

**Oakland County Senior Advisory Council
Meeting
October 21, 2024
10:00 am – 12:00 pm**

Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Rock Abboud called the meeting to order at 10:14 AM and asked each member present to introduce themselves. He welcomed all members to the SAC meeting.

Attendance Matrix:

Dist	RC	Name	Dist	RC	Name	Dist	RC	Name
1	P	Royetta Ealba	2	P	Mark Kelly	3	P	Suzanne Patton
4	E	Dianne Bubnar	5	V		6	P	Bridgette Giampa
7	V		8	P	Robert Whitcomb	9	P	Ruth Jordan
10	P	Cameron McClure	11	P	Sylvia Whitmer	12	P	Chris Peale
13	P	Norene Yuskowatz	14	A	Marcy Boskee	15	P	Brenda Anderson
16	V		17	E	Barbara Seldon	18	P	Greg Keeler
19	P	Martha Schlesinger	AL	P	Rock Abboud			
SR	P	Pat Zawadzki	SR	P	Genessa Doolittle			

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

Others Present

Julie Lowenthal, Program and Advocacy of Planning, AgeWays
Dr. Russell Faust, Medical Director, Oakland County Health and Human Services
Jim Ellison, Chief, Older Adult Services Oakland County
Heather DeVos, AgeWays Program Specialist, Health Promotions and Wellness Programs

Roll Call

There is a quorum.

Approval of Minutes

Senior Advisory Council minutes for the September meeting were approved as presented.

Legislative Update: Julie Lowenthal, Program and Advocacy of Planning at AgeWays Budget:

- Federal Update: The budget levels will be maintained until December 20, 2024. On December 20th Congress must pass a full budget in order to maintain the current spending.

State Update:

- There is a list to be included in the state level budgets. Currently they are not sure of the exact content of the list.

Legislature Update:

- Federal:
 - There is no current update for the OAA act.
 - The Senate has released their markups, but the House has not.
 - There are some AgeWays preauthorization's that may not be picked up until after the elections on November 5th.
 - After elections, AgeWays is asking everyone to reach out to senators and legislators for further support of the OAA programs.
 - Advocacy materials and pamphlets are available and will be provided at a later time.
- State:
 - MDHHS was able to raise the asset limit for Medicaid coverage programs from \$2,000 to \$10,000. It was an advocacy asset from AgeWays, and they saw the need.
 - This is huge for Medicaid participants. We are awaiting approval before it takes official effect.
 - There are four guardianship bills being reviewed by civil rights and public communities. Circuit court is opposing but AgeWays is supporting. The package has passed the house and will be on the floor soon.

AgeWays: There are no changes in care transitions. All vouchers are out. AgeWays is looking for ways to grow the program through other sources.

Health Division Update: Dr. Russell Faust, Medical Director, Oakland County Health and Human Services

- Encourage everyone to get vaccinated for diphtheria/ pertussis.
 - Tetanus is needed every 10 years.
 - Pertussis (also known as whooping cough) can cause a 3mm swelling of the trachea – tolerable in adults but presents a significant air flow obstruction for infants and could lead to death.
 - Pertussis is 100% preventable. The infant death numbers are four to five times over last year. This statistic can be changed.

- Measles: due to decline in vaccinations among younger kids, the strains are different than in the past and now we have more measles encephalitis.
 - Of 5,000 infected youth, 1 will die; for infants under fifteen months old 1 out of 600 with encephalitis will die.
 - Vaccines cannot reverse or save them.
 - PLEASE encourage families to vaccinate.
- In Michigan there is a statewide database (MCIR) to keep track of individual vaccinations.
- Dr. Faust will send information to Mr. Jim Ellison for inclusion in the ENCORE newsletter, Patricia Zawadzki, and to all SAC members for distribution.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) is creeping into all aspects of our lives.
 - When new medicines are given to a patient, AI will cross reference for contraindications and inform the physician.
 - Across Michigan, Spectrum Health partnered with insurance and data analytic vendors to optimize health.

Presentation: Heather DeVos, AgeWays Program Specialist, Health Promotions and Wellness Programs

Heather DeVos hosts health and wellness programs for AgeWays throughout Oakland County and the Southeast area across 6 counties.

