



Meeting Minutes
Juneau Commission on Aging (JCOA)
June 11, 2019
12:00PM
JEDC Conference Room, 612 W. Willoughby Ave., Suite A

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 PM. The meeting was chaired by Emily Kane.

Board members present: Emily Kane, Carol Ende, Eileen Hosey, Paul Douglas, Linda Kruger, Lisa Oberle, Alicia Hughes-Skandjis

Board members absent: Sue Warner

Others: Robyn Mesdag, Deb Ethridge, Justin Jones, Kathlee Samalon

II. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent

III. Approval of minutes from previous meeting

The minutes were approved by unanimous consent

IV. Discussion Items

A) Lisa Oberle was introduced as the newest member of the JCOA. The Board is happy to have her join the commission.

B) Deb Etheridge, Acting Director of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Senior and Disabilities Services, also appointed to the Alaska State Commission on Aging.

Deb is a Juneau based liaison for the Alaska Commission on aging. Deb shared the most recent Alaska Commission on Aging document. Deb spoke with Lesley Thompson (Denise Daniello's assistant) about pulling out Juneau information from the State Commission on Aging's annual report. They are able to do a subset that is just Juneau. Deb will get that to the Commission for their review.

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Deb has worked for 28 years in the field. She was very pleased to be invited to come to the JCOA and participate in the meeting. She is hoping she can be a connection not just from the Alaska Committee on Aging but also from her leadership role in the Senior and Disabilities Services Program.

Under the Department of Health and Social Services are the following divisions:

- Senior and Disabilities Services
- Behavioral Health
- Public Assistance
- Alaska Pioneer Homes
- Healthcare Services (main engine for Medicaid)

The Department of Health and Social Services also have a Medicare information office, which is understaffed. They need more volunteers and also someone to run the office. Medicare is a premium based program people pay into like a health insurance program, for seniors. Medicaid is for low income and disabled people. When Medicaid people turn 65 they are dual eligible. There is an annual reapplication for Medicaid. Deb's office certifies payment of the providers and also make eligibility determinations for home/community based programs using the Federal Authority of Medicaid.

The Department of Health and Social Services applied for and was awarded a community living grant, there is an RFP for services out right now. This is for dementia care giver support, to implement a care giver assessment tool. The department some time with the State of Washington to learn what they have done to assess caregivers. Through this they learned through Washington's implementation of the tool, that the actual services turned out to be the tool. Most people in Washington that took the survey didn't consider themselves caregivers and didn't have a roadmap forward. If this tool proves to be helpful, it will be expanded to include to all caregivers, including parents. Generally unpaid caregivers are who is targeted. In Washington State, and other places throughout the United States, it has been shown that supporting our unpaid caregivers in the end benefits the whole community and generally saves money.

Emily explained the commission is interested in village to village. She wondered how if the senior is in safe hands with the unpaid caregiver. Deb replied that she is keenly aware of that issue. A stressed caregiver might do things they wouldn't in their normal life. Impetus – use the aging and disability resource centers to work through the intake so there is a holistic – first door/one stop for people seeking assistance for senior/disability services. Physically located at SAIL. Eileen has a copy of the forms and can get them out to the commission.

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C) Justin Jones, Wellness Coordinator at Central Council Tlingit Haida

