

Washtenaw County Commission on Aging

May 6th, 2022 | 8:30 – 10:30am | Remote Via Zoom

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Meeting ID: 954 3400 0397 | **Passcode:** 633697

AGENDA

I. Call to Order

Called by Chair Larson at 8:32

II. Roll Call

Present: Marta Larson, Marie Gress, Bonny Webber, Steven Stein, Ellen Offen, Bennett Stark, Elizabeth Thompson, Jason Maciejewski, Margaret Reynolds

Absent (unexcused): DeLois Wilson

Number of Community Attendees: 9

III. Public Participation

[NOTE] Sarah Hong states that the BOC meeting was cancelled earlier in the week due to technical issues. She states that the chair of the COA made a presentation and during the Q&A there were some hard-hitting questions. She states that some of the answers given were different than what has been shared with this body. She says that for example, transportation was brought up during the BOC meeting and states that what the county needs is door through door transportation. She requests that the COA represent that need and if there are any questions needed to represent transportation needs, Sarah Hong says she can provide more information. She is offering continued support to make sure the conversation is data driven and reflects the needs of seniors and the aging sector.

IV. Commission Response to Public Participation

[NOTE] Stein thanks Hong for her comment. Stein requests that she comment in writing on any inconsistencies in the responses given during the BOC presentation. He said he would like to get the updated responses to the BOC to make sure they have the correct data. He is wondering if any updates to the responses can be added to the previous minutes to make sure the correct

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data is included in the minutes. Lindeman responds saying he does not see any issues with the updated data being included in the minutes and on the website.

[NOTE] Thompson states that in the BOC presentation transportation was discussed but wasn't exhaustive. She says they presented what they found to this point but that topics will be explored more throughout the year. She says the more data that is presented to the COA the better the work will be.

[NOTE] Maciejewski states that he had never experienced the issue of not being able to interact with the presenters during a BOC meeting due to the technical difficulties. Typically, when there are presentations from a county sanctioned body there are county staff who are experts and have information ready to go but this body is different. He wants to thank the body for bringing this presentation forward and states that the BOC was engaged. He says he is also having a discussion on ARPA funds along with the senior millage with the BOC.

[NOTE] Stein says that what he heard from Hong was that the presentation was thoughtful, but the Q&A had some opportunities for improvement. He says that the COA should not be expected to know the answers to every question but that we ensure that the responses given were correct, and an updated response is sent to the BOC for any information that was misrepresented.

[NOTE] Deana Smith to Maciejewski – Smith says because of the technical issues there was not as much back and forth and is wondering how that lack of discussion will play into the discussion of ARPA funds. Maciejewski says the administration is currently putting a summary together and he expects discussion to occur at the next meeting or early June. He personally does not think the technology issues will harm the chances for ARPA funding. He states the number of questions asked even with the technical issues was large. He says that the BOC can ask the COA more questions if needed and there will still be public comment opportunities in subsequent meetings to advocate for the funding.

[NOTE] Larson states she is available for a further discussion with the BOC if needed.

[NOTE] Stein states that in the ARPA proposal the COA positioned themselves as a deciding body for the funds. He asks Maciejewski and Lindeman if that inclusion was a positive thing or if

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that is something the BOC would have concerns about. He is also wondering if they review the proposal as a whole or separate out pieces if necessary.

[NOTE] Maciejewski says it is possible to separate pieces out if there is a desire. He has not heard any discussion around this within the BOC but if the county commission wanted to supply funds through a different mechanism that is possible.

[NOTE] Lindeman said that he had conversations with commissioners after the meeting and that they had more questions that they are planning to ask to their COA member or ask in another setting.

[NOTE] Larson states that she received a question about how the COA communicates with commissioners. She stated that any member of the COA welcomes communication from their county commissioner. Gress states that members of the COA should reach out to capitalize on this opportunity.

V. [Report from the Board of Commissioners](#)

[NOTE] Maciejewski says his general interpretation of the presentation was that it went well, and he was happy with the number of questions asked. As far as ARPA 3, he expects an initial recommendation to board leadership possibly next week or early June then discussion will begin. He says he is hesitant to offer up a timeline as summer meetings are more inconsistent. He states that the last process took months.

