



Advisory Council on Aging and Disability Services

Advocating for local, state, and national programs that promote quality of life for older adults and people with disabilities in partnership with Seattle Human Services and King County.

Advocacy Committee Meeting Minutes

November 3, 2023

*****REVISED 12/18/23****

Present: Alex O'Reilly, Joe Hailey, Michael Adusah, Barb Williams, Diana Thompson, Maria Langlais, Zelda Foxall

The Chair confirms that there is a quorum of voting members present at the start of this meeting.

1. WELCOME AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES (Joe Hailey)

MOTION: A vote was taken to approve minutes from the meeting held September 8, 2023. The minutes were accepted with additional comment.

*Bellevue and Kirkland's joint advocacy committee wants to expand the age-friendly Seattle programs that provide discounts. They are doing outreach to add more *business to the program to provide 10 percent discounts to seniors.*

Move to Accept: Lorna Stone

Seconded: Barb Williams

Outcome: The September 8, 2023, minutes will be modified with the word *business changing to businesses prior to finalizing and distributing.

2. ADVISORY COUNCIL CHECK-IN

Alex O'Reilly

- Tracy and I met with staff from the King County Assessor's Office about collaborating on sponsoring presentations in senior centers around the county on new laws and eligibility guidelines for property tax exemptions for seniors and people with disabilities. The Assessor's Office raised concerns about the risk volunteers at senior centers pose in looking at sensitive information when helping people who want to apply fill out the applications. I'm waiting to hear back from them about what they decided.
- I participated in Advocacy workshops two weeks ago. In the Housing Services Breakout Session, I mentioned to Kathy McCall (AARP) that our committee was trying to do a pilot to get information out. Kathy feels that having volunteers help people fill out the application would be

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good and has been in touch with John Wilson in the Assessor's Office. As soon as I hear from the Assessor's Office I'll connect again with Kathy.

- I attended a fundraiser event with the Phinney Neighborhood Association in October and spoke to Districts 5 and 6 candidates about older adult issues, to keep that demographic on their radar.

Joe Hailey

- The Low-Income Housing Alliance issued several Calls to Action. I signed onto emails to the state concerning rent stabilization and affordable housing with one focused on providing affordable multi-family housing in all neighborhoods.
- The Seattle Housing Services Coalition issued several Calls to Action. I joined a Thank You Letter to the mayor and the city council members involved in getting the human services workers wage increases across the finish line and a follow-up email to council members encouraging them to maintain that wage equity for those human service workers.
- Attended a Senior Lobby meeting in September and sat in on the Marketing Medicare seminar hosted by the Kaiser Family Foundation about how health insurers and brokers use tv ads to mislead seniors and make them think they're calling a Medicare funded 800 number when the number has nothing to do with Medicare. The way they develop their tv ads using color schemes and images that simulate your Social Security Card is misleading and the government is taking steps to reel that in.
- I attended a course in October, the W4A SCOA Conference and a Senior Lobby conference the next day.
- I delivered the Grandparents Day Keynote at the Northwest African American Museum.
- I volunteer for the non-profit Center for Ethical Leadership (CEL) and sat in on a Board meeting by invitation of the CEO. They're branching out in collaboration with the University in South Africa (called the University of the Free State). They have a school of Religion and Theology where they train pastors to lead with ethical perspective. The CEL is collaborating with them on delivering workshops to help train those pastors. I don't expect to be personally involved in the effort but was invited to join the conversation.

Zelda Foxall:

- I attended the Senior Caucus Conference and the W4A Conference; both were great, and I learned a lot.
- There are many issues that W4A, the Senior Caucus and AARP are looking at. We had a meeting October 24, 2023, and the top two issues we'll be looking at are:
 - Social Security: About 50% of the population relies on Social Security for 90% of their income.
 - Caregiving: SNAP is a big problem. The waiting lists haven't been funded (we need 15-million-plus.) Caregiving has become a national money-making industry for private

companies getting government contracts. We don't have enough people to provide caregiving. This shouldn't be a money-making proposition; it should be a way to help people who really need it.

