

Washtenaw County Commission on Aging

September 5, 2025 | 9am – 11am | Remote Via Zoom

Join by Zoom:

<https://washtenawcounty.zoom.us/j/85172952645?pwd=WCsITXxdYVpx8PaHaeha4JHQXptQ6G.1>

Meeting ID: 851 7295 2645 Passcode: 219086 Phone: 1-312-626-6799

[Commission on Aging | Washtenaw County, MI - Official Website](#)

Open Seat District 9: Apply Here - [Boards, Committees and Commissions Application](#)

Minutes

- I. [Call to Order](#)
 - a. Meeting called to order at 9:01 a.m.
- II. [Roll Call](#)
- III. [Public Participation](#)
 - a. *Barbara Niess-May, president of Ypsi Meals on Wheels* – shared impact re: budget uncertainty. Federal funding is expected to be delayed (approx. \$250,000) and State will not fill funding gap when there's a federal shutdown. 85% of those served by Ypsi Meals on Wheels are below the federal poverty limit and risk losing income if cuts are made to Medicaid, SNAP and/or Social Security.
 - b. *Monica, Ypsi Seniors* – FYI – COA website did not list today's meeting. Appreciative how quickly county got contracts out to senior centers, but hasn't received monies in account yet. They're not yet open but hope to be in the next month. Many people are wondering what's going on with the government and how they're affected. Concerned MMAP will be overrun with questions. Suggested the COA might work with the county to consider having a contact, especially for senior centers, to get updated on the latest news.
- IV. [Commission Response to Public Participation](#)
 - a. *Thompson* – The idea proposed for centralized place to provide legislative updates would be helpful for a lot of organizations. The new Office on Aging might be able to respond to this task.
 - b. *Somerville* – Believes the proposed draft budget from the MI House will not pass. She will identify staff from state congressional offices who may be able to set up a regular call for updates. The county needs a plan for preventing disruption in services if there's both a federal and state shutdown at the same time.
 - c. *McKinney* – The Townhall Committee has been discussing the issue of legislative updates and will address this during committee reports. Asked Barbara to confirm their remaining balance
 - i. *Barbara*: Food budget is \$500K and that's used for the first 6 months while raising money for next six months. No contract from AgeWays yet.

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- d. *Astrien* – Are there any county level staff responsible for tracking legislative updates and sharing those across the spectrum of service providers?
 - i. *Gress*: Various sectors have trade associations that lobby and provide updates
 - ii. *Somerville*: Nobody at the county is tasked with this. County receives updates through a lobbying firm and through Rep. Dingell’s office.
 - iii. *Herzig*: Suggests Office on Aging play a role in consolidating and disseminating communication from different service sectors.
- e. *Gress* – Encourages meal sites to work together and prepare in case BOC is open to a distribution prior to hiring the Director for the Office on Aging.

V. **Approval of Minutes – August 1, 2025**

- a. Motion to approve the minutes as-is: McKinney, second: Herzig. Motion passed.

VI. **Discussion Items**

a. **Presentation by Huron Valley PACE**

- i. Presenter: Lindsay, Marketing Director of Huron Valley PACE
- ii. PACE is not threatened by funding cuts because the organization saves the government money keeping people out of nursing homes. PACE Association of MI is their lobbying firm. MI has the 3rd most PACE programs in the country (behind CA, NY). PACE opening soon in Alpena will be the most rural in the country.
- iii. PACE: “a nursing home without walls” – clients get primary care, medical specialists, social work and case mgmt., Rx, PT/OT/speech therapy, transportation, day center, nutritional services, home care, home medical equipment. Program is very person centered.
- iv. Must be 55+ to qualify, no exceptions. Must live in service area (Huron Valley covers all of Washtenaw/Monroe and parts of Livingston/Wayne), must meet State of MI criteria for SNF level care, must be able to live safely in community w/ support of PACE.
- v. PACE programs do not compete. State of MI approves service area by ZIP code.
- vi. Plan to open Monroe day center by July 2026.
- vii. PACE is funded by Medicare/Medicaid. The program is free for those on Medicare/Medicaid, or clients can private pay the Medicare portion based on county. CA has sliding scale for private pay, MI not yet. Medicaid asset limits increased significantly.
- viii. Comments/Q&A
 - 1. *McKinney* - knows people personally whose entire lives have changed for the better because of PACE. Brought up caregiving seminar. Per Lindsay, the next seminar is October 15th.

