Washtenaw County Commission on Aging

December 3rd, 2021

8:30 – 10:30am

Remote Via Zoom

Join by Zoom: https://zoom.us/join
Join by Phone: 312-626-6799
Meeting ID: 954 3400 0397
Passcode: 633697

AGENDA

I. Call to Order

Called by Chair Munce at 8:34 AM

II. Roll Call

Present: Steven Stein, Gary Munce, Bennett Stark, Elizabeth Thompson, Marie Gress, Bonny Webber, Marta Larson, Jason Maciejewski, Margaret Reynolds, Ellen Offen

Absent (excused): DeLois Wilson

III. Citizen Participation

Public Comment from Monica Prince passing on information about recent service requests, particularly one time transportation requests due to the cost of public transportation and highlighted a free ride program that had such high service request that they had to cancel the program early.

Public Comment from Yvonne Cudney offers the fact that TheRide is actively seeking input on transit planning and suggests the Commission potential working with that organization directly to ensure seniors are incorporated into that planning process.

Public Comment from Sarah Hong also mentions the role of nonprofits in the transportation services and not just the players you think of first. She also speaks to the challenges of collaborative groups like the Healthy Aging Collaborative, because while they are absolutely important, due to organizations working across several issues, it can result in capacity constraints of the participating agencies.

IV. Commission Response to Citizen Participation

Webber asks Monica Prince for clarification about service requests to the county. Prince specifies things like assistance finding, social connectedness and affording housekeeping services and transportation, specifically noting the stop in front of the Ypsilanti Senior Center from the Ypsilanti transit location being closed resulting many having to take much longer trips.

Larson suggests to Monica Prince working with the Barrier Busters network as a potential pathway for addressing transportation costs. Larson also speaks to technology programs by EMU and University of Michigan as a means to address social isolation. Prince agrees, but notes that certain seniors, particularly older seniors have less interest in these programs.

Stein brings up the common topic of being able to reach out to under-resourced communities and asks Monica Prince for input about how to reach out to people, so that they don't have to go through someone, but can attend meetings and get involved. Prince suggests tapping into existing networks doing work in the area, like the organizations that attend Parkridge Monday Meetings. Stein asks about a health/faith based collaborative as a means for communications, which Prince said she would like to look into.

Munce also brings up how often the issue of transportation comes up and points to the proposed Mobile Support Services Initiative that the County is considering funding through using from the American Rescue Plan.

Webber notes the barriers that both in-person and virtual meetings present as more outreach by the Commission happens to get people to participate in their meetings. In-person can have transportation as a barrier, while virtual presents digital literacy as an issue. She believes it's an important conversation and topic moving forward.

Deana Smith mentions a connection between the Healthy Aging Collaborative and TheRide and that they are happy to help connect that group to discuss transportation as their data work has shown that as a primary concern. Stein asks how broad these Healthy Aging Collaborative conversations are as transportation is a wide topic, and Deana provides clarification that currently the Healthy Aging Collaborative conversations are broad but as additional work is done, groups are drilling into these categories.

Offen suggests advocating the County Commissioners spend time visiting senior centers and engaging with seniors as they have a broader scope of county services, and it could directly inform their work. She also offers to reach out to AAATA to see if they would be able to present at a Commission on Aging meeting this year to answer some of these questions. She also raises the question of how the Commission on Aging can be a good source for answering questions, so folks know they can come to a meeting or reach out if they need help with something.

Thompson strongly agrees with inviting the AAATA and working with them directly, in addition to the Healthy Aging Collaborative's work, to be a part of their planning process. She also agrees that the Commission on Aging can be a great resource for the Board of Commissioners to be conduit of information and resource referrals. Margaret strongly agrees and suggest working on a framework for being this funnel of information to and from the commissioners.

Munce formally suggests putting transportation as a main topic of a meeting early in 2022. Stein agrees and also suggests being as inclusive as possible when thinking of what transportation means.

Gress brings up AAATA housing the Transporation Coordinating Council that is comprised of a lot of these groups and another source for having this conversation by joining existing structures rather than recreating systems. Webber asks for more information and asks whether that might be another group that the Commission on Aging to have a more formal connection.

Stein asks clarification about how different groups are assigned to different domains on the Healthy Aging Collaborative, given that groups, like Sarah Hong mentioned, do work across a number of categories. Smith states that is a case by case basis when it comes to who was asked to lead each subcommittee, but fully expect organizations that do different levels of work to be spread across as many subcommittees as they want to be a part of.

Stein wonders if funding agencies may be able to support group participation in groups like the Healthy Aging Collaborative to address some of Sarah Hong's concerns about capacity. Chris Lemon mentions that is a possibility and they would be interested in having further conversation.

Munce does talk about the struggle of weighing the need to advocate for service funding and structural funding and that this conversation certainly highlights that.

V. Approval of Minutes

Moved: Gress, seconded Stein, that the minutes of the 11.19 meeting be approved.

Unanimous Roll Call Vote in the Affirmative.

Minutes Approved.

VI. Subcommittee Updates

A. Data Organizations / Domains

Munce offered a report that this committee has one more meeting scheduled for 2021.

