

JUNEAU COMMISSION ON AGING

City & Borough of Juneau

Minutes of Regular Meeting

November 12, 2015

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: Pat Watt, Brynn Keith, Carol Trebian, and Ric Iannolino, and Mary Lou Spartz. Eileen Hosey was ill. Also attending were Representatives Sam Kito and Cathy Munoz, Alaska Commission on Aging (AKCOA) member Marie Darlin and staff members Lesley Thompson and Dee Shaw as well as Marsha Partlow of CCS Southeast Senior Services, former Juneau Commissioner Dixie Hood and 3 other members of the public.

AGENDA; DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

The agenda was adopted. It was declared that a quorum of members was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the regular meeting on October 8 were approved.

REPORTS OF MEETINGS ATTENDED

Ms. Watt reported that at the request of Assembly member Kate Troll she had spoken with CBJ Finance Director Bob Bartholomew in regard to the roll out of changes to the Sr. Sales Tax exemption which become effective January 1, 2016. CBJ staff have prepared educational information and are meeting with as many public groups as possible, and would like to come to the Commission's December meeting to present the plans and help get the word out.

Ms. Watt also reported that she had attended several Aquatics Board/Committee meetings. The new Board held a Retreat on October 18 to ensure all Board members were on the same page as regards to the Board's purpose and mission, as well as how it is organizing itself. The Retreat was a success. A new fee policy has been developed and a much simplified price structure will be rolled out, most likely at the New Year. Seniors will continue to get a price break.

SPEAKERS:

Representatives Kito and Munoz shared their thoughts about issues likely to come up in the next legislative session, particularly as it relates to their impact on seniors. The state's fiscal situation will be at the forefront with the hope that it can be stabilized with a mix of revenues and expenditure cuts done on a priority basis. The Governor's budget will be released in mid-December and is expected to include some cuts, but also a number of new ideas for increasing revenues and financing capital needs. The bond rating agency Standard & Poor's has indicated it will hold steady on the state's bond rating until May to give the Legislature time to take positive action. If that doesn't happen, Alaska will undoubtedly be downgraded, bringing additional costs to any capital financing by the state or underlying municipalities.

AKCOA member Marie Darlin and staff member Lesley Thompson shared information on bills from last season's Legislative Watch list. Commission priorities include reauthorization of the Commission (which currently sunsets in 2016) as well as preserving safety net programs and services for vulnerable older Alaskans, supporting family and informal caregivers, and protection of seniors from financial exploitation, abuse, and harm. (See attachment for more details.)

Ms. Darlin chairs the AKCOA Legislative Advocacy Committee which convenes a teleconference for agencies and AKCOA members across the state during the session. These teleconferences are initiated in Juneau in the Alaska Office Building (350 Main Street) on the 4th Floor from 9:30am to 11am on the following dates: January 28, February 11, and 25, March 10 and 24, and April 7, 14 and 21. (See attachment for details.) Members of the Juneau COA are invited to attend.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Following a suggestion from the audience, consideration was given as to how the Commission might reach out more effectively to and, coordinate with, native groups and the Filipino community.

NEW BUSINESS

Legislative Priorities for 2016:

Following what the Commission heard today, Ms. VandeCastle will draft a letter to the Assembly outlining our priorities and requesting that these be added to the City's own legislative agenda for the upcoming session. This letter will be reviewed and acted on at the December meeting

Proposal for Outreach

Mr. Ionnolani shared a draft proposal for a COA outreach program to better serve the information needs of seniors. Action was temporarily tabled.

Retreat

Ms. VandeCastle suggested that, given the group has four of its seven members new to the Commission, and in light of Ms. Watt's proposal for considering changes to the Commission's authorizing ordinance, Mr. Ionnolani's proposal, and other suggestions a Retreat be planned to step back and look at the Commission's mission and what it feasibly can accomplish given its limited resources. Mr. Iannolino, Ms. Trebian and Ms. Watt will serve on a Committee to bring back a Retreat proposal to the Commission in December. In the meantime, Ms. VandeCastle will see if she can find a facilitator.

CONCLUSION

The next meeting of the JCOA will be on December 10 at 1:15 pm at the Juneau Senior Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.