

## Oakland County Senior Advisory Council Meeting

March 21, 2022

VIRTUAL MEETING

10:00 am -12:00 pm

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairperson Cameron McClure (District #5) called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**ATTENDANCE:** Secretary Martha Schlesinger (District #20) conducted member roll call and meeting attendance.

Member Attendance:

Dist	RC	Name	Dist	RC	Name	Dist	RC	Name
1	P	George Hanley	2	E	Linda Hyduck	3	P	Jerry Sowik
4	P	Carolyn Morrison	5	P	Cameron McClure	6	A	Renata Erickson
7	P	Barbara Garbutt	8	P	Norene Yuskowatz	9	V	VACANT
10	P	Carolyn Price	11	A	Howard Adams	12	V	VACANT
13	P	Sylvia Whitmer	14	V	VACANT	15	P	Dianne Bubnar
16	P	Mark Kelly	17	E	Barbara Seldon	18	P	Marsha Kamin
19	P	Royetta Ealba	20	P	Martha Schlesinger	21	A	Cheryl Cushingberry
AL	P	Rock Abboud	AL	P	Marcus Jackson			
SR	P	Pat Zawadzki	SR	P	Genessa Doolittle			

Key: **Dist** = District # (AL -Member-at-Large, SR – Staff Rep); **RC** = Attendance P – Present; E – Excused; A -Absent; V – Vacant); **Name** = District Council Member

Others Present:

Commissioner Charlie Cavell (District 18)

Dr. Russell Faust – Oakland County Medical Director

Carolyn Krause – Oakland County Community Development

Katie Wendel – AAA 1B Director of Planning and Advocacy

## **APPROVAL of MINUTES**

Senior Advisory Council minutes for the meeting February 14, were amended and then unanimously approved. Amendments: the District #10 program was not done with the speaker; typo in second-to-last paragraph of Cam McClure's comments should read "many" centers, not "may" centers.

## **COUNTY UPDATE**

Dr. Faust addressed two topics of concern: 1) when/whether another covid surge is expected, and 2) covid as an emerging pathogen, and other potential emerging pathogens.

Regarding concerns about another potential surge, Dr. Faust reported that the strain known as BA2 has already arrived in Michigan, but as of now it's been seven weeks since it was first detected but there are still no markers found that would indicate an impending surge. Community immunity is high - however Dr. Faust urged mask wearing in public spaces continue. Noting that Covid 2 is an emerging pathogen – that is, new to humans – he reported that there is another emerging pathogen that is also of great concern that is widespread in Asia and Australia, but just appearing in Oakland County, called Candida Auris. It has high levels of resistance to current conventional medications, and can only be killed by hydrogen peroxide, UV, and bleach – NOT sanitizers. It is transmitted by contact – it is not airborne like covid – so it is of particular concern to those in long term care facilities, nursing homes, and those chronically hospitalized. 50% of the cases are a bloodstream infection, and 50% of those cases are mortality cases. The strategy for addressing this pathogen is containment.

During a question-and-answer period, Dr. Faust told SAC members that the County will get and administer a 4<sup>th</sup> covid shot as soon as it is available; and the County continues to actively reach out to those in under vaccinated communities with public messages and personal interactions, but success here is frustrated by those who still believe the vaccine is dangerous and will not get it.

## **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Katie Wendell shared updates on the following:

-The State Budget process is underway and AAA-1B is advocating for an increase in Silver Key Coalition funding (for non-Medicaid in-home services). Formed in 2014, the Silver Key Coalition was quickly overwhelmed by the large number of those wanting and needing its services. It currently has 7,270 older adults on its waiting lists, and they are prioritized based on need (and income level). AAA-1B wants a \$7million increase in its funding, and a \$1million increase for home delivered meals. In other Counties, senior needs are funded by a senior millage – but Oakland County currently has no such millage, and there are no County representatives on the state finance committees (House or Senate) to advocate for budget increases. AAA-1B continues to support the direct care workforce. AAA-1B is advocating for a 10% increase in My Choice rates, but there is only 2% increase currently proposed. Ms. Wendel suggested that SAC members sign up for The Advocate AAA-B newsletter to keep abreast of developments.