[NOTE] Maciejewski says overall things in the commission are slow as far as policy. They are in a budget cycle and spending a lot of time in working sessions on aspects of the budget.

[NOTE] Maciejewski says he has submitted draft language for the senior millage for consideration by the county commission.

[NOTE] Reynolds asks Maciejewski how issues come to the board. Maciejewski states that board leadership is made up of 4 of the 9 commissioners. That group is responsible for vetting items that end up on the agenda and the chair is responsible for finalizing the agenda. In general, if something does not make it through leadership then it wouldn't make it through the full board.

[NOTE] Lindeman says that ideas are generated through many sources, sometimes board members and sometimes administration and the ideas are brought together at leadership.

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[NOTE] Stein asks if Maciejewski is comfortable sharing the draft millage language with the COA. Maciejewski states it's very similar to what was drafted a couple years ago and can be shared with the COA.

[NOTE] Stein asks Maciejewski if there are any suggestions on what the COA could do now on the lack of diversity on the COA. Maciejewski says the COA cannot really answer any of those questions because the BOC appoints members to the commission so there is not much that COA members can do to assist diversity. He thinks the point of having more diversity is valid, but the county commission needs to deal with it. Maciejewski states he will raise it with the rest of the BOC.

[NOTE] Larson states that she feels the COA has had a variety of presentations and she made it clear to the BOC that the COA does not control the membership of the COA.

[NOTE] Stein states that there seems to be a lack of older adult advocacy on the millage and ARPA proposal. Maciejewski says that grassroots organizations tend to be very helpful. Those that work in the field day to day and bring advocates to the table are useful. He says these topics tend to filter down through the agencies that offer services, and they are then filtered down into advocates.

[NOTE] Thompson states that in the work plan the COA is planning to map funding from the county on how to assist older adults. She is asking Maciejewski on the best way to get a handle on what is being spent and new spending on older adults in the budget. Maciejewski says there is no aging office so there are not many programs or services that are aging focused being supported by the county. There are programs that largely target seniors but there is not anything aging focused.

[NOTE] Thompson states as far as DEI, as individual board members the COA can work to identify diverse candidates in their district and potentially propose replacing themselves.

[NOTE] Maciejewski states that overall, the technology issues during the BOC did not seem to hurt the presentation.

VI. Approval of Minutes

Moved Offen, seconded Gress, that the minutes of the 5.6 meeting be approved.

Reynolds abstains. Unanimous Roll Call Vote in the Affirmative.

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Minutes Approved.

VII. Subcommittee Updates

A. Communications

[NOTE] Gress states that updating the COA on Larson's presentation is the update and that was covered fully. The only other update would be to encourage COA members to capitalize on the engagement by the BOC and reach out to their commissioners.

[NOTE] Thompson is asking that Gress resend the communication materials to the full COA and Gress agrees.

B. Needs Assessment

[NOTE] Gress states that the subcommittee has been discussing how to partner with other organizations. Gress explained that Chris Lemon is exploring how Washtenaw County might develop a network and is reviewing options of hiring a support person for this project. Gress will provide further updates as they develop.

C. ARPA

[NOTE] Webber states the subcommittee is on hold until there is an ARPA decision.

D. Potential Millage

[NOTE] Thompson states that there was a robust discussion around a potential millage. The *Say Yes to Seniors* initiative is developing a needs assessment along with a group structure to administer the funds. The COA subcommittee is currently waiting for those reports.

[NOTE] Stein requests that Lindeman restate the process for putting millage language on the ballot. Lindeman states that the language must be approved by August 16th and the language would be introduced at the meeting prior – August 3rd. Language would have to be introduced by the July meeting.

[NOTE] Stein requests clarification on if support for or against the millage must be shown by June. Lindeman states that it can be anytime during the process before it must be approved by the BOC.

