

Tuolumne County Commission on Aging
Minutes of Meeting on Monday, August 9, 2021, 1:30 pm
**** Meeting held via Zoom ****

1. **Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 1:34 pm by Chair Rex Whisnand.
2. **Introductions: Commissioners Present:** Rex Whisnand, Malcolm Carden, Cathie Peacock, Carleton Penwell, Ted Michaud, Tyler Summersett, Kristi Conforti, John Featherstone, Laurie Sylwester, Syd Robenseifner, Melody Brotby, Zandra Bietz. **Absent:** Catherine Driver, Jim Grinnell, Matthew Rose, Charlotte Frazier (LOA).
BOS/County Staff Representatives: David Goldemberg, District 1 Supervisor, Tuolumne County, Jason Terry, County Administrator's Office.
Guests: Kristin Milhoff, Area 12, Tim Gillespie, TCTC, Michael Wilson, TC Behavioral Health.
3. **Public Comments:** Non-Commissioners are welcome to speak about senior-related issues NOT listed on this agenda (2 minutes maximum per speaker) – no discussion, please. None.
4. **Minutes:** Minutes of the July 12, 2021 meeting were approved as submitted.
5. **Chair's Report:** Rex welcomed newly-elected Commissioner Zandra Bietz to the Commission. He also congratulated Tyler on his appointment as Executive Director of the Adventist Health Blue Zone Project. The California Senior Legislature, in which Rex sits as a Senator, has finally issued a list of bills for the coming year which it is either proposing or supporting. The Tuolumne County Housing Commission will be meeting this week.
6. **Treasurer's Report:** Cathie Peacock – no activity during July. Malcolm's check will be issued shortly.
7. **Corresponding Secretary's Report:** Nothing to report.
8. **BOS Report:** Supervisor Goldemberg said that the Delta variant of Covid-19 is becoming a major concern. The rate of hospitalization in particular is matching the earlier peak. Many of the new cases are in the younger age groups, and the County's overall vaccination rate is one of the lowest in the State. Seniors are 70-75% fully vaccinated, however. County employees will be required to wear a mask and be tested weekly going forward if they are not vaccinated. Breakthrough cases are few in number, but need to be carefully watched. Syd asked about the availability of testing facilities for Groveland residents, since the only site at present appears to be in Tuolumne City. DG said the County is looking for another site in Sonora, which will be up and running as soon as possible. The BOS spent 4 days last week discussing the possible disbursements from the American Recovery Plan funds received by the County, and also the County Budget. There are no immediate plans to change the BOS Meeting format because of the Delta outbreak.
9. **Committee Reports on 2021 Goals:**

Transportation Committee: Tyler mentioned that Tim Gillespie will be taking his place on the Transportation Committee.

1. **Report unmet needs in Senior Transportation to SSTAC (Social Services Transportation Advisory Council) and County.**
2. **Review a program of driver assistance to Seniors utilizing taxi and public transportation services.**

Community Relations Committee: Cathie mentioned that the Committee is looking at changing the structure of the Senior Volunteer of the Year event.

3. **Continue to review viability of Senior Volunteer Event.**
4. **Continue to review viability of Centenarian Luncheon.**
5. **Have a Commissioner attend BOS (Board of Supervisors) meetings as needed and speak on Senior topics during Public Comment or on Agenda.**
6. **Attend Senior community meetings & events and publicize COA (Commission on Aging). Report back to COA as part of regular Agenda item.**
7. **Investigate establishment of County-wide network to provide services to seniors via phone, online, newspapers, etc.**

Legislative Committee: See Chair's comments above regarding CSL bills. The CSL is also heavily involved in the roll out of the State Master Plan on Aging.

8. **Continue to monitor State and Federal Legislation as it impacts Seniors, and report to BOS as needed.**
9. **Report periodically on the status of Senior Legislature proposals, and highlight items which will directly impact the County.**
10. **Study California Master Plan for Aging and make recommendations to BOS and other agencies.**

Governance Committee: Per Carleton, minor tweaks to the ByLaws will be sent out for discussion soon.

