

JUNEAU COMMISSION ON AGING

City & Borough of Juneau

Minutes of Regular Meeting

May 12, 2016

CALL TO ORDER

The Commission met at the Senior Center. Chairperson VandeCastle called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m. Other members present were: Eileen Hosey, Ric Iannolino, Carol Trebian, and Mary Lou Spartz. Also attending was Assembly member and JCOA liaison Loren Jones.

AGENDA: DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

The agenda was amended to include a discussion of senior food insecurity under Old Business, and adopted as amended. It was declared that a quorum of members was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the regular meeting on April 14th were approved, with several minor changes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

MaryAnn announced that our Older Americans Month radio spots had not been placed yet on the Juneau Radio Center stations. We will re-run last year's spots. Apparently Problem Corner on KINY has a classified section where we could also run an Older Americans Month blurb.

MaryAnn and Mary Lou appeared briefly on A Juneau Afternoon on KTOO radio at the beginning of the month.

REPORTS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED

Eileen attended the Community Resource Network meeting yesterday. The Alaska Commission on Aging did a presentation. Seniors have a huge economic impact on Alaska – estimated at \$3 billion annually. This is more than fishing, construction, and other large industries. The ACOA has compiled a lot of data on the senior population, and updates it each year.

MaryAnn and Eileen attended the Caregiver Connections meeting in April. This group, initiated by AARP to address family caregiver issues, has as one of its priorities the compilation of a senior and caregiver resource directory, something the JCOA has also identified as a critical need in the community. That group also discussed caregiver support groups, but based on input from various agency staff saying that such groups had been tried and had not always been successful in Juneau, the group is focusing on other priorities (such as training for paid and unpaid caregivers). However, both Ric and Mary Lou stated that they had been involved with successful caregiver support groups in the past. There is definitely a demand for these; Ric suggested possible agency “turf wars” may have been responsible for the groups’ demise.

Carol brought in a number of newsletters of local Native organizations, with the suggestion that we could write up a blurb for them, introducing our group and inviting their participation. MaryAnn will do that.

SPEAKER: LOREN JONES, ASSEMBLY MEMBER AND JCOA LIAISON

Mr. Jones joined us to discuss his role as the JCOA's liaison to the Assembly and vice versa.

Almost all the CBJ advisory boards are advisory to the Assembly – without any authority to act independently.

He pointed out a discussion of the liaison role in the CBJ's booklet on boards and commissions. A liaison is a link between the Assembly and a specific board or commission (not all of them have a liaison), and the main role of the liaison is to facilitate communications between the two groups. They are not a voting member of the commission, and not considered in determination of a quorum. Mayor Sanford had instructed them that their role is to be informed on the group's activities and stay on top of the current issues but not to drive the group's agenda.

Besides the liaisons who attend the meetings of CBJ boards and commissions, some Assembly members also serve ex officio in local organizations such as the Downtown Business Association, the Chamber of Commerce, etc. The mayor sits on the JEDC (Juneau Economic Development Council) as a voting member.

The liaison will try to attend all meetings of the board or commission, but if they cannot, they will at least keep up with the minutes of the meetings. It's good to get a draft of the minutes out as soon as possible after the meeting (although minutes of the hospital and airport boards are only released to the public after they are approved). Many people read the minutes on a board's or commission's website.

Liaisons change every year; this is usually determined after the October elections. There is a list on the Assembly's website of all committee assignments. Mr. Jones is on the JEDC, DBA, Airport Board, liaison to the Juneau Commission on Aging, and also on the Marijuana Control Board at the state level. Appointments may or may not reflect the personal interests of an Assembly member. He got stuck with us because nobody else wanted us! Also because he is one of the few who can make a weekday afternoon meeting. Most other boards and commissions meet during the noon hour or in the evening.

Mr. Jones noted that the mayor and a number of the current Assembly members are seniors.

There are about 40 boards and commissions, with about 350 individuals active in these groups. A lot of these people are older people. It may be possible to compile data on appointments to boards and commissions as percentages of our different resident age groups.

Board composition keeps shifting. Recently, the Social Services Advisory Board was eliminated. That group, which took over funding decisions after the City ended its social services role, never got its act together. Social services as a whole were moved to the Juneau Community Foundation. Funding will be added to the Corbus gift and broaden the scope of what they are able to do.

Boards vary widely in their level of activity. Some are very active. An example of this would be the Disability Committee. They were set up to provide advice on access to public buildings, not private spaces. Some groups are not very active and may have continual trouble getting a quorum.

Almost all advisory boards are now empowered to raise money, but in order to do so we would need to appoint a treasurer. All money raised goes into the City coffers and is disbursed from there.