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2. Q (*McKinney*): Is there housing being built next to PACE?
 - a. Goal is to build some affordable housing on property PACE already owns, with Ann Arbor Housing Commission. This project is years out.
3. Q (*Astrien*): Does PACE have contingency plans if they do suffer funding cuts?
 - a. Huron Valley PACE is a nonprofit owned by Brio Living Services (formerly UMRC). Presenter is unsure of their contingency plan, but knows they are a large organization with many assets.
4. Q (*Gress*): What are some barriers someone might have for being part of PACE (aside from financial considerations)?
 - a. A common barrier is that clients must let PACE manage their primary care physician, and their specialists must be on contract with PACE.
5. Q (*Gress*): Is there a waitlist?
 - a. No waitlist, but you cannot enroll except for the 1st of the month. You can start paperwork qualifiers prior to the first though. PACE is a great program, but not for emergencies.
6. Q (*Gress*): What's the capacity of the program?
 - a. Currently 295 enrolled, capacity for 360. Attrition increases the longer the program is active. Monroe Day Center will have capacity for 150.
7. Q (*Gress*) – What does the transportation process look like?
 - a. Door-through-door service is standard. High levels of communication with office staff, caregivers and family members. Drivers don't wait while clients are in appointment, but notify reception staff of the time of pickup for the client. Drivers are contracted employees through Emergent Health and Huron Valley Ambulance. Drivers get high satisfaction marks on surveys.
 - b. Q (*McKinney*) – How many vehicles does Huron Valley PACE have?
 - i. 15-20 vehicles, and PACE also contracts with other companies (ex: Mamadou, A-ride). No clients are transported in personal vehicles.
8. Q (*McKinney*) – How has PACE adjusted to recent changes in Medicaid services?

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- a. Some people who have had stipends rescinded have converted to PACE. PACE has also adjusted to changes by creating a robust network of providers (catering, fresh produce shoppers, home delivery, frozen meals, etc.)
 - 9. *Litten* – One barrier for their clients to getting on PACE is that you must be housing secure.
 - b. Subcommittee Discussion
 - i. Communications – Gress, Litten
 - 1. none
 - ii. Future Planning – Herzig, Astrien, Reynolds
 - 1. none
 - iii. Townhall –McKinney, Litten, Foreman, Astrien
 - 1. Hearing often in the community that Medicaid services have been changed/cut and recipients aren't getting sufficient explanation. Thinking of requesting someone at federal level to come share information and answer questions. Looking at 2nd Baptist Church in Ypsilanti. In early planning process.
 - a. Gress can connect committee with MMAP's Executive Director to request a speaker.
 - iv. Millage Workgroup – Larson, Astrien, Green, Foreman, Thompson, Ballard
 - 1. Some members (Astrien, Ballard, Foreman) were part of the review committee for the transportation grant. Unclear what role of workgroup will be moving forward. Some confusion from members of committee as to the RFP scoring process and understanding the results of the review.
- VII. Report from the Board of Commissioners (Somerville) ([Upcoming Meetings](#))
 - a. BOC voted on funding for one transit organization, the other two are delayed
 - b. Excited to hire an Office on Aging Director. Somerville has recused herself from that hiring process.
 - c. Q (*Astrien*) – COA wants to be as involved as possible with the office, and wants to focus on recommendations that were made/suggestions for the office. Will the COA be involved in the hiring process for the Director?
 - i. Jennifer Green is on the committee representing the COA.
- VIII. Report from the Chair
 - a. October meeting presenter – AgeWays on Unmet Needs Survey
 - b. November meeting presenter – tentatively Washtenaw Housing Study
 - c. December will focus on Annual report

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IX. New Business

- a. none

X. Setting Next Meeting – October 3, 2025

XI. Adjournment

- a. Motion to adjourn: McKinney, second: Herzig. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 10:48 a.m.

Washtenaw County Commission on Aging meetings are recorded and are available at

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLR9rFHLfXEKHiQa3DQzHLSmdjlc00Jtb>

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