Diana Thompson:

- The Network on Aging is concerned about Medicare coverage for mental health. Starting in January 2024, congress will cover mental health.
- The information on lack of food is serious and that's going to be a major thing to get to the legislature.
- Sound Generations has a 2-year waiting list for Meals on Wheels. If you have money and can pay for the meals, you can get them to come to the house and that will help a lot of people who are home-bound.

Barb Williams:

- We had a lecture at Skyline with the chair of the Republican Party for Washington State; Jim Walsh, a representative from the 19th District (SW Washington). He lectured us on tax relief and how much we're spending on assistance when it should be personal and we should not as a government, be supporting the issues that support things like food, and anything else we care about. I think he bears watching for anything we do in terms of advocacy.
- I went to a PSARA web presentation: "We Can Reclaim Medicare from Greedy Profiteers" Ed Weisbart. Online: <https://www.psara.org/aco-reach-resources>.
- We hosted a talk from Plymouth House. First Hill lost one of the stations for light-rail and the property ended up being gifted to Plymouth House and Bellwether and they built a nice high-rise (Bakehouse). Sound Transit donated the land and Plymouth House and Bellwether are running the facilities including partnership with Swedish Health Services. It has affordable as well as apartments that are supported by the levy for seniors and veterans who have been homeless.
- I attended Seattle City Council District 3 Candidate Forum. We have two candidates, Alex Hudson, and Joy Hollingsworth, both very capable.
- Everybody went to the W4A conference, and the Senior Lobby.
- The Continuing Care Retirement Community is involved with a study to report what rights residents in facilities have. There was a \$300,000.00 stipend by the legislature to produce this study, due to be unveiled December 2024.

3. ADVOCACY ISSUES

Federal

- US Aging sent an advocacy update on the Federal budget and how that may be impacted by the current House Leadership, what we can expect and what the message should be to your

congressional delegation, and that's continuing to beat the drum of the Older Americans Act. Meet with your congregational delegation to remind them who we are and why these issues matter.

- AL TSA decision packages did not include W4A priorities for nutrition or CM, so they may not appear in the governor's budget to be released mid-December.
- The alert from US Aging indicated specific actions we might discuss as a group; one was sending a letter. Letters are effective if you want to get a more detailed response from your legislator. Sending letters to the editors gets lots of attention; it's time-consuming but it pays off and raises awareness among the community.
 - A lot of Calls to Action are looking for organizations to sign a letter. We have to be careful claiming to speak for a group of people you may not have vetted the information with. If it's a missive on behalf of the organization, in the past, we formalize the letter with a vote, the liaison drafts the letter and sends it out under the Chair's signature. Individuals can also send letters as an extra measure.
 - For clarity, this is bringing a recommendation to the full committee related to writing two letters supporting the federal funding issue; one letter to the legislature in direct response to the US Aging Call to Action advocating for the Older American Act funding, and a separate letter to the governor asking to support the W4A legislative priorities which are funding for AAA Case Management programs to reduce caseloads for clients without caregivers and to provide a sustainable funding source for senior meal programs.

MOTION: Draft a two-part letter to the Federal Legislators and one letter to the governor.

Move to Accept: All Members Present

Seconded: None

Outcome: The motion will be reported to the Advisory Council during the meeting this afternoon.

State

- Funding, senior nutritional roles, and caregiver support on the state level. Michael Adusah is working on getting appointments with legislators for this session; funding for case management to cover uncovered case load for clients who do not have caregivers in place as a result of the workforce. Nutrition funding is a permanent sustainable source of funding to match what they provided in the last session with leftover COVID-19 funds.

Local

- The City Council has released their draft budget, which will be approved before thanksgiving. We don't anticipate any changes to aging network services.
- The County Council is going to be approving the VSHSL Implementation Plan in the next few weeks. We heard from partners at King County Alliance for Human Services that this is the time council members can make amendments, some of which would be advantageous to Human

Services providers, in particular those in the Aging Network. The draft plan is on the King County website. Senior center funding may go out the door more quickly than we originally thought. They may be queuing senior center RFPs to launch in December instead of early 2024.

