

## **Committee on Aging MEETING MINUTES – April 5, 2019**

**Committee Members participating in person:** Gene Hysjulien, Deborah Melby, Annette Hofstad, Jolene Keplin, Craig Knudsvig, Bruce Davidson, Delores Rath, Nancy Willis, Elaine Keepseagle and Barbara Danks.

**Committee Members participating via telephone:** LaVonne Cameron and Madonna White Bear Azure.

**Ex-Officio participating in person:** Nancy Nikolas-Maier, Aging Services Division, Shelly K. Haugen, Governor's Office

**Presenters:** Tami Ternes, North Dakota Assistive and Josh Askvig, AARP.

**Others participating in person:** Michelle Gayette, Assistant Director, Aging Services Division, Amy Johnson, Administrative Assistant, Aging Services Division, and Mary Weltz, Program Administrator, Aging Services Division.

**Others participating via telephone:** Carmel Froemke, Lutheran Social Services.

**Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions & Approval of Minutes:** The meeting was called to order by Gene Hysjulien, Chairperson. Gene welcomed all past and new committee members. A motion to approve the December meeting minutes was made by Delores Rath; seconded by Bruce Davidson.

**Update on Vacant Committee Positions:** Michelle Gayette informed the Committee that all positions are currently filled as of April 4, 2019. It was noted that a few of the Committee Members terms will be up in June this year. Michelle let the members know that they will be receiving an email soon to see if they would like to extend their terms or reapply for appointment. Gene asked the current members to introduce themselves, give their background on their involvement with the Committee and add anything they needed to bring to light from their Region, and new members to introduce themselves.

**Committee Member Updates:** Mary Weltz of the Aging Services Division reported to the members that Region 8 will be offering their first Class for Powerful Tools for Caregivers, which is an option for caregivers to get classroom training on caregiving techniques. Regional Adult Program Service Administrators (RASPAs) were discussed. Some members were not sure what a RAPSAs is, and an explanation was given of the services they provide. It was discussed that the Aging Services Division will ask the RASPAs connect with the Committee Members in their regions to provide more education to the Committee Members and to see how the Committee Members can better serve their regions.

**Speaker – Tami Ternes, Assistive Technology Consultant, North Dakota Assistive – “ND Assistive Services and Assisted Technology for Aging and Disabilities”.** ND Assistive connects people of all ages and abilities to assistive technology to help them learn in school, get back to work, access the community and live safely and more

independently in the home of their choice. Since 1993, ND Assistive is one of the 56 Assistive Technology programs in the United States. They are a nonprofit organization. Assistive provides consultants to assess individual needs, recommend assistive technology solutions and connect people to the technology they need. They also help with finding funding for individuals to obtain the devices they need.

Assistive has educational demonstration centers in two locations, Fargo and Mandan. No referral is needed, and there is no cost for the assessment, but they do request an appointment is made so someone is available, and they are prepared to show the devices needed. The demonstration centers are set up with technology in a home-like scenario which creates conversation as to what other devices an individual may need. Within the next year, their demonstration centers will be set up as smart homes with items such as automatic blinds, and voice activation items for those with paralysis. Tami invited the Committee to schedule a tour at any time.

Individuals needing Assistive Technology can try a device before purchasing, by renting technology for an up to six-week trial period (fees range from \$15-\$45 plus shipping costs) which provides individuals a time to ask questions, try new things and see what works best for them. Assistive also has an equipment reuse program – which is a free database the public can access to buy, sell or give away used equipment. That database can be found at [www.nd.at4all.com](http://www.nd.at4all.com).

As part of their financial funding, Assistive raises dollars for a Possibilities Grant. These dollars are raised every year to help both North Dakota and Moorhead, MN residents obtain assistive technology and services they need. There are some criteria for those residents to qualify - they must have a clearly established need for assistive technology, have needs not met by other funding programs and meet other identified criteria. Assistive also offers a Financial Loan Program, where you can take a loan out with them at a very low interest rate. The financial loans range from \$1000 - \$50,000 with some qualifying criteria. They provide flexible payment plans.

Assistive is very willing to exhibit and will attend spring events in regions or anywhere statewide. Tami encouraged the members to reach out if they need a demonstration in their area. Contact them at 1-800-895-4728; by email at [info@ndassistive.org](mailto:info@ndassistive.org); their website is: [www.ndassistive.org](http://www.ndassistive.org) and they can be found on Facebook by searching “ND Assistive”.

A copy of Tami’s presentation will be emailed to the Committee Members with these minutes for their future reference.

**Speaker – Josh Askvig, ND AARP – Legislative Updates.** Josh Askvig has been the State Director for AARP for the last 3 years. Prior to that he was the Advocacy Director for the AARP for five years, so he has been with AARP for a total of 7 years. The AARP provides advocacy and outreach for the community. The AARP has 3 high priority bills for this legislative session.

First is Senate Bill 2154 “The CARE Act”. This bill addresses how to bridge the gap of knowledge that occurs when someone goes into a hospital setting (at any age) and transitions back home. It intends to hold both the hospital and caregiver responsible for making sure caregivers receive instruction on how to perform medical and nursing tasks at home. This Act has passed the House and Senate and was signed by Governor a few weeks ago and will take effect August 1. The CARE Act as passed doesn’t do exactly everything the AARP had wanted it to do, but it does formalize the process and ensures even the hospitals are statutorily complying with the requirements for discharging with instruction to family caregivers.