-There has been no Federal budget adopted for the current fiscal year – operations continue to be funded by extension resolutions. Current increases are at a modest 1.5%, but much more was hoped for.

-Older Michiganders Day 2022 will be mostly virtual, with only a small number of people on the State's Capitol lawn. Senior Action Week will be May 9 -13, with a different senior issue highlighted each day. May 11 will be Older Michiganders Day, and some action activities are being discussed. She will update us on specifics at the next SAC meeting.

-2022 is a big planning year for AAA-1B, and RFPs (requests for proposals) were launched today. AAA-1B is also writing a 3-year multi-year plan to the State of Michigan for their organization's funding, and there will be a public hearing in May.

- Activities regarding the newly adopted Blueprint are ramping up: the Healthy Aging Ad Hoc committee met three weeks ago to approve the start of outreach to build working groups that will meet to discuss activating the recommendations in the Blueprint. There will be 3 Working Groups formed (and will look at 9 areas in the Blueprint): Quality of Life, Housing and Volunteers, and Basic Needs. Each Group will set its own agenda and timetable for action. Meetings will be online. Katie is building the work groups to start the implementation process. Katie would like to know what SAC members will do; it would be great if there were SAC members on each

of the three work groups. Katie will also share the invitation to participate with senior centers and would appreciate SAC's assistance with informing their respective senior centers and other providers that SAC works with in their communities. Pat Zawadzki said that SAC officers will need to establish a platform for participation consistent with the By-laws that clearly indicates that SAC members will participate in these working groups representing only themselves and will not be speaking for all of SAC. Cam McClure asked each SAC member to determine which working group they would be interested in working on, and let him and Pat know. He also reported that he met with his commissioner, Kristen Nelson (District #5), who told him the Ad Hoc Committee will ask each commissioner to identify what working group they want to serve on –and they will serve along with AAA-1B reps, SAC reps, and others who may have interest/expertise in specific relevant areas of focus within each working group's assignments.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE**

Carolyn Krause thanked all SAC members who participated in the outreach meeting with County Executive Dave Coulter last week. The administration is continuing to share the County's Strategic Framework that has been developed to get our work out over the next few years and are still working on outreach efforts to communities and interest groups. They are engaged in senior outreach efforts to make sure that our seniors are aware of the services that the County has available. They are also involved with the Healthy Aging Ad Hoc Committee.

#### **COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE**

Commissioner Charlie Cavell (District #18) told SAC members that he will be on the Basic Needs Working Group, and asked for SAC feedback on a few ideas before the commissioner April 5 and 6 committee meetings to introduce resolutions if they are passed then the resolution is voted on by the full Board of Commissioners.

What they have introduced is creating:

- A Housing Trust Fund

- A Shelter Capacity Fund
- A Home Repair Fund, and possibly a
- A Zoning Policy Scan

He explained each briefly:

**A Housing Trust Fund** would provide gap funding for developers who are building housing, to help incentivize saving room for those at 120% of median income level or below. It has also been called an Attainable Housing Trust Fund. Feedback from SAC members was positive, saying that there is a disparity of meeting the needs for families/individuals in the middle that suffer from lack of acknowledgement and support.

**A Shelter Capacity Fund** would use ARPA funds, so there would be no increase in taxes, to increase shelter capacity in Oakland County –and it is greatly needed. There are over 1,000 children in the County who are ‘doubled up’ (You are not living in your own home). There are some foundations who provide funding for homelessness, but not for shelters or increasing shelter capacity. There is a significant but unaddressed need for shelter space appropriate for families. Suggestions from SAC members included the Working Group looking into use of space in parks (seasons permitting), and surveying available/appropriate building stock (unused schools, etc.) to see if they can be adapted and used to increase capacity, especially for families.

**A Home Repair Fund** would support necessary repairs so that individuals/families can continue to live in their home safely. Doing home repairs can be especially dangerous for older adults, but allowing unsafe conditions to remain unresolved is also a safety hazard. SAC feedback indicated that this could be a key element in allowing seniors to remain safely in their homes, and therefore keeping them in the county in future years. This need for seniors – regardless of income criteria - has been both under-estimated and under-addressed.