- Title 3D and 3E funding and private donations support the programs.
- The programs are evidenced based programs created at a university.
- Work all about real world situations that are interactive.
- Evidence-based programs offered by AgeWays are created by universities and are proven to be effective.
- AgeWays partners with other organizations like the National Kidney foundation who offers AgeWays programs such as:
 - A matter of Balance (falls), Aging Mastery programs, (baby boomers improve longevity and age gracefully) Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less, (online dietitian led, each session on being healthier) and Powerful Tools for caregivers.
 - Classes are in person.
- The family caregivers 6-week program runs 24/7 online and in person about dementia life (step into the world of someone with dementia) helps to become more understanding and empathy. Emphasis is placed on the African American communities because it is proven there are higher incidences of dementia; two to three times higher.
- Michigan State University extension uses their programs such as:
 - Walk With Ease, Path passage, diabetes, chronic pain, HBP, programs and more.

- AgeWays provides tool kits with an abundance of information to be used in the communities. It is available to anyone who wants it. AgeWays will also come out and present to your community if you desire.
- You may connect with the programs three ways:
 - Online registration link
 - Direct line to health and wellness
 - E-mail connected to registration.
- Patricia will send PowerPoint to SAC members so members may send to their senior centers.

County Update: Jim Ellison, Chief, Older Adult Services Oakland County

- The next Senior Expo is tomorrow at the Royal Oak Farmers Market from 10 AM to 1PM
- The Senior Summit was held in Southfield last month. Greg Keeler was there to help and interact with the people. Anyone wishing to come and interact with seniors are welcome. There are 4 dates available. If you want Mr. Ellison to come to speak to your community, let him know.
- The new publication of ENCORE will go to print very soon. It will be mailed timely to everyone who is a registered voter and sixty years+ old.
- There are planned coffee and conversations in Huntington Woods and Clawson.
- Mr. Ellison attended the ribbon cutting at the senior center in Troy. On November 15 he will attend the celebration of the new kitchen at the senior center in Auburn Hills.

Presentation: Rock Abboud, Chair Oakland County SAC

- Rock Abboud is a member of the Oakland County Food Policy Council, along with 8 or 9-members including MICAH 6 Community, Metro Food Rescue, Lighthouse of Michigan, Forgotten Harvest, Gleaners Community Bank, Live United, Trinity Health, City of Pontiac, and City of Oak Park. Mr. Peter Lindman was hired as the consultant to assist in determining where food insecurities lie in the county.
- There are pressing issues in Oakland County, folks are not getting enough healthy food.
 - Some of the challenges:
 - There are food deserts in Oakland County where fresh, healthy, affordable food is limited. This impacts most of those without transportation.
 - The rising cost of food and living expenses represents an economic barrier in affluent but unevenly distributed areas like Oakland County.
 - Of special concern is children. Many parents rely on school meal programs to meet their children's basic nutritional needs.
 - Seniors on fixed income and with mobility issues face difficulty accessing affordable and healthy food. Meals on Wheels play a critical role but face funding issues.

- Low-income families and areas of higher poverty rates (like Pontiac) food insecurities are particularly acute.
- Efforts to combat food insecurity:
 - Local food banks have increased their efforts (Gleaners, Forgotten Harvest, Community Food Bank)
 - Government programs such as WIC and SNAP
 - Free and reduced food programs in schools provide much support but there are barriers to access and stigmas that prevent full utilization.
 - The Oakland County Food Policy Council works with local stakeholders to identify gaps and create policies that improve food access, especially in underserved communities.
- Addressing food insecurity in Oakland County requires a combination of community support, governmental assistance, and improved access to affordable, healthy food. The Coalition has been meeting for a year and there have been three meetings.

SAC Community Updates:

Mark Kelly (2): Troy had a ribbon cutting for their senior center, looking at renaming it the Troy Community and Senior Center. A portion of the \$250,000 grant is being spent on converting the cafeteria into a senior room. Placed new signs around saying, “senior center.” PACE came in and spoke, may want them to come in and speak to SAC; had opportunity to sample Meals on Wheels lunch.

Susan Patton (3): Meals on Wheels is providing Thanksgiving Luncheon in Madison Heights.

