 of the funds would be allocated to home repair costs and the remaining \$5,000 would be utilized for administration. The timeline for this funding would be July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025. These funds would allow for home repairs and/or modifications based on a functional assessment. Some example of repairs include ramps, lighting, nonslip flooring, and ADA complaint toilets.

Mr. Shull made a motion to allocate \$100,000 to Lake-Geauga Habitat for Humanity for the Aging in Place program for one-year. Ms. Foley Kessler seconded the motion.

"Ayes": Ms. Foley Kessler, Mr. Shull, Ms. Koenig

"Nays": Mr. Dreher, Mr. Sterk

Motion carried.

The request will be brought before the Board of Commissioners for final approval.

Ms. Barajas provided an update on the Center for Community Solutions (CCS) Project. There has been a very good turnout and a lot of great conversations that have taken place and the second set of focus groups are scheduled for Wednesday, May 15. CCS will compile this information, along with census data and the results of the surveys, which will be placed into a full report that will include five innovative projects that are happening nationally to help address the common themes that arise.

Ms. Barajas briefly noted that she and Ms. Kane attended the National Conference on Aging conference in Arlington, VA last week. Some of the common themes involved caregiving, nutrition, falls prevention, fraud/scams, and social isolation/loneliness. Overall, both felt it was a worthwhile experience and look forward to using the information learned to inform future projects.

Ms. Barajas provided the Panel with the dates of some upcoming special events, which are as follows:  
Senior Day at the Great Lakes Mall: Tuesday, May 21 starting at 8:30AM  
World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) Walk: Thursday, June 13 starting at 11:45AM at Job & Family Services  
Senior Day at the Fair with the Council on Aging: Friday, July 26  
Support Our Seniors Pancake Breakfast: Sunday, September 15 at Willowick Senior Center  
Lake County Caregiver Forum: Tuesday, October 29 at the Holiday Inn, Route 306

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

General Discussion: Mr. Tomsick provided a brief update on the recent proposed federal regulations for Adult Protective Services.

Adjournment:

Ms. Foley Kessler moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:18 p.m. and Mr. Shull seconded the motion.

Vote: "All Ayes"

Motion carried.

\*The next meeting will be held Tuesday, September 10, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.\*