

JUNEAU COMMISSION ON AGING

City & Borough of Juneau

Minutes of Regular Meeting

September 10, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

The Commission met at the Senior Center. Chairperson VandeCastle called the meeting to order at 1:16 p.m. Other members present were: Pat Watt, Eileen Hosey, Carol Trebian, Ric Iannolino, and Mary Lou Spartz. Brynn Keith was absent due to travel. Also attending were seniors Sandy DeLong, Alfrida Dore, Marie Darlin, Sue Nielson, Cathy Boutin, and Dixie Hood. Jeanette Lacey Dunn, Director of Case Management at Bartlett Hospital attended as a speaker.

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 August 13 were approved.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Ms. VandeCastle welcomed three new members to the Commission and expressed the Commission's deep appreciation for her years of service, and commitment to seniors, to former member Dixie Hood whose term had expired. New member Keith was unable to attend due to travel arrangements made prior to her appointment to the Commission.

REPORTS OF MEETINGS ATTENDED

Ms. VandeCastle reported that she had attended the Assembly HR Committee meetings to give the Commission's Annual Report, and also appeared on KINY Radio Capital Chat to discuss senior issues. Ms. VandeCastle also attends the Assisted Living Task Force meetings. Ms. Watt reported she attended several meetings of the new empowered Aquatics Board and/or its Committees. Mr. Iannolino attended meetings of the Auke Bay Steering Committee and the JAMHI Board.

OLD BUSINESS

Senior Sales Tax Exemption: On Monday, September 21, the Assembly will hold a public hearing prior to taking action on the proposed ordinance to implement modifications to the senior sales tax exemption. The ordinance will continue to exempt all seniors from only the tax on essential purchases (food and utilities). The ordinance also provides a rebate to low income seniors to offset the sales tax paid on non-essentials. Ms. VandeCastle summarized the Commission's prior involvement in the issue for the new members. At its last meeting, the Commission discussed whether to provide further input to the Assembly as it comes to closure on this issue. Since there was no consensus among the group, it

decided that members should provide their own input if they wished, but to note such input did not reflect Commission views. Ms. VandeCastle encouraged all present to attend the hearing, and inform the Assembly of their particular viewpoint on the issue.

Implementation of the Juneau Economic Plan. Ms. VandeCastle said that she understood the Juneau Economic Development Council (JEDC) would be taking the lead in managing implementation of the Juneau Economic Plan and she will ask Brian Holst, Executive Director of the JEDC to keep the Commission informed.

INTRODUCTIONS OF NEW MEMBERS

Each Commission member, including existing members and those newly appointed by the Assembly, described some of their background experience and what led them to apply for appointment to the Commission. Due to time constraints the new member Orientation to the Commission operations and activities was deferred to the October meeting. In preparation, Ms. Watt gave each new member a package to read of information from prior meetings on issues before the Commission,

SPEAKER: JEANETTE LACEY DUNN, DIRECTOR OF CASE MANAGEMENT AT BRH

The goal of Bartlett's case management staff is to facilitate what happens at discharge. Nurses and social workers on the case management team begin assisting patients upon admission to the hospital. They provide information, referral counseling, crisis intervention, case management and discharge planning services. Based on physician orders, staff arrange for home healthcare, hospice, medical equipment, legal aid, housing, food and protective services when needed. They can sometimes provide visiting nurse, occupational and physical therapy services on a short-term basis after discharge. There are many complexities to what insurance covers, including Medicare and Medicaid. Medicare covers rehabilitation by not ongoing care over the longer term. Medicaid provides personal care and can cover long term care through a Miller Trust (See attachment on Miller Trusts.) Those considering a Miller Trust should seek legal advice. There is a shortage of Assisted Living and Long-Term Care services in Juneau. The Pioneer Home is an option, and there are a few private providers. The costs are high, and may be \$275 - \$300 per day.

Ms. Dunn said that elderly patients entering the hospital should immediately request a discharge planner, since those services can be in short supply. The Nursing Admission Assessment should flag potential discharge needs, but that information may get lost among critical care material. The hospital does provide comfort care for patients nearing the end of life who don't have a 24-hour caregiver or who need hospice services.

Ms. Dunn stressed the importance of seniors preparing wills, powers of attorney, advance directives, etc. The biggest challenges staff face are for seniors who haven't thought about, or planned what to do – or what is to happen to them - when they become sick or incapacitated.

The Juneau Foundation for End of Life Care (<http://www.foundationforendoflifecare.org>) produced a 40-page booklet "When You're Not Here" (ISBN: 9780615229935, published in 2009) that provides guidance with estate planning, what to do when there is a death in the family, how to cope with grief, etc. It offers advice on where to get help when a family

member is dying. The book is not just about death, but also about preparing for loss. The booklet has two journals for recording important information that can be lost or difficult to obtain after someone dies. Having this information in one place, safely recorded can remove some of the stress and agony from losing a loved one. Sue Nielsen indicated that she has copies available upon request.

CONCLUSION

The next meeting of the JCOA will be on October 8 at 1:15 pm at the Juneau Senior Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.