

JUNEAU COMMISSION ON AGING

City & Borough of Juneau

Minutes of Regular Meeting

March 13, 2014

CALL TO ORDER

The Commission met at the Senior Center. Chairperson MaryAnn VandeCastle called the meeting to order at 9:45 am. Other members present: Elizabeth Terry, Dixie Hood, Mary Lou Spartz, Pat Watt. Also attending was John Hughes, Practice Administrator at Juneau Urgent and Family Care Clinic.

DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

It was declared that a quorum of members was present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

The meeting agenda was approved with addition of one item to New Business. Draft February meeting minutes were handed out and will be approved at the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Commission members introduced themselves to Mr. Hughes, who is new to Juneau and the Clinic. He had come to learn more about the Commission and issues related to seniors. He explained that the Clinic is open for 12 hours 7 days a week and can provide about 80% of those services typically available through hospital emergency rooms. The Clinic averages around 30 visits/day, with 70% being walk-ins, and 30% by appointment. Many patients are elderly. The Clinic is privately owned and is funded through reimbursements from Medicare, Medicaid, and the usual range of private insurance. A few people use the Clinic as their primary care physician. The Clinic has 2 physicians, a Physician's Assistant, 5 Medical Assistants, and 2 support staff. Mr. Hughes noted that there are approximately 1,500 Urgent Care Clinics across the U.S.

REPORT ON RELATED MEETINGS AND CONTACTS

The Juneau Economic Development Council has issued an RFP to find a consultant to conduct a Needs Assessment for a new Assisted Living facility in Juneau.

On February 25, on behalf of the Commission MaryAnn submitted a letter to the Mayor, Assembly, and Planning Commission expressing the urgent need to provide transit service on holidays, and also to address other transit-related items affecting seniors.

(See Attachment 1.) Dixie attended the subsequent Planning Commission meeting at which it reviewed the new Capital Transit Plan. MaryAnn will find out when final approval of the proposed Plan will come before the Assembly.

MaryAnn does not yet have the report from Monday's Senior Food Forum. 20 people attended including four Commission members. MaryAnn and Liz will attend the meeting of the Food Summit group next week.

MaryAnn attended a Pioneer Home Advisory Board meeting in support of the Assembly's request to the Governor to expand the Home - which currently has 1,300 names on its waiting list.

Marie is not at today's meeting because she is chairing the meeting of the Alaska Commission on Aging's Legislative Advocacy Committee. She will make her report at the April meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

The list of potential speakers was distributed. MaryAnn is trying to get the Affordable Care Act Patient Navigator to come to our April meeting. In light of transportation concerns, the Commission thought an exchange of ideas with CSS about how to improve services available through Care-A-Van would be useful. In addition, other potential speakers added to the list included representatives from the Front Street Clinic, Compass Care, and the UA Extension Services.

MaryAnn submitted a funding request to the Assembly to underwrite the production and distribution of the Commission's planned senior resource directory/brochure. Based on input from potential printers, it will be best to do a three-fold double-sided brochure. Card stock appears to be cost-prohibitive. The goal is to try to bring some cohesion to the fragmented service delivery system.

MaryAnn handed out proposed draft 2014 Commission goals. The list incorporates unfinished business from 2013 along with new items that have come up as issues or ideas at Commission meetings during the past year. Members offered some preliminary input, but a full discussion was deferred to the April meeting. It will be important to prioritize goals and keep an outcome focus. (See Attachment 2.)

The burden on seniors of expected increases to water/sewer rates was discussed. MaryAnn will draft a letter for the Assembly requesting that seniors be grandfathered in at their existing rates.

MaryAnn distributed a one-page summary of statistics about Juneau's population makeup, showing the proportionate growth in the senior sector. The contribution of seniors to the local, and state, economies is substantial. The Commission agreed it

would be useful to quantify this contribution in both dollars and volunteer hours so as to demonstrate the net benefit to the state of this population segment.

NEW BUSINESS

Suggestions were offered for activities the Commission might promote during Older American's Month (May.) These included a variety of special events, a senior conference, TV/radio PSAs, and coverage on KTOO's Juneau Afternoon or other radio shows. Decisions will be made at the April meeting.

The impact of the shift in state funding from the AMHS to the proposed Juneau Access Road was discussed. The impact on seniors will be significant and adverse. Dixie and Mary Lou will draft a document for the Commission to submit to the Assembly expressing its concerns about the impact. The Commission will hold a special meeting within the next 2 weeks to review the document and approve action on the topic. MaryAnn will check public notice requirements and schedule the meeting,

MaryAnn will do some research on potential resources for resuscitating a Senior Health Fair in preparation for our April discussion of 2014 goals.