4. CLOSING

Review of Action Items:

- The Advisory Committee is defending the above recommendations.
- Kathy Knight is sending the Older American's Act letter early next week on behalf of the W4As.

Meeting Adjourned.



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November 3, 2023

*****REVISED 12/18/23****

Present: Joe Hailey, Michael Adusah, Dolores Wiens, Zelda Foxall, Maria Langlais, Irene Stewart, Alex O'Reilly, Joel Domingo, Vedrana Durakovic, Traci Adair, Dick Woo, Dinah Stephens, Mariel Torres Mehdipour, J.J. Wong, Karen Winston, Mary Mitchell, Barb Williams, Wendy Murphy, Lorna Stone, Tom Minty

WELCOME

The Chair confirms that there is a quorum of voting members present at the start of this meeting.

RACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE MOMENT: Color Blind or Color Brave (Michael Adusah)

A video Color Blind or Color Brave by Melody Hobson was sent out prior to the start of the meeting and a discussion was held during the meeting with major takeaways being:

- I like the fact she's focusing on being color brave, not color blind because color blind is fooling yourself and ignoring reality.
- I loved the idea of getting comfortable with being uncomfortable.
- I portray the life of African American women in our past who've overcome racism and poverty and find that storytelling about the lives of actual people and what they've experienced is a great way to open up and discuss race in a more comfortable way and to learn about each other.
- Color brave is a wonderful way of describing and talking about race even though it's difficult and challenging. The discussion of the competitive advantage that people or who are color brave bring to their organization was meaningful. When she said organizations need diverse groups of people to solve a problem and it includes all kinds of diversity, it feels like she brought another dimension to the discussion. Her final words were, not everybody belongs to a business or organization where they can bring this kind of thinking of color brave discussion up, but you can do it in your own circle.
- We each have our stories, and there's a concept of the danger of a single story but together in the aggregate as we continue to share our own selective stories, there's power in that.

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- I was reflecting on the statue of Harriet Tubman that Philadelphia commissioned, representing an iconic black woman from history. The committee first authorized a white sculpturer to create the statue and that was done without consideration or with submissions and that woke up the city to the point that they were not being color brave, even though they had chosen an iconic statue of someone who would represent the past. It's harder to be color brave or to be color bling or to profess color blindness.
- I thought the phrase color brave is clunky, but it made me stop and think what does that mean? It can mean so many different things in different circumstances. The power of diversity reminded me that before this meeting, I was thinking about the council and how over the years there have been so many different people from different places and different walks of life that I have learned from, and the power of diversity in this council is very important.
- In the past, the Elder's Council had the Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens (now incorporated into the Aging and Disability Services) and the elders' want it back. They feel like the African American Mayor's group is listening to them (Aging and Disability) and not them (elders), so they're creating a division. I understand why they want their office back, it's hard when they need something; it's hard for them to go on the website and find all the different agencies and know which to go to. It would be easier if they could go to an office where someone can help them get to where they need to be without the confusing step online. I'm sad they're putting color into the problem.
- This group is focused on issues that benefit all elders and folks with disabilities. There's a tremendous amount of resource in the state of Washington focused on elder issue and there have been additional demands put on communities of color because the data is irrefutable; the folks that have been harmed to the extreme by systems and practices in this society tend to be people of color, so in order to rectify that condition to get people of color back on a more even playing field, there's an intense focus. The need to deal with issues of race is something the government in Washington has acknowledge exists and we need to deal with it. The beginning of that is having conversations such as this and having a heightened awareness as we attempt to focus on communities of color to make sure we are not causing harm to other communities in the process. At the end of the day, we're after the same treatment, equitable treatment, for all demographics. The fact this conversation is ongoing is a key item on the agenda in this meeting, every single month. It's a key area of focus for a tremendous number of resources in Washington. The more input we, the more effective we're going to be in tackling this issue of equity.
- Should we create speaking points for everyone here so when we have people that come with questions like this, we'll have speaking points to help spread education and the history of race in America and why we're doing what we're doing? Our systems were set up for the preservation and support of white people, so when a group is created for Americans or any

other community of color, it's because they have not received those same services as the majority. Our office is open. You have to have badge access, but we could do a better job of letting the community know we are here. We have people in Seattle and Renton available to assist the community.