Mr. Jones is the chair of the Assembly's Human Resources Committee. That group reviews all board applications and makes appointments to vacant seats. For the six enterprise boards, the entire Assembly sits as the Committee of the Whole and interviews all applicants; for all other boards, appointments are made on the basis of applications alone. The HRC also evaluates the various advisory boards. In the case of the JCOA, they had concerns with our membership and how our meetings were going, and how close we were to the intent of our enabling ordinance.

Mr. Jones suggested we review our advisory board resolution and determine if we are actually performing our duties as directed.

Ric brought up the Smart 9-1-1 issue. Neither Ric nor Mr. Jones will be able to attend JCOA's June meeting, so we will try to reschedule Ms. Kalwara from the JPD for another meeting so they can be present when we discuss Smart 9-1-1. Mr. Jones said the funding decision must go through the police chief. It's possible the Juneau Community Foundation may be a source of funds – they do have some dealings with seniors, such as the End of Life Foundation, although senior issues are not one of their identified priorities per se.

Apparently there are two pots of money related to the Corbus gift – with one, only the earnings can be spent; with the other, the money can only be spent on capitol remodeling. JCF also manages several smaller pots of money, including the End of Life Foundation, the Douglas-Dornan Foundation, and recently Ian Fisk put in some money from his father's estate, earmarked for youth activities. JCF is not comparable to a Rasmuson Foundation with a billion-dollar collection of funds. They had about \$4 million until Corbus gave them \$20 million.

The Mental Health Trust Authority has limited mini-grants available - \$10,000 to \$20,000.

The police department may have access to federal money.

With regard to 9-1-1 in general, we need to find a champion, someone within the JPD or CBJ, to help break through the slowness.

The Assembly is not quite ready to go to body cameras yet. There are tremendous issues with storage and retrieval of information, among other things.

Mr. Jones mentioned that the airport has moved up a category [in emergency response requirements] due to the arrival of Delta – and now must add a larger fire suppression vehicle, and a new building. The fire department is adding staff, but the airlines are paying, based on increased airport fees. Covering one additional 24/7 position actually requires hiring 4.75 FTEs (full-time equivalent personnel).

In summary, regarding the liaison role, Mr. Jones said his role is to sit and listen, to provide information from the Assembly to us, and from our group back to the Assembly, and to provide us with feedback. We can ask him to request time in front of the Committee of the Whole or the Human Resources Committee if we want to present information.

Mr. Jones suggested we invite the new CBJ housing coordinator, Scott Ciambor, to speak to us about senior independent living concerns as well as assisted living and other housing needs. With regard to assisted living, the Assembly recently approved a rezone as requested by the group working on developing an assisted living facility in the Vintage Park area. There will also be one or two conditional use permits before the Planning Commission.

The newly approved Housing Plan will drive all housing decisions. It will be added to the Comprehensive Plan. Find this report on the CBJ Affordable Housing Commission's website.

Two lower lots in the Reninger Subdivision, near DZ school, are going to Alaska Housing for moderate- to low-income apartments. This space could contain up to 460 units! Some of it does include wetlands. There are competing proposals for the upper three lots. One is education housing, eight homes, which could be built by students. The other is from an out-of-state group that wants to build 90 units of "workforce housing" for people making 80 to 100% of the area median income. They proposed a public/private partnership in which the CBJ keeps the land, and this group builds and manages the units, which stay off the property tax rolls. Eventually everything goes back to the City, which could operate or sell them or ??? City staff is analyzing this proposal.

Mr. Jones stated that he personally is skeptical about the claims regarding Juneau's changing senior demographics. He doesn't believe we'll see the huge economic impact from seniors that has been predicted. For one thing, local doctors will not support bringing in specialists, as they already have relationships with down-south hospitals. In Anchorage and Seattle, hospitals are buying up doctors' practices. We don't have the volume needed to support a cardiologist. On the other hand, it's possible that assisted living could change things here.

So, in summary, our liaison can relay information to us about issues of concern to seniors that come before the Assembly. They have just completed the budget. The mill rate will be kept at 10.76. Money was put into deferred maintenance/ capital improvement projects. So far, the legislature hasn't done the damage they could do.

To avoid repeating past dysfunctional patterns, where time lags in meetings as well as differing views among members prevented the JCOA from providing timely recommendations to the Assembly on senior matters, Mr. Jones recommended dealing with the issue in one meeting (rather than bumping it to the next month's meeting in an attempt to develop a consensus recommendation), or scheduling an additional meeting to reach agreement. "Develop a position quicker," was Mr. Jones' advice to us. Reaching a consensus on every issue may not be possible. When we get a majority vote on an issue, proceed, and let dissenting members speak as individuals, rather than spending time seeking a position all can support. At the same time, it's a good idea to involve the community and give them an opportunity to weigh in before we adopt an official recommendation.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.