

Minutes of the  
Lake County Senior Citizens Advisory Panel  
Tuesday, November 15, 2022  
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 11:08 a.m.

Present:

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

Staff: Alyea Barajas, Cristen Kane

Absent: None

Public: None

Public Comments: None.

Approval of the November 9, 2022 minutes:

Mr. Dreher moved to approve the minutes of the September 6, 2022; Mr. Gauntner seconded the motion to approve.

Vote: "All Ayes"

Motion carried.

Correspondence: None.

Nomination and Election of 2023 Officers:

Lyle Shull indicated he would accept nominations from the Board for the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

Mr. Gauntner nominated Mr. Lyle Shull as Chairperson, Mr. Dreher seconded the nomination.

Vote: "Ayes"

Motion carried.

Mr. Gauntner nominated Ms. Lisa Manning as Vice-Chair, Mr. Dreher seconded the nomination.

Vote "Ayes"

Motion carried.

Interviews with 2023 levy applicants:

The Panel met with most of the 2023 levy applicants for 15-20 minutes each to learn more about each organization's operations and to ask questions regarding the 2023 request for levy funds.

**Adult Protective Services (APS):** Ali Tomaselli, Program Administrator, Anne Rasic, Finance Director, and Suzanne Casar, Director of Job & Family Services presented an overview on APS services. Items discussed included:

- Sources of revenue
- Evaluating program performance
- Community outreach
- Program referrals

Ms. Casar thanked the panel for the levy funding and indicated that as a result they have been able to increase the number of cases they are able to investigate and provide additional outreach to educate the public on who to call when they suspect abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

**Eastlake Senior Center:** Grace Giangiacomo, Senior Center Director, presented a brief overview of the center and the recent re-location. Additional topics discussed included:

- Membership fees
- Former congregate meals program
- Out of county members

Ms. Barajas asked about the \$30,000 expense “bus fee to Laketran”. Ms. Giangiacomo indicated that was not the annual cost to use Laketran services for bus trips. Ms. Giangiacomo believes it is around \$10,000 annually. Ms. Barajas also asked if the City of Eastlake was planning to pay a portion of the salary requested for an administrative assistant. Ms. Giangiacomo was unsure. Mr. Dreher asked if Eastlake has ever considered merging with Willowick. Ms. Giangiacomo indicated that yes, they have considered that in past, but not sure it would work for various reasons. She also indicated that would be a decision of the Mayor.

**Mentor Senior Center:** Renee Ochaya, Senior Center Director, and David Malinowski, City of Mentor Finance Director attended on behalf of the center. Ms. Ochaya gave an overview of the center. Mr. Dreher expressed his opinion regarding Mentor’s application specifically related to how much is allocated to the Mentor Senior Center each year by the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Dreher felt the comments by the City of Mentor were insulting. Ms. Ochaya apologized if the statement was seen as insulting and indicated that it was simply meant to highlight Mentor’s contribution to the levy. Mr. Gauntner indicated that the City of Mentor overlooks the contribution of other agencies, such as the Council on Aging, to the residents of Mentor. Ms. Manning indicated that it is not an even playing field and different centers have different resources and levy funds are meant to supplement each center; some need more than others do. Mr. Malinowski asked the Panel to look at the subsidizers of the levy and do a statistical analysis. Ms. Ochaya asked if the Panel was still working on a more equitable formula by which to allocate funds. Mr. Gauntner replied that the Panel has made great strides towards this and the City of Mentor is getting far more than other communities. He further stressed that the Panel tries to be as equitable as possible and consider what each community can supplement. Ms. Shull asked if the City of Mentor is looking at cuts if they do not receive the amount of levy funds requested. Mr. Malinowski indicated they are currently reviewing the 2023 budget and therefore could not answer that question. Further discussion included:

- Silver Sneakers
- Parking lot concerns
- United Way funding

**Kirtland Senior Center:** Teresa Szary, Senior Center Director, attended and provided an overview of the center including the growth she has seen since being hired. Ms. Barajas asked why the \$70,000 budgeted for instructors was so high. Ms. Szary indicated it may include contracts but would find out from the finance director. Discussion continued with the Panel related to out of county members. Ms.