ADVISORY COUNCIL BUSINESS

I. ACCEPTANCE OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES (Joe Hailey)

MOTION: A vote was taken to approve minutes from the meeting held September 8, 2023. The minutes were accepted as written, without additional comment.

Move to Accept: Lorna Stone

Seconded: Barb Williams

Outcome: Approved minutes will be distributed as written.

I. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND COUNCILS

Advocacy Committee (Barbara Williams)

- The Senior Tax Exemption (property tax) is not well understood or well utilized. An effort to work with the Assessor's Office is being made to get them to do presentations at Senior Centers so the senior population becomes more aware of this as an option. The Assessor's Office is willing to do presentations, and it's recommended that volunteers are trained to help people fill out paperwork in order to get the exemption and that's stalled progress temporarily because volunteers will be looking at fiscal information for the person they are assisting.
- ARRP has focused on two particular items for advocacy 1. Social Security (15% of seniors rely on Social Security for 90% of their income which is a factor in providing for yourself), and 2. Caregiving.
- There are efforts to widen the footprint of the Gold Card so that participating organizations and businesses could give a discount to people with the card. This is specific to Seattle, so the effort is to broaden coverage to the East Side as well.
- The memo about the Older Americans Act and the request by USAging to take action to inform legislators is a concern. The language is: Our collective goal is to ensure that members of Congress: 1. Protect the OAA from any cuts; and 2. Recognize that funding for the Aging Network's programs and services needs to be significantly increased on a long-term basis for three reasons: to serve the rapidly growing numbers of older adults who need them, to meet the greater complexity of needs among the older adults you serve, and to address the workforce challenges that are affecting older adults' access to services.
- The Advocacy Committee's suggestion is that this organization send a letter to our federal legislators supporting the topics that we're outlined in the template that was attached to that memo (ask for action). We believe that it's important that our state official (the governor) as he's getting ready to produce the final version of his budget, that similarly there needs to be a voice heard from this council that covers the needed increase in dollars for case management

support and increase for nutrition funding. The committee would like to suggest that the full body authorize the sending of two letters – 1. To Federal legislators following the USAging template in part, and second letter from the body to the governor supporting those two items mentioned above. I move those two letters be sent from the ADS Advisory Council first letter to our Federal Legislators supporting the USAging template and a second letter sent to our governor (Jay Inslee) requesting increased dollars for case management and secondly, nutrition funding. I propose both letters be sent under the auspices of this body.

MOTION: To authorize the sending of two letters from this body as proposed above.

Move to Accept: Barb Williams

Seconded: Alex O'Reilly

Outcome: This motion has been passed without further comment or discussion and with no voting members opposed. This body shall issue two letters in support of 1. Federal level funding for OOA, and 2. A letter to the governor meant to influence his budget to ensure that we have adequate case manager funding as well as nutrition funding. Michal Adusah is given authority to proceed with drafting the letters which Joe Hailey will approve on behalf of the council.

Note: This action does not negate the opportunity we have to individually send communications to people we can influence. Letters to the editor have a double benefit; not only publicity and higher visibility but people may read those letters and make other constituents aware of these issues. Every communication is important; phone call, email, letters to the editor of any publications that you get.

- The mayor's budget is being worked on by the City Council. The Draft Budget is out with the final expected before Thanksgiving.

Planning and Allocations Committee (Lorna Stone)

- Committee meets January-September. We did not have October, November and will not in December. Nothing to report this month.

VSHSL Board Seniors Committee (Traci Adair)

- The committee has not met so there are no updates to provide this month.

NW Universal Design Council (Tom Minty)

- Dinah Stephens and the Design Council had input on a recent article (Aging in Seattle) in the Sunday paper (Seattle Times). <https://www.seattletimes.com/life/how-do-seattles-evolving-neighborhoods-include-older-residents/>
- A presentation was given yesterday on Aging in Place (and advocacy) to the Kirkland Senior Council.
- The next Steering Committee meeting is November 14, 2023, at 3:00 p.m. (virtual).