Regarding doing a scan of zoning policies throughout the County, Commissioner Cavell acknowledged that the idea is controversial, as the County has no authority to intervene with an individual municipality’s zoning responsibilities. Chair McClure suggested that SAC members think about this, and the other Fund ideas that were presented, and email Commissioner Cavell with their thoughts.

## **GUEST SPEAKER: “PARENTS CHANGING PLACES”**

Elizabeth Morley, from the organization Parents Changing Places (PCP), described the organization’s history, purpose and processes that address the growing audience in need of having their changing needs assessed and met. Parents Changing Places is a living referral service, which identifies different kinds of senior living services and spaces with different levels of care and matches it to a family’s situation. It was founded in 2007, out of ‘personal experience’, and partners with other local agencies/companies in SE Michigan. A Power Point presentation (which will be sent to Pat and available to SAC members) looked at a number of different topics.

Helping prospective clients is a three-step process between PCP and interested families:

- 1) Conversation, to establish the geographic, budgetary, and care needs of an individual/family
- 2) Attend facility tours with the family
- 3) Ensure their needs prior to moving into a new place.

The organization also helps to determine if it is indeed time to fix up a residence or it’s time for them to move by looking at needed space modifications, access challenges, types of assistance needed, available resources, and the possibilities of downsizing – as well as checking for warning signs that a senior may not be taking appropriate care of themselves like refrigerator contents, clothing conditions, medications, and forgetfulness.

The goal is to match the needs of all who are living in a place, and there are many options each with a different level of care and support. These options are:

- 1) Aging in place – though this may not be a permanent situation
- 2) Multi housing units, without specific care services. This category has a long wait list.
- 3) Independent living with services, but these services are not on 24/7 call
- 4) Assisted living – which has daily living help, but not skilled nursing
- 5) Memory care – facilities that are locked and secure, with specially trained staff available 224/7
- 6) Residential care homes – these have 6 or fewer residents, lots of hands-on care that comes to the house. This option can be more affordable than others.

- 7) Nursing homes – these have the highest level of skilled nursing care. They may also be used for short-term rehab care (usually about 3 weeks in duration).
- 8) Respite care – is temporary short-term care (1-2 weeks), used at a senior community facility and/or if a family caregiver needs a break. This is also available through the VA.

Elizabeth shared a chart of cost comparisons for these options and said that PCP also can give advice on making options work financially. There are seven different potential sources of funding.

In a question-and-answer period that followed the presentation, Ms. Morley said that the organization is funded through commissions paid to them by some of the facilities they work with, but their recommendations are not limited to only these facilities. PCP vets the facilities by regular on-site visits (with and without families), by making sure they are state-licensed, and by PCPs' own history of experience with them.

Responding to a question about how/whether there is or can be a temporary transfer of services (when the cared-for persons come to Oakland County for only a few months during the year) she said she did not know of a process to accomplish this, but would check and get back to Pat with any information. Katie Wendell of AAA-1B said that in Michigan services are determined at the local level because the rules for being cared for by County services and the senior millages that pay for those services are local. 72 of 83 counties in Michigan have such a millage, but Oakland County does not. It was suggested that Oakland County Commissioners look into the possibility of having a senior millage here to help underwrite the cost of senior care, especially because of the size and projected growth of the number of senior citizens in the County.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Returning to the topic of how SAC members should participate in the Blueprint Working Groups, both Cam McClure and Pat Zawadzki emphasized that this is an opportunity for SAC members to help shape the quality of life for seniors in Oakland County and urged everyone to get involved. They cautioned, however, that SAC members should speak their own opinions and NOT represent they are speaking on behalf of SAC. If there is some topic or position that should be considered by SAC as a body, then it should be put on the agenda of a SAC

meeting and discussed there as a group. Mr. McClure asked that SAC members review the Blueprint and the working groups' purviews and contact him or Pat if they want to actively participate in one of those groups' discussions.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 12:01 PM

## **NEXT MEETING**

**MONDAY April 11, 2022**

**10:00am – 12:00PM**

**VIRTUAL MEETING**