

JUNEAU COMMISSION ON AGING

City & Borough of Juneau

Minutes of Regular Meeting

January 9, 2014

CALL TO ORDER

The Commission met at the Senior Center. Chairperson MaryAnn VandeCastle called the meeting to order at 9:30 am. Other members present: Marie Darlin, Elizabeth Terry, Dixie Hood, Mary Lou Spartz, Pat Watt. Also attending was Lesley Thompson, planner with the Alaska Commission on Aging, and Carol Comolli, manager of CSS Senior Center.

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 no revisions. The November 14th meeting minutes were also approved with no revisions.

REPORT ON RELATED MEETINGS

Marie and MaryAnn attended a meeting of the Assisted Living Task Force yesterday. The process is moving along well: land options have been identified; and the CBJ has agreed to fund 50% of the costs of a Needs Assessment up to a maximum of \$25,000. The results of the Needs Assessment will drive the requirements for both the facility and its location.

PRESENTATION BY LESLEY THOMPSON (Alaska Commission on Aging, ACoA)

Lesley presented statistical information on the status of seniors in the state and summarized the ACoA's developing legislative agenda. Juneau Commission member Marie is also a member of the State Commission and chairs its Legislative Advocacy

Committee. As a state funded entity, the ACoA cannot lobby the legislature, but does advocate in accordance with its statutory purpose – *“to advocate for state policy, public and private partnerships, state/federal projects and citizen involvement that assists each of us to age successfully in our homes, in our communities or as near as possible to our communities and families.”*

Lesley provided copies of the ACoA 2012 Annual Report and its Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2013. The FY 2013 Annual Report will be ready for the upcoming legislative session. The data from which the Snapshot draws comes from Census statistics and projections produced by the state Department of Labor, available online at <http://laborstats.alaska.gov/>. The Snapshot also lists the various programs that support seniors financially. Alaska's senior population is growing faster than any other state, and seniors are estimated to contribute \$2.2 billion to the state's economy. The benefits seniors provide far outweigh the costs to the state of services provided to them. Lesley noted that the Senior Benefits Program (it replaced the former Longevity Bonus) which supports low income seniors on a sliding scale is scheduled to sunset in 2015, though there is proposed legislation to extend the program. It was suggested that it would be useful to have a speaker from the Division of Public Assistance come to the Commission to review the various support programs available to seniors. There are numerous programs, but there is no overall coordination and it can be complex to access benefits. CCS has a Caregiver Resource staff person, and SAIL has an Aging and Disability Resource Center whose staff recently turned over. It would be good to hear from both at future meetings.

Lesley handed out the list of legislation that the Commission was interested in last session, and noted that once the pre-filing deadline is past a 2014 list will be prepared. The ACoA sponsors teleconferences twice a month during the legislative session to track bills. Seniors and advocates are encouraged to attend the teleconferences at group sites to reduce costs. Juneau's location is Room 115 of the Alaska Office Building (DH&SS). The teleconferences run from 9:30 am to 11:00 am approximately every other Thursday as follows: January 23, January 30, February 14, February 27, March 13, March 27, April 10, April 17, and April 24.

The Alaska Commission on Aging will meet in Juneau in February and will hold a senior community forum at the Senior Center on February 11th to get input for the preparation of the 2016 - 2020 State Plan for Senior Services. The Commission members will be meeting with legislators on priority issues on February 12. The Commission is looking at two funding priorities, recognizing the tight state budget situation. (1) To increase funding for the National Family Caregiver Support Program and (2) to increase funding for the Nutrition Transportation Support Program.

During this presentation suggestions for future presenters included: the Community Resource Network that meets monthly at Bartlett Hospital, SAIL's Aging and Disability Resource Center, the State's Long-term Care ombudsman, the CCS Caregiver Resource, and the AK Legal Services senior advocate.

OLD BUSINESS

Due to time constraints, the discussion and review of 2013 goals and priorities was deferred until next meeting with the exception of action on the development of a Juneau Senior Services Directory. The group unanimously agreed it would develop a one-page card-stock senior information resource sheet to be mailed to every address in the CBJ. MaryAnn will lead the compilation of the content and Pat will do the design and layout and prepare a print-ready file. MaryAnn is developing a budget for printing costs, and the CBJ will be asked to mail the document out. MaryAnn explained that CBJ Boards and Commissions may undertake fundraising activities – however these involve significant accountability requirements. The group determined it would not do any fundraising, as that would divert attention and energy from our mission.

NEW BUSINESS

Dixie noted that the Assembly will be acting on the proposed new Capital Transit Plan shortly, and that the consultant's final recommendation does not address the lack of services on major holidays. This is a long unmet need that significantly affects seniors. The Commission voted to authorize Dixie to represent the Commission before the Assembly in order to request and support the provision of holiday services through both Capital Transit and the Care-a-Van.

Next meeting date: in order to ensure a quorum, this will be moved to February 20 at the Senior Center, not February 13.

The meeting adjourned at 11:28. The group determined that, typically, its regular meetings last about 2 hours so we should advertise them as 9:30am to 11:30am and not 9:30am to 11:00am.