Mayor's Council on African American Elders (Karen Winston)

- Lashawnda Pittman gave a presentation at our October meeting on her research and her book, Grandmothering while Black. Highlights included grandparent-headed households increased by

3% in 1970 and now up to almost 8.5% in 2019; nearly 30% of children in the United States live with grandparents at sometimes in their lives; African American Grandparents are only 13% of US population but 20% of grandparent headed households. We're getting ready to release the RFPs in early 2024.

- The November meeting will include a presentation from the Seattle Housing Authority on the types of senior housing they provide.
- The African American Caregivers Forum is Saturday, November 4, 2023, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the NW African American Museum. It's a free event and lunch is provided.

<https://www.agingkingcounty.org/legacyoflove/>

Age-Friendly Seattle (Dinah Stephens)

- We supported the audit of the Seattle Housing Authority Unit. We know that more people are aging in place in the Seattle Housing buildings. There are more older adults in non-senior designated SHA buildings than there are in senior designated SHA buildings. The SHA has the motivation to help make sure people are able to age safely in place, so they invited the council in to do an audit and design elements that are/are not conducive to aging in place.
- We wrapped up 4 Seattle City Council Forums this cycle. It was a great opportunity to get connected to future elective leaders, to ask questions related to aging and educate our future incoming council leaders so they're ready to be champions on aging issues.
- We have our last Civic Coffee event this month (November 16th) about assisted technologies. Will spend month of December planning for 2024. We plan to do more of what we did in the latter half of 2023, which is hold in-person events around the city to spread ourselves equitably across our communities, still providing live interpretation during events and being responsive to featuring topics requested by the community.
- A year ago, we worked helping vet and bring online, a new Dementia Caregiver Program in the state of Washington and we sponsored twenty-free Trainer slots. In the past 6- months, there's been eighteen 4-hour trainings held and two-hundred and fifty caregivers supporting loved ones with Dementia have attended.

II. REPORTS FROM AAA PARTNERS

King County Department of Community and Human Services (Traci Adair)

- THE VSHSL Draft Implementation Plan was sent from the Executive Office to the King County Council a week and a half ago. A vote is expected later this year, and once we have a final budget, we'll work on making sure there's no cliff of funding for most services until there's a procurement process. We're drafting procurement and more information will be coming out when we have a finalized plan. The Draft Implementation Plan is available here:

<https://mkcclegisearch.kingcounty.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6385177&GUID=841D868C-%2088CA-4E71-A3A4-83B297059BF4&Options=Advanced&Search=>

- We're wrapping up collaboration with ADS on Emergency Supplies to older adults (85 and older) and the Housing Authority distributed that earlier this fall, leading to collaboration with the Office of Emergency Management to provide Emergency Planning Training to seniors through our senior centers. The opportunity is for 5-senior centers and King County OEM are doing additional centers as they have capacity.
- A Transportation Forum will be hosted November 8, 2023, to bring together seniors, advocates, and transportation providers to explore on-demand and flexible transportation solutions for seniors and people with disabilities in rural and suburban King County. We're working with Metro, Hope Link and ADS to have that conversation. Link to the registration: <https://www.coopartnerships.org/community-events/2023/11/8/transportation-solutions-summit-improving-transportation-services-for-older-adults>

Public Health Seattle-King County (Mariel Torres Mehdipour)

- There are changes with regard to how COVID-19 Vaccinations are being offered. In the last few years, it's been readily available for free, and it's now commercialized with different ways to get the vaccine. You can see your medical provider and there's a program through pharmacies (Bridge Access Program) to make the shot free for those uninsured or whose insurance doesn't cover the cost. Our clinic in Kent is offering it for free irrespective of insurance status and you can call the clinic to schedule or schedule online.
- It's flu season, and upper respiratory illnesses are going around. Yes, you can get the flu shot and COVID-19 shot at the same time. We recommend talking to your doctor if you have questions or concerns.
- The RSV is available for adults (age 60+); it's also recommended for pregnant people (32-36 weeks into pregnancy) to help provide protection to their babies. Vaccines for babies up to 19-months are also eligible to receive the vaccine; talk to your pharmacist or doctor to receive it.
- Open Enrollment for health insurance is happening. We have a new option in our state where individuals, irrespective of immigration status, have the option to enroll in insurance. Public Health's Community Health Access Program has staff who can help community members find affordable insurance options, answer questions, and help apply for coverage: 1-800-756-5437 or email: chap@kingcounty.gov. Public Health's clinic in Kent (appointment scheduling) 206-477-6950 (choose option #5 for interpretation support) www.kingcounty.gov/kentvaccine (in English, Spanish, Somali, Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian).

