

**Juneau Commission on Aging
Meeting January 12, 2017**

Present: Mary Ann VandeCastle, Mary Lou Spartz, Carol Trebian, Eileen Hosey. It was determined that a quorum was present and Mary Lou brought the meeting to order at 1:20 p.m.

The minutes of September 2016 and December 2016 were reviewed and accepted as presented, with a couple of minor typo adjustments.

The guest speaker for today's meeting was Lesley Thompson of the Alaska Commission on Aging, presenting current and upcoming legislative issues of interest to ACOA and seniors in general. She touched on some of the challenges facing senior issues and funding. Within the agency itself they have seen severe staffing cuts.

ACOA is looking at the issues coming up within the scope of their guiding principle which is Advocacy for Seniors. Lesley discussed the many dynamics of the upcoming legislative session.

The pending budget with regard to seniors shows only modest cuts in grant monies for a variety of senior programs. Senior Benefits program is being maintained at near the current level although this is certainly subject to change.

Medicaid services for seniors may increase with more federal dollars, while Medicaid adult dental might be designated "optional" and could possibly be cut. Decreases are also forecasted in General Relief as well as the Pioneers' Home.

Lesley listed three priorities for their agency in 2017:

1. Protect the senior safety net, maintain current programs.
2. Supports for family and natural caregivers.
3. Improve the capacity to serve other older/vulnerable seniors.

They will also be advocating for more senior housing. There was a general board discussion about some of the desirable safeguards for seniors in housing designed with older people in mind.

There was another general discussion of the "Lifeline" type of devices that would not be cost prohibitive and easily available. Technology is changing and improving all of the time..

Lesley also brought up an idea to recognize Lorilynn Swanson who is the rental manager at Fireweed Place. She feels that Lorilynn does a lot for seniors in advocacy, support, information. The board discussed this idea, and will consider it at a future meeting, perhaps coordinating it with Older Alaskans Month in May.

Public Comment: Andi Hirsh from the Juneau Public Library discussed the upcoming library outreach to seniors. It will be held next Tuesday at the senior center and there will be books, tapes, and CD's available for seniors to check out. If this turns out to be helpful, the library personnel will come to the senior center twice a month with a variety of material to lend.

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Old Business: None.

New Business:

The board discussed the Smart 911 idea that had been promoted by board member Ric. He is currently out of town but should be back for the February board meeting. The board felt it would be good to have Erann Kalwara of JPD return to talk with us, either at the February or March meeting so we can discuss further this system as compared to others possibly available. It is felt that the board would like to look more closely at options before we make a big investment in studying and promoting this service.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:15 p.m.

Eileen Hosey
Secretary