Bridget Giampa (6): Orion Township and Lake Orion Village received a \$85,000 exploration grant; they are currently in survey phase, used for outdoor yard works, clean-up, roof replacement, snow removal, etc. The Great Lakes Athletics Club has been approved for Silver Sneakers - 7 insurance companies will participate, there will be dedicated parking and special entrance for seniors. Consideration for creating a senior sub-committee for Orion Township.

Ruth Jordan (9): County is providing Flu and COVID shots to seniors tomorrow; Wednesday is a hayride at Addison Oaks and the Cider Mill. Additionally, every second Wednesday Ruth co-facilitates an Alzheimer’s support group at the Bowen Center at 1:00 PM.

Cam McClure (10): The Waterford Senior Center tossed over Waterford Township who tossed it over to Waterford Parks and Recreation. Seems to be a good fit. There is a millage or bond going where they are looking to purchase a part of the OCC Campus and placing a community center there; The J is upgrading their communications center.

Sylvia Whitmer (11): In West Bloomfield there is a new center manager. Active programs, programs connected to P and R which have a lot of trails where seniors take trail trips. This is a popular activity for seniors, the extended expansion of the P and R center is still in planning and financing. There is a meeting next Tuesday.

Christopher Peal (12): New member of SAC fwas introduced and welcomed to the SAC. He is a retired public school principal and was a teacher for over 25 years.

Noreen Yuskowatz (13): Unable to unmute. Sent report to Patricia Zawadzki.

Brenda Anderson (15): Attended the Costic Center's health fair, where there were immunizations, other agencies etc. and more than 300 people attended. Had the opportunity to explain how the county government functions differently in terms of the grants that were made to improve the senior centers. The big issue in Farmington Hills is: what they will do with their senior center? Will they move to the Hawk, or will they stay where they are? In Northville they are having a health fair this week and their rebuilding is going along well.

Gregory Keeler (17/18): Attended the Southfield Senior Summit with Jim and Denisha. Since most Southfield residents knew him, he would send them to AgeWays because of their interest in dementia. Southfield needs to have coffee and donuts, soon. As winter comes, the seniors start to shut down and plan their holiday celebrations. They will also close in January and in February. They will re-open in March when they do not have to worry about the weather and falling. Royal Oak is doing good. Things are going smoothly, they have a new driver, and the Secretary of State will be coming to their pavilion to assist seniors in renewing their drivers' license, state ID etc.

Martha Schlesinger (19): Last Sunday her community held a pumpkin and hayride community event. Most important - on the ballot for Ferndale is a proposal for a heavy override for building improvements and expansion of fire, EMS, and police. The proposal is asking that the city be allowed to raise the millage. The question is what the benefit for seniors will be.

Rock Abboud (At-Large): The City of Birmingham has purchased the "Y" in Birmingham. The YMCA then decided they will move out and build a new building in Royal Oak which has created a rift between the YMCA, Birmingham and NEXT. There was a senior millage that passed. The half million dollars funding agreement that NEXT will put up in order to become a tenant. In return Birmingham will pay all of the operational costs for the next three years. The hired architect does not have the experience of building a senior center. NEXT now comes to the table representing the villages of Birmingham, Franklin, Beverly Hills, and Bingham Farms, brings in Chris Brown with a need for more funding, daycare issues come to play and NEXT needed a spokesperson to speak on their behalf.

Pat Zawadzki, Oakland County SAC Coordinator

Pat thanked the SAC members for attending the meeting, accomplishing their work, and presenting updates for each district.

- Based on all of the reporting and the many comments about ARPA funds, she wonders if SAC would be interested in making a request to Jim's office about following up on this topic and bringing information to the SAC December meeting.
- There is an election happening! The County Commissioners are up for re-election, and this is the first time the commissioners are going for a 4-year term instead of the traditional two years.
 - For each of the SAC members, your appointment ends at the end of this election year.
 - Everyone will need to approach their Commissioner (should they desire to be re-appointed to the Oakland County Senior Advisory Council).
 - *Your appointment has to go through the county executive for approval.*
- Pat will ask for recommendations or self-nominations for officers' positions for SAC in December. If you are interested, she will send you the duties and responsibilities.

Adjournment

Rock Abboud called for adjournment and announced the next meeting date and time. The meeting was adjourned at 11:54 AM.

**NEXT MEETING
VIRTUAL
Monday, November 18, 2024
10 AM – 12 PM**