Sound Cities Association (Andi Parnell)

- There are no updates this month.

III. ADS DIRECTOR'S REPORT (Mary Mitchell)

- We (ADS, Age Friendly, and DCHS) have been jointly accepted for an American Society on Aging presentation in San Francisco to share the work on Emergency Preparedness and distribution of supplies.
- We (HSD) had our first in-person All-Staff Appreciation event at the Rainier Community Center.
- We are working with HCS and are close to taking clients without caregivers. We're starting with taking ten to fifteen a week.
- The ADS Area Plan (2024-2027) for Seattle and King County, Washington was completed and successfully submitted, along with the 701 Plans and the Budget Plan. Area Plan: https://www.agingkingcounty.org/wpcontent/uploads/sites/185/2023/11/ADS_AreaPlan2024-2027_submitted2023-11-02.pdf
- I attended the Pride Place Grand Opening on Capitol Hill (a senior housing facility for LGBTQ+ seniors.) It was amazing to see. A past Director for ADS was instrumental in securing funding for this project. It's been a long effort to have this building erected and it was an honor to be part of the celebration.
- I went to South Park Senior Center for Disco Night. It was a good night getting to know people, seeing the facility, and talking to the Executive Director.
- Our Mobile Integration Health Program won a Seattle Management Association Award. The team partners with the Seattle Fire Department and is a non-police response unit with Case Managers and Fire Fighters responding to emergency calls that come into 911 for people that are experiencing mental health crisis. The team will be recognized tonight at City Hall (Bertha Knight Landes Room).
- The passage of the VSHSL helped to strengthen the city's collaboration with the county. We're exploring a shared senior center funding process (instead of having two separate processes) and we've submitted a proposal to Leadership. It would be helpful to include your thoughts and concerns on having one process (involving one application instead of two) for Mary to share with the Leadership Team for working on getting approval. Please send your thoughts, comments, or strong feelings to Michael Adusah michael.adusah@seattle.gov.
- We have Advisory Council applicants joining us today:
 - Joel Domingo Ed.D., Director of Research at City University of Seattle. Joel comes to this meeting as a result of conversations with Michael Adusah and the article he saw on aging. He considers himself a child of the 60's and wants to thank us for the wisdom in the room. Prior to academia he worked at the governor's office on policy and advocacy work, and advocated in several spaces from the disability community, education community. He served as a council member at the UW Center for Development and Disability and is happy to help and participate in any way he can.
 - Wendy Murphy, Senior Programs Director at Maple Valley Community Center. She would like to discuss what we're looking for and is excited to be here. Michael Adusah will reach out to Wendy to discuss.

- J.J. Wong feels privileged to be part of the audience of this group and likes to observe for a long time before joining any organizations. J.J. has respect for each member of this council (for who they are and what they bring to the council) and was honored when first joining the Seattle Metropolitan Elections Committee (an LGBTQ organization), as a non-member for three years until deciding to be a part of it, becoming a director 17-years ago when elected to the chairmanship. It's a privilege to support the LGBTQ Community: a community that needs to be present, to be voiced and to be heard, and JJ hopes to be that element (as part of the council) at some point in the near future.

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Seattle Senior Housing Program was a bond issue passed by the city in 1981, to create one-thousand units for \$48 million dollars. There were non-seniors living in SHA at that time, and if they were twenty-five in 1981, there are now sixty-seven, so we can appreciate the aging in place of many of these folks living in SHA as well as other housing.

Meeting Adjourned