

## **Committee on Aging Minutes June 8, 2018**

**Committee Members participating in person:** Gene Hysjulien, Bruce Davidson, Deborah Melby, Merry Green, Delores Rath, and Barbara Danks

**Committee Members participating via telephone:** Madonna White Bear Azure

**Ex-Officio participating in person:** Nancy Nikolas-Maier, Aging Services Division

**Presenter:** Amy Johnson, Aging Services Division

**Others participating in person:** Jane Opdahl, Senator Heidi Heitkamp's Office; Mike Chaussee, AARP; Brian Barrett, APT, Inc.; Amy Johnson, Aging Services Division, Mary Wertz, Aging Services Division.

**Others participating via telephone:** Rene Schmidt, Badlands Human Service Center, Katie Ferguson of Community Living Services and Bill Lytle, Region 6 RAPSA.

**Call to Order/ Approval of Minutes:** The meeting was called to order by Gene Hysjulien, Chairperson. Motion to approve the March meeting minutes was made by Bruce Davidson; seconded by Delores Rath.

**Welcome and Introductions:** Gene welcomed all committee members and guests and introductions were made of all non-committee members in attendance. It was reported that, in addition to Ed Christ's resignation, Peter Belgarde has also resigned due to illness. All expressed their appreciation of Ed and Peter and their service on the Committee. Committee member vacancies were discussed and are three vacancies in Region III (General, Turtle Mtn. and Spirit Lake) and one in Region IV. It was discussed Peter Belgarde made the recommendation that Heather Lawrence would be a good replacement, and the membership agreed. Nancy Maier will be reaching out to her to discuss the vacancy. Gene encouraged that membership needs to be kept full and asked members to share any recommendations they have in the vacant regions. Application for membership is on-line at:

<https://www.governor.nd.gov/boards/AppForm.aspx>

Gene gave an update on the Vision West ND Consortium meeting he attended on March 15. Gene stated the focus of Vision West is to bring businesses back to North Dakota. Gene took a tour of the Gasification Plant and attended a meeting in Williston on the oil boom impact on the community. Vision West has created a booklet entitled "Summary of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development". Along with the Summary, Vision West is conducting a survey on their plan. Gene asked the membership to review the Regional Plan booklet and participate in the Survey Monkey Survey. Gene sent the link to Nancy and requested the survey link be emailed to the membership.

Gene also shared that Bruce Davidson has agreed to be a member on the Aging Coalition. He thanked Bruce for his willingness to serve on the Coalition.

Bruce Davidson shared that he is now assisting the New Life Center in Fargo, which is a homeless center for men. He stated they are always full. They provide meals donated from different restaurants and they also have a thrift store. Bruce stated he goes through the electronics received at the thrift store and makes sure they are in good working order.

Barbara Danks stated she is still working on the educational process of her role as a committee member. She stated that the North Dakota Aging Symposium very helpful to assist her with her role. She is also active in senior center in Amidon. After the Aging Symposium she shared words with members of the senior center on what she learned, especially valuable information on the VAPS program. She stated she received very good feedback from the seniors.

Jane Opdahl was given a formal introduction as a guest of Deborah Melby. Jane stated she came to learn about what is happening with the Committee. She stated Senator Heitkamp's office often works with Social Security and Medicare issues, and also with community health centers and their funding issues. She feels Senator Heitkamp's office comes in touch with many issues that affect our group and wanted to learn more about the Committee on Aging.

Guest Brian Barrett from APT stated he was in attendance to learn about issues across the state and report back to his colleagues.

**Tom Solberg Presentation – Update on Culture and SB 2206 Redesign:** Tom Solberg was a guest speaker there to provide the Committee an update on Culture in the State. Tom provided a handout on the Purpose, Values and Culture for North Dakota Cabinet Agencies. He covered the handout and the Governor's initiatives. He stated there is a 4-billion-dollar budget to the North Dakota Department of Human Services, and two thirds of that budget is Medicaid. Twenty-six percent goes to Nursing Homes. He stated there are 2256 FTEs in the Department. Tom stated the goal is to try to get the Departments to work together for a common service. Nancy talked about the combining of HCBS services into Aging Services and the efforts to get regional and county offices to look at each other as coworkers and working as one unit.

Tom discussed social service redesign and how the decisions by social services can be more in unison with the counties. He stated there are subcommittees working together for the next legislative session focusing on how they can assist these state services and reduce property taxes from each county where these funds originate. Tom spoke about our state looking at the successful programs in other states and how we need to look at what makes them successful and adapt that blueprint into North Dakota.

Delores spoke about the transition of the State Hospital in adapting adolescent services separate from adult services. Barbara Danks spoke about school issues in her region and not being able to get children the help they need.

Gene asked Tom how these culture changes are reaching people throughout the state. Tom discussed the cultural meetings done across the state with all state employees, and the attempts to get the vision out in the community, but that it will take a while for these cultural change ideas to be accepted and adopted within the state.

