

MINUTES

Senior & Disabled Services
Senior Services Advisory Council
Hilyard Community Center, 2580 Hilyard St., Eugene

August 9, 2005

Members Present: Anna May Herbert, Chair; Jane Boren, Dianne Burch, Marion Esty, Andrea Gillispie, Don Hampton, Mary Johnson, Steve Kraus, Rikki Rainey, Oguilvia Skelton, Steve Skipton, Joe Xavier.

Members Excused: Mae Westfall Cook, Jack Ewing, Jim Patterson, Jonathan Ramey.

CR Member Present: David Quale.

Staff Members Present: Patti Little, Kay Metzger, Ted Stevens.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Anna May Herbert called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m. She welcomed the newly appointed members and invited all in attendance to introduce themselves. At the request of Don Hampton, the dates of the remaining SSAC meetings in 2005 were announced (October 11 and December 13).

2. CONSIDERATION OF THE MEETING AGENDA

Action: Without objection, the Chair ruled that the agenda for the meeting be accepted, as presented.

3. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF THE JUNE 2005 SSAC MEETING

Motion: Moved by Mary Johnson, and seconded by Joe Xavier, to approve the Minutes of the June 14, 2005 meeting, as written. Motion passed unanimously.

4. LCOG REPORTS

a. Disability Services Advisory Council

Ted Stevens reported that the most recent meeting of LCOG's Disability Services Advisory Council (DSAC) was held on June 10, 2005. He reminded members that a report of that meeting was provided to the Senior Services Advisory Council at its June 14th meeting.

b. LCOG Board of Directors

Ted Stevens reported that the LCOG Board met on Thursday, July 28th, in Cottage Grove. This meeting served as the Board's annual planning meeting and, as a result, no routine business was conducted. In response to a question from Marion Esty, Ted shared the topics that the Board expressed an interest in addressing during the next 12-to-15 months, including the following: public safety, the Metro Plan, I-5 issues (bridges and interchanges), telecommunications in rural areas, education/workforce/economic development, local government finance, and land use planning (buildable land, growth accommodation, systems development charges).

5. ACTION ITEM – ORGANIZATION OF THE COUNCIL FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2005-06

Anna May Herbert, SSAC Chair, presented the initial set of Standing Committee appointment recommendations developed by staff, based on the results of a telephone poll of members. With one exception, she expressed comfort with these recommendations. After stating that she found the number of individuals recommended for appointment to the Procurement and Monitoring Committee to be too few, she asked if any member would be willing to volunteer to serve on this committee. Mary Johnson volunteered for this additional assignment.

Next, Anna May asked for one or two SSAC members to volunteer to serve as liaison members to the DSAC. Jane Boren expressed a willingness to accept this appointment.

Motion: Moved by Joe Xavier, and seconded by Marion Esty, to confirm the appointments set forth on the next page for Program Year 2005-06. Motion carried unanimously.

Liaison to DSAC: Jane Boren (with back-up by Anna May Herbert).

Advocacy Committee: *Core Members* – Jane Boren, Dianne Burch, Marion Esty, Andrea Gillispie, Mary Johnson, and Jim Patterson; *At Large Member* – Stephen Kraus.

Long Term Care Committee: Jack Ewing, Stephen Kraus, David Quale (CR), Rikki Rainey, Jonathan Ramey, and Steve Skipton.

Nominating Committee: Marion Esty, Don Hampton, Oguilvia Skelton, and Joe Xavier.

Planning & Budget Committee: Jane Boren, Dianne Burch, Mae Westfall Cook, Murray Petitt, and Joe Xavier.

Procurement & Monitoring Committee: Anna May Herbert, Mary Johnson, Jean Jordan, Debbie Olsen, Cathy Steadman Cox (CR), and Jane Strasdas.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

a. Chair's Report

Anna May Herbert thanked Jane Boren, SSAC Vice Chair, for chairing the June Council meeting. She reported that she had a good visit with her daughter and family in southeast Alaska. Anna May also shared that she was impressed with the Advocacy Committee's plans for continuing its dialogues with members of the State Legislature.

b. Committee Reports

(1) Advocacy Committee

Ted Stevens, S&DS Director and staff to the Advocacy Committee, reported on behalf of the Committee. Working from a memo included in members' meeting packets, he shared the Committee's plans for legislative events during the next several months. Specifically, he announced and described the **2005 Legislative Wrap-up Event scheduled for September 29 (2:30-4:00 p.m. at Hilyard Community Center, Eugene)** and reported on the Committee's plans for hosting "conversations" with smaller groups of legislators between October 2005 and February 2006. All SSAC members were urged to attend the September 29th event.