The second priority bill is Senate Bill 2012, as it relates to the portion of the DHS Budget that will prioritize funding for enhancement of HCBS Services. North Dakota is currently 49th in state funding used towards HCBS services. This Bill is a step toward moving our State into utilizing more funds to help keep people living at home.

The AARP’s third priority bill is House Bill 1174 which works to eliminate income tax on social security benefits. North Dakota is one of only two states today which taxes social security benefits at the full amount of the state taxes. This bill attempts to eliminate it from state tax obligations. The Bill passed the House and went to the Senate floor and passed the Senate floor. However, the Senate chairs sent it back down to appropriations, who amended the Bill to state if a resident’s gross income is below \$50,000 (as either individual or married) that is when you don’t have to pay taxes, and those over \$50,000 would pay a portion. The new frustration with the Bill language is they don’t have a separate amount for married or individual, and they want different parameters for married and individuals, so married people are not penalized.

Josh provided a sheet a how individuals can stay updated on AARP Advocacy and Legislative Work. A copy of that will be sent out with these Minutes.

### **Aging Services Division Report and Legislative updates - Presented by Nancy Nikolas-Maier:**

Nancy began her update by stating this year is the best support the Division has received from an advocacy standpoint. She stated that the money for the Division is in two budgets, so the Division legislates in both the Long-Term Care budget and the Department of Human Services budget.

Nancy provided an explanation of some of the slides in the LTC Services and support budget that fund HCBS. She stated that the department is requesting several investments to help assure we are offering the right type of supports to increase so they can stay in their own home and community and avoid or delay institutional placement. Some of the request involve new services and changes in the functional and financial eligibility for the SPED program.

**She also discussed some bills that may be of interest to the committee.**

**Specifically:**

- HB 1034- Requires the department to work with skilled nursing home providers to establish ways that they could provide HCBS
- HB 1099- Program bill that would allow trained QSPs to provide medication administration to eligible clients. The bill would also expand the definition of adult foster care to allow an agency to purchase or rent a private, home, professionally staffed and provide care up to 24 hours per day.

Michelle Gayette discussed there will be a change to the VAPS law. These changes include clarifying the program is developed and administered by the Department and removes references to county social service boards; shortening the timeframe for an Ombudsman to investigate and resolve administrative complaints received by discharged residents from nine months to one month (once discharged, the individual no longer meets the definition of resident and one month is sufficient for the purposes); clarifies an individual in the role of Ombudsman is not a mandatory reporter as they are prohibited by federal to report without resident consent; clarifies who is the subject of a VAPS report; attempts to make sharing of information and requesting records from community partners easier; and spells out that a guardian or legal representative may have access to the VAPS records only if they are not suspected of abusing or neglecting the vulnerable adult. This bill passed both houses with no amendments and has been signed by the Governor. It will go into effect on August 1.

There were several other bills that will affect vulnerable adults including a bill that will allow banks to put a freeze on funds they suspect are as a result of financial exploitation. There is also a bill to address robocalls.

**Review and Approval of Updated Committee on Aging Rules of Order (bylaws):**

Gene Hysjulien addressed the members regarding the drafts of the updated bylaws they had all received prior to the meeting by email, asking if the Members had any objections, changes, issues or concerns with the Rules of Order as drafted. The Committee Members had no objections and therefore a motion was made by Craig Knudsvig to approve the Rules of Order and that motion was seconded by Bruce Davidson, with a unanimous vote in favor to adapt the changes. Amy Johnson presented the updated Rules of Order for Gene Hysjulien, Chairman and Delores Rath, Vice Chairman's signatures.

**Other Business – Call to Public:**

Gene asked if there was any other business or topics to bring to the table. Annette Hofstad was looking for some clarity on her role and how to take the information back to the community. It was discussed that each Committee Member receives a brochure upon election to the Governor's Committee on Aging, and that the Committee serves an advisory role to the Aging Services Division. There were further discussions that members could meet with the RASPAs in their regions to network and help in their area

to help promote services and educate the public on what is going on with programs across the State. Gene reminded new members that they should spend some time attending meetings, settling in and they will begin to understand their roles better with each meeting. Michelle Gayette stated one of the easiest things members can do is to promote ADRL. Barbara Danks spoke about working off the brochures to communicate with the community regarding Aging Services and legislature, but she would like a cheat sheet of some sort she could use that would be bullet points on programs and initiatives of the Committee. Nancy Nikolas Maier indicated we could put something together on that for the next meeting.

The Committee Members agreed we need to keep our presentations in line with our 2019 priorities, and therefore we will plan our next meeting speakers to stay within our agreed upon presentations, which were outlined in the December meeting minutes.

**Next Meeting Date:** Friday, June 14, 2019

**Adjournment:** Bruce Davidson made a motion to adjourn and Delores Rath seconded that motion. The meeting adjourned at 3:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy L. Johnson