**Mary Siverson Presentation – RSVP Program.** Mary Siverson, Director of the RSVP Program came to discuss the abilities and potential of RSVP. She provided handouts on how RSVP can help, a listing of RSVP State Staff, and a handout on the programs priorities for 2018-2020. RSVP is now administered through Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota, with “Healthy Futures” goals of 1) keeping Aging population in their homes; 2) food security and a hunger-free population and 3) health/wellness care which gives access for seniors to proactive with health and wellness activities.

**Aging Services Division Report:** Nancy Nikolas Maier, Aging Services Division, began by reporting Federal news and issues. Nancy was pleased to announce they did give a slight funding increase which was good. New legislation at the Federal level is being introduced with a goal of additional funds for Alzheimer’s programs in the nation and making centers of excellence across the country.

Nancy reports that the Aging Division has finished the State Plan on Aging and it is to the Governor for final review. Sheryl Pfliger’s retirement began June 1, and Nancy announced that Michelle Gayette was the new Assistant Director but was unable to attend today’s meeting as she was in Fargo in training. Nancy stated the department is in the process of hiring a position that covers Sheryl’s other duties relating to program administration.

Nancy spoke about the Strategic reviews that are being conducted with each Division of DHS. Nancy stated the highlights of the Aging Services Division are its strong staff, VAPS program, Dementia Care services, Older American’s Act Services, Caregiver Support Program, Ombudsman Program and supportive services. The Aging Services Division lowlights are a poor IT system, lack of certain HCBS services and ageism.

Gene asked if VAPS is still a high priority and if it still needed more supports. Nancy stated is most definitely a high priority. She stated the VAPS staff is in Fargo attending training to obtain national certification. She stated there are 13 VAPS workers in the entire state. Nancy stated that as the Governor’s plan calls for invocation that the department is looking to innovate food and nutritional services. Ten million dollars is allocated to that program. Congregate meals are going down nationally and home delivered meals are going up. The question is how the programs change to deliver meals in a way that will attract a new generation of seniors. Nancy is hoping the administration can lead the charge to innovate within communities to keep meal counts from going down.

Bruce Davidson brought up rates for QSP’s not increasing and how this can affect the level of care available. Bruce suggested incentivizing the rates as is done in other states. Mike Chaussee from AARP asked if the state recruits QSPs or what recruiting efforts are made. He spoke about how cumbersome the process of becoming a QSP

can be and believes that adds to the struggle to improve that program. Nancy stated that in North Dakota family members are the majority of the actual caregivers and that there is a need for additional support to keep these HCBS services going.

Madonna stated Spirit Lake held a program on training QSPs. She stated they did work with inner recruitment for QSPs but spoke about the cumbersome qualification processes. Madonna also stated the billing process is sometimes difficult and some QSPs are not getting payment. Madonna stated the State need to improve support for QSPs and proper training on billing.

Gene asked Nancy about on budget about travel budget for committee members. Nancy asked the Committee if there is a desire to be reimbursed for travel as there are funds set aside. Nancy handed out a handout on the Committee's Budget and Expenditure Report and pointed out there are funds for travel reimbursement. Options to utilize the budget were discussed such as travel, additional forums or maybe a new brochure to educate on the Committee. The board agreed that available funds should be used for travel reimbursed of committee members as requested.

Gene asked about ways the Committee can create forums to get the word out about what the Committee is doing. Bill asked what the individual counties do to market the programs they are providing. Nancy discussed the fact that there is not a uniform organized effort. Mary Wertz stated that the counties all have RASPAs that are in place and they can and should be utilized by Committee members to help educate on programs available within their Regions.

**Establishing Priorities for the Committee on Aging:** Gene asked the Committee to review a list of key issues for the Committee and asked if these issues remain, and if we prioritize these issues. Bruce agreed the issues need to be prioritized. Madonna stated that the issues should be prioritized from the results of the State Aging Survey and decide based on the highest needs the survey what the highest priority of the Committee should be. Barbara stated a priority should be to educate communities and create awareness. Merry stated awareness of programs and how to access them should be a priority. It was stated by Gene and agreed by the members that a list of key issues will be made and prioritized by the Survey results.

**Review/Add Potential Topics for Presentations:** The Committee was in agreement that once the key priorities and issues are made based on the survey that the Committee will then organize presentations for each meeting based on the key priorities and issues. Nancy will be reviewing the survey and organizing the key issues based on necessity within the survey.

**Other Business – Call to the Public:** Brian Barrett noted the AARP is now hosting "Coffee and Conversations" across the state. Brian will send Nancy the schedule of these to send out to the Members. Ashton Applewhite will also be speaking on ageism in September. He will get the information to Nancy. He stated Ashton Applewhite's book is available at the Humanities Center.

**Next Meeting Date:** Friday, September 14, 2018

**Adjournment:** Mary moved for adjournment; seconded by Barbara; meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Johnson