Justin Jones is the Wellness Coordinator at Central Council Tlingit Haida. In his role he juggles many programs. Tribal elders are those 60 and older. The Older American's act for Title 6 is what deems an elder. He goes on the rough age of 60 and up. He also does work with AWARE, and youth programming to get boys running, with culture and food values entwined. In his work, he tries to wrap all the programs with their elders. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays they have group exercise for their elders. Fall prevention/balance classes are on Mondays and Wednesdays and Tai Chi is on Fridays. Thursdays are big event, a group meal at the bingo hall. They try to lead a group exercise during that Thursday time. Just is big into getting the elders moving. They use things like resistance bands, fit bits, etc. . Roughly 140 elders come through, roughly 60 – 70 come to the lunch. 10 – 15 usually attend exercise courses. The goal is to get elders independent and moving and confident on their own. They also have resource activities. For example, they had SAIL come in and talk, and also have had SERRC speak about medical directives and wills. They want to make sure elders feel confident with their finances and have had someone come in and talk about basic budgeting. A big step is now refocusing the cultural system, knowing the elders are our teachers. They are pushing on elders in the classroom and have worked with TM and Floyd Indian Studies to have elders there at lunchtime. They have also expanded to Gastineau and may expand into DZ. They are looking at how to connect elders with students. They took elders to the AK state museum last year and the elders had so much personal history to share. Workers at the museum got a lot out of it. They are trying to make elders feel connected and part of the community. They try to give rides and also work with Care-a-Van. Some elders can drive themselves. Justin has been picking up 6-10 elders on Thursdays and has other volunteers as well. They are working hard to make sure elders feel connected to different areas and that they know what is going on and working to keep them involved. There are many elders that live alone and may not leave the house except for Thursday lunches. Justin is working with Title 6 to see what resources are out there and how to expand. They are working on an elder's room in the Elisabeth Petrovitch Hall. They are growing and believe the elders are feeling valued again. There has been a big push over the past couple years and have some good momentum going forward.

They want to find out who are they not reaching? They are trying to do some home delivered meals. A lot of it is word of mouth. They started with 30-40 elders, now have 70 elders attend Thursday lunches. Of those 70, 5 of which are guys. They need more male dance partners for the dance. With current staff, Thursday lunches are working. They need to be sure they have attention to get support. Ie: volunteer organizations to help serve. They have also been seeing an uptick in the exercise groups and working with the people that attend to feel more upright and more confident on the stairs.

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Carol inquired as to if they had spoken at all at all with the new performing arts building? Do the elders feel they have a place and are being seen there?

Justin replied he has an elder council, and is looking for an elder leader to help with that new performing arts building.

Carol commented it would be wonderful to see that influence in the new arts building.

Justin – Tlingit Haida is a blanket organization that covers most of SE. They are always working to collaborate. For example, how to get the elders' gifts and share them?

Linda commented she has been working with forest service for 28 years and closely with Central Council and Goldbelt, found what worked was working with people in the communities. Her organization reached out to people in the community directly and dealt one on one with people and that has been very successful. Since 2003 her organization has worked in communities across Southeast Alaska - 13 communities - to bring elders and youth together to work on projects within the communities. It has been an amazing experience, and she found people are very open to that to this approach.

D) Update on New Recruits

Emily asked Justin if he would consider being a Commission on the JCOA and he replied affirmatively. Lisa will forward him the application. If Justin is appointed, this will leave the commission with one general public seat open.

E) Senior Survey Update

Emily reported that CBJ hasn't totally signed on dotted line for funding, but the JCOA will likely receive a \$10,000 grant to continue JEDC support to the JCOA and also will get money for data analysis crunching and printing costs affiliated with survey. The JCOA took the request to CBJ, and CBJ awarded almost \$24,000 - \$9,000 for printing and about \$15,000 for the data analysis and producing survey itself. 2020 will be similar to the 2010 survey but Emily is also hoping to have updated resources for seniors.

The next step is final refinement of the tool. Deb asked if the JCOA has considered a question for the survey on if seniors interact at all with the opioid crisis. Emily is wondering how we would pose the question and how would it be used once we gathered the data.

Deb was approached by work group working on opioid crisis because they were startled by number of individuals over the age of 55 identified as users of opioids. Of the group identified as using opioids, 63% are over 55.

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There was question as to if this should be included on the survey.

Carol asked if putting that question on the survey would be creating awareness for the elders. There would need to be a description of what that medication is. If you can make someone aware of it, and they go back to the doctor and ask those questions. Caregivers may also be helping fill this out and maybe they will also gain some awareness.

Linda commented that regardless of what we do with the question, this may be an information piece that goes into the survey report.

Emily will forward the question to Robyn to add to the survey.

V. Other Business

None.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05