[NOTE] Stark would like clarification on what can or cannot be expressed to the commissioners when discussing this topic. Lindeman says that as an individual, any member of the COA can express their thoughts on the millage topic they just cannot express thoughts as the full COA.

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[NOTE] Stark is wondering if he must identify himself as a commissioner then identify that he is speaking as an individual. Lindeman says that is best practice.

[NOTE] Stark requests clarification on if the COA is a decision-making body for ARPA funds, how conflicts of interest would be addressed? Lindeman states that being open and transparent is important.

[NOTE] Larson requests the county's policy on conflicts of interest be distributed to the COA. Lindeman agrees.

IX. Discussion Items

A. COA Work Plan for 2022

[NOTE] Larson asks the COA for a motion to approve the workplan.

Moved Reynolds, seconded Offen, that the COA work plan for 2022 be approved.

Stein votes no. Roll Call Vote in the Affirmative.

Work Plan Approved.

X. Report from the Chair

[NOTE] Larson states she received one question on homelessness during the BOC presentation that she could not answer. She says she gathered the information after the fact and supplied it to the BOC with the help of Gress. She also received a question about transportation on if people should go to services or if services should go to seniors. She said that maybe both would be true.

[NOTE] Larson states that when discussing housing and homeless individuals she touched on how hard it is to count homelessness or housing insecure individuals. She states she felt good about the presentation and questions.

[NOTE] Thompson asks if it would be helpful to stress the point that one way of looking at housing insecurity is how safe it is to live in a current housing situation along with how much they spend on housing each month. Financial resources to help individuals with home repairs are limited and run out quickly. In her discussion with Ingham County, one of the key uses of their millage funds was for minor home repairs. Thompson states she would like to communicate the different types of housing insecurity to the BOC.

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[NOTE] Larson states that in her presentation she emphasized the need for home repairs.

[NOTE] Webber stated her experience with homeless living in wooded areas on University property. Her experience was the individuals did not want assistance or to discuss their situation. Webber also referenced her experience with the aging in place challenge of finding vetted repair service providers. She agreed that a subsidy program would be helpful.

[NOTE] Deana Smith states that the HAC is in the process of doing a deeper dive into transportation. Currently they are creating an inventory of transportation resources and identifying gaps and needs.

[NOTE] Stein states that there would be value in having a transportation expert present to the COA with a focus on door to door and even assisting in the house. Larson states that the Officer's invited a expert on transportation to present at this meeting, but the presenter was unable to do so. Transportation will be added to a future COA meeting. Smith says at the HAC meeting in June there will be 2 presenters on transportation – AATA and Phoenix Mobility Rising. Gress and Smith will discuss offline on how to collaborate on transportation presentations.

[NOTE] Stein is wondering if the transportation experts can speak to best practices in other areas on transportation. Smith says we will likely learn about limitations and then learn about best practices. Smith states the HAC is hoping to hire a consultant to help with problem solving.

[NOTE] Stein also requests an expert present on housing.

[NOTE] Gress states that the transportation presenters do a lot of work with other regions to learn about best practices and how to address transportation.

[NOTE] Stark clarifies that the covid deaths for 80+ are 87% not for all the aging community.

[NOTE] Offen wants to clarify that this discussion on transportation supports her request. She also says she can find presenters on AATA.

XI. New Business

XII. Potential Future Topics

- Requested by Offen, 12/3/21, Transportation Coordinating Council
- Requested by Stein, 2/18/22, Nursing homes
- Requested by Thompson, 3/18/22, HAC presentation update
- Requested by Thompson, 3/18/22, Discussion on innovative solutions

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- Requested by Stark, 3/18/22, Center for Independent Living presentation
- Requested by Stein, 5/6/22, Say Yes to Seniors
- Requested by Stein, 5/20/22, Housing

[NOTE] Thompson would like clarification on timing now that the work plan is approved. She is wondering about the direction of the commission to move forward and if more subcommittees are needed.

[NOTE] Larson says there is some direction in the work plan as to tasks assigned to subcommittees.