Foley Kessler indicated Kirtland Senior Center was blessed to have so many community partners helping with center projects and partnerships.

**Fairport Senior Center:** Chris Yano, Senior Center Director, Denise Duncan, center advisory board member, and Christine Page, Fiscal Officer, attended and Ms. Yano provided an overview of the center. Ms. Yano indicated that she would like to not have to rent out the center building any longer for revenue as it is causing a lot of wear and tear on the facility. Mr. Shull asked about how much revenue they would lose if this were to occur. Ms. Yano indicated about \$18,000 annually. Further discussion included:

- Increase in members
- Residents of Fairport Harbor compared to surrounding communities

Mr. Guanter inquired how much Fairport Harbor contributes to the center. Ms. Yano indicated they did not provide funds to the center, except what is generated through rentals.

**Lifeline:** Jennie Best, Director of Community Services attended on behalf of Lifeline and provided an overview of the Volunteer Guardian Program and 2-1-1, as well as some of the goals for the programs for 2023. Further discussion amongst Ms. Best and the Panel included:

- Relationship with Probate Court
- Quarterly guardian program surveys
- Mon Ami software

**Perry Senior Center:** Christine Znidarsic, Senior Center Director, and Lynn Kary, Fiscal Officer, provided an overview of the center and specifically touched on COVID-19 and the importance of the senior centers to keeping seniors healthy and independent, and the growth of Perry Senior Center over the last decade. Ms. Znidarsic indicated the center could only support the continued growth of the center with funding from the senior levy. She indicated the senior levy is critical to the center's operations as they do not have the tax revenue other centers might have. Mr. Guanter asked what other funding the center has. Ms. Znidarsic indicated the center receives \$20,000 from Perry Township, and \$5,000 each from Perry Village and the Perry Recreation District, as well as in-kind services from the Township. Further discussion included:

- Annual fundraisers
- My Senior Center software

**Willowick Senior Center:** Doreen Nevulis, Senior Center Director, and Cheryl Benedict, City of Willowick Finance Director attended on behalf of the center. Ms. Nevulis provided a brief overview of the center since assuming the role of director in May 2021. Ms. Nevulis discussed some of the challenges with becoming a Meals on Wheels site. Mr. Shull asked if the center receives any rent from Council on Aging for the MOW program. Ms. Nevulis indicated they did not but that they had informally agreed on paying some utility costs to the center. No further discussion on this has occurred to date. Mr. Dreher asked if the city has considered merging with Eastlake. Ms. Nevulis responded that this is a decision of the mayor and city council and the seniors tend to go to the center that offers programming they like so they do have many shared members. Ms. Barajas asked for more information about the funds requested for the patio and intercom. Ms. Nevulis provided an explanation as to the center's plans for those items. Mr. Gauntner indicated that the in-kind services received from the City were not included in the budget request. Ms. Benedict indicated that was correct. There are in-kind services provided by the City that are not accounted for in the budget request.

**Madison Senior Center:** Carol Billetter, Senior Center Director, and Kristie Crockett, Finance Director for Madison Village, attended the meeting and Ms. Billetter provided an overview of the center operations. Discussion with Ms. Billetter and the Panel included:

- Congregate meals attendance
- Funding and in-kind services provided by Madison Village and Township

Mr. Guantner indicated that the typical award to the center is \$93,500 but that the center was requesting \$174,000. Mr. Guantner inquired as to why the increase in the request. Ms. Barajas noted that in the future, this type of explanation should be included in the application for levy funds to help provide context and background.