MaryAnn shared the registration flyer for the Power of Aging Symposium to be held in Anchorage on May 1 and invited Commission members to attend. The Symposium is being sponsored by the State's social service agencies, The University, AARP and Conoco Philips.

CONCLUSION

So as to not conflict with the Alaska Commission on Aging's Legislative Advocacy Committee meeting on Thursday, April 10, our Commission will meet on Friday, April 11.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Juneau Commission on Aging

DRAFT 2014 Goals

Improve seniors' access to information resources:

- Produce a senior community resource brochure mailed to all Borough households
- Work with 211 system to ensure adequate coverage of seniors' concerns in Southeast Alaska

Engage with community food programs to ensure seniors' needs are met:

- Attend (or host) food-related meetings to highlight senior needs and learn about efforts to meet them
- Help distribute information about available emergency food resources in the community
- Encourage innovative transportation options to help seniors access existing food pantries and food bank

Help make Juneau an easier place for seniors to live:

- Begin a campaign to encourage Juneau to be a "senior-friendly community" – re: accessibility of buildings, friendliness to senior customers and clients, winter maintenance, attention to pedestrian issues (walk light length, etc.), senior housing and assisted living....

Seek a partner in creating learning opportunities for seniors:

- Identify a UAS staff person with an interest in helping us bring Lifelong Learning Institute programs to Juneau

Draw attention to senior issues during Older Americans Month:

- Run Older Americans Month radio spots on variety of senior topics
- Consider sponsoring a community event for Older Americans Month

Begin an effort to obtain a larger, fully staffed senior center for Juneau:

- Monitor JEDC demand study for results re: senior center need
- Develop a presentation combining demographic information with information about what a full-time senior center could offer

Increase participation in our meetings:

- Increase our outreach by advertising meeting topics, keeping an email list of people to notify, etc.

February 25, 2014

Mayor Merrill Sanford
Members of the Assembly
Planning Commission Members

RE: CBJ Transit Plan Comments from Juneau Commission on Aging

As you consider the proposed transit plan, we ask that you weigh the needs of seniors. The Juneau Commission on Aging met with the transit plan consultants last year to convey our suggestions for upgrading the current system; several of our members also participated in the various public meetings designed to gather information on residents' preferences. Unfortunately, many of our concerns are not addressed in the proposed plan.

At our January 9, 2014 meeting, the Juneau Commission on Aging voted to authorize our member Dixie Hood to represent the Commission at an upcoming Assembly Committee of the Whole meeting in order to convey the Commission's strong recommendation that holiday service be added to the bus system as well as the Care-A-Van. Although there was no opportunity for public testimony at that meeting, we want to highlight the fact that Juneau residents, especially seniors, have long requested this additional service so that they might join relatives and friends for holiday celebrations or attend to other important needs on those days. We are also aware that older workers (and many employees) rely on public transportation to get to their jobs on holidays.

We realize that additional resources are limited, but we believe that holiday service should be a priority at this time. This issue has arisen repeatedly at transit plan public meetings over the years and, as Juneau's senior population increases at an unprecedented pace, we think it's critical to have this service in place now.

Other issues of concern to seniors about which we provided input during the transit plan process included: the need for attention to unsafe bus stops, some of which have no shelters, no sidewalks as a platform for loading and unloading, and may discharge passengers on the side of a busy road with no place to stand; avoidance of extremely unsafe drop-off points such as the one across from the Job Service/ Public Assistance offices where passengers must make their way on foot across a very busy highway (we suggested the bus pull into the parking lot of that facility); the need for improved winter sidewalk maintenance so that access to bus stops is not impeded by ice and snow; and direct bus service to and from stores in the Costco area.

We'd also like to suggest a rider-training or bus-buddies program for seniors, people with disabilities, and other residents who need a little guidance in navigating the bus system. We believe there may be a number of seniors, including some current users of the Care-A-Van, who would use the bus system if they had a higher comfort level with understanding where to catch the bus, how to enter and exit the bus, where the buses can take them, who to contact if they have a problem, and so on. Such programs have successfully helped other cities' transit systems to optimize usage of the available options.

Thank you for your consideration of our input on behalf of Juneau seniors.
Sincerely,

MaryAnn VandeCastle
Chair, Juneau Commission on Aging