(2) Procurement & Monitoring Committee

Anna May Herbert, Committee Co-Chair, reported on the Committee's June meeting. She stated that the Committee received a report from staff on the status of S&DS' in-home services contract, via the tri-agency in-home services procurement consortium, with Addus HealthCare. Regarding this report, she shared that the Tri-Agency Consortium negotiated a six month contract extension at the 2004-05 payment rates. This extension will expire on December 31, 2005. A new contract, with new (and, likely, higher) rates for the delivery of home and personal care services will be negotiated this fall between the Consortium and Addus.

c. Staff Reports

(1) Update on Medicare Part D

Ted Stevens described recent developments regarding the implementation of Medicare Part D. He talked about the two-part decision process for most older people – enrollment in the voluntary prescription insurance plan authorized by Congress and, if enrolled, the selection of a prescription drug plan – and the assistance that will be offered to various groups of prospective enrollees. Regarding seniors who are enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid (“dual eligibles”), Ted reported that DHS is handling the Part D enrollment process and, in addition, will have access to a pool of limited duration employees to assist these individuals with the selection of a prescription plan. DHS is also attempting to recruit up to 1,000 volunteers, statewide, to help with the drug plan selection process for dual eligibles. Concerning low income seniors who are not eligible for Medicaid, responsibility for Part D enrollment has been assigned to the Social Security Administration. SSA offices throughout the country have been given additional staff to help with this process. Unfortunately, SSA's mandate does not extend to the provision of assistance in the selection of prescription drug plans (a.k.a., “choice counseling”). For the balance of older people (an estimated 70% of the senior population), the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will publish and disseminate educational materials, will maintain its Medicare.gov web site, and will staff a toll-free telephone number. Beyond these services, no federal support or assistance will be available locally to help with enrollment and plan selection decisions. To address this void, S&DS plans to launch a community outreach and education initiative in October. The agency, using Older Americans Act III-D funds, will hire a limited duration employee to arrange and publicize Medicare Part D educational meetings throughout the

county, refer individuals seeking assistance with Part D issues to knowledgeable agencies and individuals, and, time permitting, will coordinate the provision of one-on-one counseling on Part D issues to seniors and people with disabilities. Beyond this, S&DS is taking the lead in calling together the major senior and disability service providers to attempt to craft a coordinated outreach and assistance initiative for people seeking assistance on enrollment and plan selection issues.

During his description of the challenges ahead, Ted mentioned that it would be helpful to identify one or more local entities (governmental agencies and/or businesses) with excess call center capacity (computers and telephones) that would be willing to loan this resource for several months to S&DS for Medicare Part D enrollment and choice counseling work. Ideally, trained volunteers could work at this facility, helping seniors and people with disabilities with their problems. SSAC members offered a number of suggestions of entities to contact regarding this resource. It was also suggested that some of these entities, especially LCC and the U of O, may be sources of volunteers for Medicare Part D work.

(2) Legislative Report

Ted Stevens distributed a four page “End of Session Status Report” and gave a detailed oral report on its contents.

(3) Network of Care Project

Information on this project was provided to SSAC members in advance of the meeting. During the meeting, Ted Stevens provided a brief overview of the project. He stated that the launch of Oregon’s Network of Care web site is scheduled for mid-to-late October. Once the web site is operational, he stated that it would be desirable for the Council to hold a meeting in a “wired” location so that a demonstration of the site can be provided. Members expressed an interest in such a demonstration.

Following Ted’s remarks, members commented on the use of the term, “elderly,” in the title of the site. Some members opined that its use may discourage utilization of this resource by older people who do not view themselves as elderly. Other possible terms were discussed, but none generated broad-scale support.

7. OTHER REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Giant Garage Sale in Florence

Joe Xavier announced the annual Florentine Estates Garage Sale, scheduled for Saturday, August 13.

b. Senior Day at the Lane County Fair

Patti Little reported that Wednesday, August 17th, will be Senior Day at the Fair. She urged SSAC members to attend the 1:00 p.m. “opening new doors” celebration. At this event, which is sponsored by the Lane County Coalition of Senior Programs, seven local seniors will be honored for re-inviting themselves after retirement.

8. REMINDER OF NEXT MEETING/ADJOURN

Anna May Herbert reminded members that the next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 11, 2005, 1:30 PM, at the Hilyard Community Center, Eugene.

The meeting adjourned at 2:55 PM.

(Recorded by Ted Stevens)

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