11. **Continue to recruit new members to fill openings and maintain a "bench strength".**
12. **Develop an ongoing succession process for the COA.**
13. **Review COA ByLaws and present recommended changes to COA.** Per Carleton, some minor tweaks of the ByLaws may be needed.

Education Committee: The Committee did not meet in July. Malcolm mentioned the difficulty in getting basic information to support the Committee's goals.

14. Review information from applicable organizations and agencies on Senior homelessness, and report concerns to BOS. Cathie mentioned she had done an informal survey of homeless seniors coming in to Interfaith. Their main concerns are safety, isolation, and a lack of available housing. The exact number of homeless seniors is not known, but the concern is that it is growing.

15. Investigate impact of Homeowners Insurance situation on Senior homeowners and renters. Malcolm speculated on the impact of the latest fires on the insurance situation in the County. Laurie commented how difficult it was becoming to get contractors and repair people to come out to fix small problems. There seems to be a shortage of skilled people in the area.

16. Review current County plans for emergency evacuation of Seniors and make recommendations as appropriate. Tyler confirmed that Kittelson & Associates has been selected for the TCTC evacuation route project, more info to come. Laurie said she hoped the study would include asking people what their personal perceptions are as to the best way to evacuate from a particular area in the event of a fire. John asked about the use of the Fairgrounds as a Gathering Point in the event of an evacuation. Apparently this depends on what other uses the Grounds are being put to at the time.

17. Develop list of relevant speakers for March – November meetings, to include all Supervisors. We do not have a speaker for September at this point, but the County may be presenting an affordable housing project in East Sonora to the Commission. Speaker is set for October in Groveland (Dore Bietz). We need to get someone for November, which is the last slot of the year.

18. Monitor and report on Covid-19 vaccination situation in County as it applies to Seniors. See comments in County report above.

Senior Expo Task Force:

19. Investigate putting on 10th Senior Expo later in year. It is looking unlikely that we can put on this event this year. The Exec Committee has discussed shelving it until its regular time next year. Carleton again suggested we approach Chris Bateman, former owner of Friends and Family News, about getting involved.

10. Guest Speaker: Michael Wilson, from TC Behavioral Health, gave an overview of his department's activities, and the numerous contracts they manage for outside bodies including Medicare and MediCal. Older residents are a small but growing portion of their current client base. Many services are contracted out to other agencies such as ATCAA. Laurie asked about the availability of dementia services in the County. These are available, but they depend on the type of insurance cover the individual has. Michael also mentioned the new 988 Suicide Prevention Hotline, which was signed into law last year.

11. Unfinished Business:

Status of Commission Membership – We will have 4 vacancies on the Commission with Zandra joining us. One Commissioner (Charlotte) is on Leave of Absence,
Groveland Meeting. Syd has arranged for County OES Coordinator Dore Bietz to be the speaker at the October Meeting. We will likely have a bus to transport the Sonora folks up to Groveland if they so wish.
In-Person Meetings. We will continue to play the situation by ear.
Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee will be meeting shortly.

12. New Business:

New Member Initiation – Rex and Ted met with Zandra on this.

13. Public Comment: Laurie again brought up the lack of dementia services in the County. Kristi mentioned Area 12 as a source of service info. Malcolm said that we should revisit the Groveland “Village” that Luci Tyndall runs, and see how they are coping up there.

14. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 2.55 pm.

Next COA Executive Committee Meeting – TUESDAY, September 7, 2021, 2 pm (Monday is Labor Day). Venue TBA.

Next COA Meeting – Monday, September 13, 2021, 1.30 pm. TBA, but most likely by Zoom.

In accordance with Government Section 54954.3(a), the public may comment on any item on the agenda. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance (i.e. auxiliary aids or services) in order to participate in this public meeting, please contact the Commission on Aging Chair, Rex Whisnand (209) 785-8166. Notification 48 hours prior to the start of the meeting will enable staff to make reasonable accommodations to ensure accessibility to this public meeting. Agenda packet materials are available for public inspection at the office of the Tuolumne County Administrator, 2 S. Green St., Sonora CA 95370.