B. Survey

This committee is on hold.

C. Website and Communications

Munce offered a report that the committee added Stein, Larson, and Webber, as they begin working on a report to the Board of Commissioners over the next few months.

D. Potential Millage

Munce offered a report that the committee is continue to meeting with different county commission on aging.

IX. Report from the Chair

Munce reiterates the importance of connecting with Commissioners and has hearing positive feedback.

Munce says he is participating more in Board of Commissioners meetings and offers a few updates:

- *The Commissioners passed a vaccine mandate for county employees*
- *The Commissioners spoke in favor of motion at a future meeting to allow commissions to meet remotely*

- *The County released a potential package of American Rescue Plan funding investments that will be considered in early 2022 and will share that with the group*

Reynolds asks about the Board meeting calendar. Lindeman answers that the 1st and 3rd Wednesday @ 5:30 is Working Session and 7:00 is the Board of Commissioners meeting.

Stark asks whether this is the appropriate time to offer feedback, which Munce allows. Stark speaks to the importance of focusing on COVID-19 as a primary goal of the Commission and his disappointment in a recent presentation by Senior Centers not focusing on this. Larson agrees the importance of acknowledging COVID and how it magnifies the larger issues facing seniors that should be the focus of the group. Webber appreciate Stark's suggestion but wants to make sure we are still taking advantage of the information that already exists and the issues that are not exclusively COVID related, even though that is an important topic. Stark understands them but fully believes that more needs to be done and is concerned by previous presentations. Thompson believes this topic is important because COVID showed that we do not have the capacity to the needs of the community and underscores that every group that has presented has talked about shifts in services, but that it is simply not enough. Stein suggests a subcommittee to specifically looking at COVID-19. Webber thinks a subcommittee could be a good idea and believes Stark and Stein could be very well positioned to do this work. Stark and Stein believe that is a good idea. Munce agrees, but want's to again clarify that every service provider is doing all that they can, given their resources, to respond to COVID.

Moved: Gress, seconded Stark, to create a subcommittee to study and discuss the impact of COVID on older adults who will then report back to the full Commission on its findings.

Unanimous Roll Call Vote in the Affirmative.

Motion Approved.

X. Report from the Board of Commissioners

I. Update on 2022 requirement for in-person meetings. Unless statutory change or if COA is found not to fall under the Michigan Open Meeting Act, COA in-person meetings will be required for all meetings starting January 2022.

II. Update on support for COA. Contract with AAA1-B in progress. Transistion expected in 2022. Linderman will provide approximately 10% support with website postings and communications with County Board of Commissioners

VIII. Discussion Item

I. A resolution instructing the Commission on Aging officers to monitor policy and COVID-19 health guidance to inform the setting of the first meeting of 2022 for the Commission on Aging

Moved: Webber, seconded Larson.

Discussion: Munce and Webber clarify that this does not apply subcommittees and that the Commission on Aging will remain active and busy until they are able to meet in full again.

Unanimous Roll Call Vote in the Affirmative.

Motion Approved.

II. American Rescue Plan Funding

Chair Munce offer an overview of the American Rescue Plan proposal that the Board of Commissioners is currently considering. He also mentions that the Commission on Aging can work to be well positioned to give feedback on this proposal as they did with the first proposal, and potentially be more involved in the next iteration.

Thompson believes we need to focus on ARPA eligibility, to ensure we don't spend time on issues that might not be eligible, even if they are critical.

Stein offers to be a part of future conversation on this topic. He asks whether external individuals can be a part of subcommittees. Chair Munce repsonds yes.

Moved: Stein, seconded Reynolds, to start a subcommittee to explore opportunities for ARPA funds to be used by the county to support older adults.

Discussion: Munce and Webber clarify that this does not apply subcommittees and that the Commission on Aging will remain active and busy until they are able to meet in full again.

Unanimous Roll Call Vote in the Affirmative.

Motion Approved.

III. County COVID-19 Safety Policy

Stein clarifies this topic, as what county policies are in place in terms of requiring COVID-19 vaccines among both staff and members of the public attendance. Lindeman and Munce mention that this will likely be widely discussed at the January meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

IV. Representation on the Commission on Aging

Stein starts this topic as an opportunity to ensure we are using all of the tools we have to ensure the commission reflects the community we are serving. He also speaks to whether the Commission can play a better process moving forward to ensure an inclusive appointment process moving forward. Thompson reminds the group that individuals who are members of the Commission may need to be willing to step aside when it comes time for reappointment if they feel other people may better represent the community. Larson agrees and believes this is an issue for the Board of Commissioners to solve and do *better. Webber agrees with Thompson and believes the Commission on Aging can support that by making this a visible and active commission that can get more people to apply in the future.*

XII. New Business

Stein asks whether we can invite other commissioners to also participate in meetings, partially due to scheduling conflicts that prevent full participation from Commissioner Maciejewski, but also to inform other Commissioners on their work. Linderman offers to assist in this area.

XIII. Setting Next Meeting

To Be Determined

XIII. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn. Move Larson, seconded Reynolds. Meeting Adjourned at 10:43 am.