[NOTE] Stein states that he would like some time frames in the work plan. For example, with the millage there must be a time frame otherwise the work could become null if not completed in time for the proposal. Also with ARPA funding, it could be useful to include the housing presentation higher up the list so that funds could support that topic.

[NOTE] Stein does not feel comfortable with the process of prioritizing topics based off of request and believes they should be prioritized based off of need. He thinks the topics should be based on priority not when they were brought up by a member of the COA.

Stein makes a motion that future topics are prioritized, and Reynolds supports.

[NOTE] Offen states that she wants to be clear on how the group decides on priorities. She asks if there is going to be a discussion at every meeting on the priority or is it going to be set broadly and the officers will decide? She wants to be clear that immediacy is important and other topics would be dropped into bigger picture work.

[NOTE] Webber would like a clear motion and agrees with Offen's comment.

Stein clarifies motion: motion that the COA will vote to determine the order of speakers based on priority of the current list of topics and any future requests will be determined by the COA as to where new topics go on the list.

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[NOTE] Reynolds is unclear if there is a need for a motion. She thinks prioritizing is good and at each meeting there could be discussion on top priority for the next meeting.

[NOTE] Webber states that she agrees with Reynolds. Potential future topics is on the agenda and there could be a scheduling discussion at each meeting to discuss what comes up next for the next couple agendas.

[NOTE] Stein states that he is in support of the proposal that Webber stated.

Stein withdraws the motion and Reynolds seconds.

[NOTE] Thompson thinks the idea of a standing agenda item of discussing the next meeting's agenda would be good. She also thinks it would be useful to think about the order for the rest of the year allowing the possibility that the schedule could change.

[NOTE] Gress states that as officers it was discussed that if ARPA was accepted, it would take up a good portion of meetings. She likes the discussion of planning out a master calendar. She is cautious about discussing at every meeting about rearranging the schedule as that would take up a lot of time.

[NOTE] Reynolds states that as a commission they would like to be involved in the planning. She thinks the officers can plan out the master calendar like they have and the discussion at each meeting should be brief.

[NOTE] Webber states that meetings were set aside for ARPA in June, but it is unlikely that a decision on ARPA will be made by then. She suggests setting the next 4 meeting topics while waiting for an ARPA decision.

[NOTE] Larsons suggests each member state their top 2 priorities. Webber suggests top 4.

[NOTE] Voting of the top priorities took place, and the results were:

- Requested by Offen, 12/3/21, Transportation Coordinating Council (7)
- Requested by Stein, 2/18/22, Nursing homes (2)
- Requested by Thompson, 3/18/22, HAC presentation update (5)
- Requested by Thompson, 3/18/22, Discussion on innovative solutions (4)

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- Requested by Stark, 3/18/22, Center for Independent Living presentation (2)
- Requested by Stein, 5/6/22, Say Yes to Seniors (5)
- Requested by Stein, 5/20/22, Housing (7)

[NOTE] Webber states that the officers believe they have experts in the areas but if other members of the COA have experts on these topics to supply that information to the officers. She also states that the officers like to see the presentations from the groups before the full COA meeting to make sure the meetings are useful.

[NOTE] Thompson states that all the materials that were used to present the report are located on the COA website and encourages COA members to take advantage of those resources. She thinks that if members come across useful materials that they should be submitted as potential resources to be shared. Any resources can be sent to Gress.

[NOTE] Gress wants to circle back to the request that the work plan is assigned to subcommittees. At this point mapping funds is not assigned to anyone, and she thinks that should be discussed at the next meeting.

[NOTE] Stein states that a lot of communities sought out foundation money to enhance older adult services and is wondering if that task is included in mapping funds.

[NOTE] Reynolds asks Lindeman if there are recommendations on who could be added to the mapping funds subcommittee. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

[NOTE] Webber asks the public to reach out if they know of any resources to assist with this project.

XIII. [Setting Next Meeting](#)

A. June 3rd, 2022 @ 8:30am

XIII. [Adjournment](#)

Motion to Adjourn. Move Stein, seconded Reynolds. Meeting Adjourned at 10:28am

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