**Wickliffe Senior Center:** Gerri Hubble, Senior Center Director, Timothy Stopp, City of Wickliffe Recreation Director, and Debra Doles, City of Wickliffe Finance Director attend and Mr. Stopp provided an overview of the center. Mr. Shull asked if the Council on Aging pays rent for the use of the center for Meals on Wheels/Congregate meals. Mr. Stopp indicated they did not but that it has been discussed in recent years. Ms. Barajas asked if they could quantify the increase in costs as a result of the nutrition site operations. Mr. Stopp responded that he could do a cost per square foot to get an idea of how much it costs to house the program at their center. Ms. Manning indicated that the budget request reflected an increase in personnel costs and asked if the center has had a hard time finding staff. Mr. Stopp responded that it has been challenge and the center needs additional staff support beyond the director. Some additional discussion related to the Knox Box program occurred and Ms. Barajas asked where these costs where reflected in the budget. Mr. Stopp indicated they were not included and this is currently funded by the fire department but he would be open to expanding the program.

**Willoughby Senior Center:** Amy Cesa, Senior Center Director, Judean Banker, City of Willoughby Recreation Director, and Cher Hoffman, City of Willoughby Finance Director, attended on behalf of the center. Ms. Banker distributed a PowerPoint presentation to the members and provided an overview of the center facility and operations. Ms. Barajas inquired about the need for an intervention specialist as indicated on the application. Ms. Cesa explained her thoughts behind that request and indicated it was more of an observation and something that the center hasn't really encountered in the past. Ms. Barajas indicated that the ADAMHS Board has services that may be helpful in these types of situations and indicated she would contact the ADAMHS Board to follow-up with Ms. Cesa to provide more information. Ms. Foley Kessler asked if the center has ever considered Silver Sneakers and Ms. Banker indicated they were exploring that option. Mr. Dreher expressed his discontent with the Willoughby Senior Center related to the increase in fees to participate in activities. He indicated that he felt the City increased fees without regard to the taxpayers and members and without any discussion.

**Project Hope:** Marian Ruckert, Finance Director, and John Hutchinson, Community Engagement Director, attended and provided an overview of the services offered by Project Hope, and specifically the Hope House. Mr. Hutchinson indicated the highest rent charged at the Hope House is \$292 a month and each resident receives Meals on Wheels. He indicated they have served 26 seniors from January 1, 2022, through September 30, 2022. Further discussion with the Panel included:

- Partnerships
- Success rated related to stable housing
- Aftercare coordinator functions
- Spiritual offerings at the facility

**Council on Aging:** Joseph Tomsick, CEO, Kip Jochum, HR Director, and Debi Holland, Finance Director attended the meeting. Mr. Tomsick distributed a PowerPoint handout to the Panel and provided overview of services. Ms. Gauntner asked if Meals on Wheels had increased as a result of the pandemic. Mr. Tomsick indicated that requests for home delivered meals has increased. Mr. Shull asked what the plans were to increase attendance at the congregate sites and Mr. Tomsick responded anything and everything. Mr. Tomsick continued by saying they will do whatever they can to increase participation including working with the senior centers and having partners come in to do presentations. Ms. Barajas indicated the reported units for case management decreased from 2021 to 2022 and inquired as to the reason for the request to increase funds for that department. Ms. Holland indicated the program director would need to provide information related to units. Mr. Jochum indicated the increase is related to having to adjust salaries to retain employees and that overall they are still relatively low comparatively speaking. Ms. Barajas asked about the salary allocated to the outreach social worker position specifically. Ms. Holland indicated she did not have that level of details with her at the meeting but would follow-up with it. Ms. Barajas inquired about the 8% increase in administrative wages. Mr. Jochum explained some of this related to bringing one administrative staff up to market value. No further explanation provided. Ms. Foley Kessler asked if with the increase to the cost of living has Council on Aging seen more need. Mr. Tomsick indicated that they had.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

General Discussion: None.

Adjournment:

Mr. Dreher moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:35 p.m. and Mr. Gauntner seconded the motion.

Vote: "All Ayes"

Motion carried.

\*The next meeting will be held Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.\*