



MAG

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Aging & Family Services Advisory Council Meeting

Wasatch County Library Board Room

Thursday, May 11, 2023

1:30 pm

MINUTES

Conducting: Kendall Crittenden, Chair, Wasatch County Councilmember

Attending:

Gena Bertelsen, Vice Chair, Orem Friendship Senior Center
Jamie Jensen, Lindon Senior Center
Cheri Tuckett, Utah County Senior Volunteers
Sandra Curcio, Ability First Utah
Jonelle Fitzgerald, Wasatch County Health Department
Mike Winward, Wasatch County Senior Center
Judy Maedel, Park City Senior Center
Gale Pace, RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program)
Tori Eaton, Springville Senior Center
Tonja B. Hanson, Summit County Councilmember
Jan Kirkham-Jonsson, Lehi Senior Center
Carla Merrill, Alpine Mayor
Heather Dorius, Nutrition Program Manager, MAG
Mary Lucero, Aging Director, MAG
Jimmy Golding, Volunteer Manager, MAG

Guests:

Geri Lehnardt, Case Manager/Caregiver Support Program, MAG
Paul Leggett, U4A Chair and Salt Lake Aging Services Director

Excused:

Linda Cole, LTC Ombudsman and Aging Deputy Director, MAG

Minutes

Council Member Crittenden called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to approve March 9, 2022 minutes. Cheri Tuckett made a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes and Sandra Curcio seconded the motion. The motion was carried and minutes approved.

DISCUSSION & ACTION AGENDA:

U4A and the USAging Conference - Paul Leggett

US Aging is the national association of Area on Aging. There are 12 area agencies on aging in Utah that receive federal Older Americans Act funding. US Aging acts as the association on a national level and provides nationwide advocacy and policy work.

US Aging Policy Priorities for 2023:

Priority 1) - Support Aging Well at Home by Investing in Older Americans Act (OAA) Programs and Services.- US Aging wants to invest in, maintain and expand the services that provide long term success of current aging programs ie. In-home programs, Ombudsman, Home delivered meals, and Congregate meals. Current population growth brings an increased demand and need for services. To combat this, US Aging has proposed to the president's budget that the IIB funding be doubled to equate to \$820 million. This request serves as a focused talking point to various officials on a national and local level. There is strong support from the president but that support often gets downgraded as it moves through to the Senate and the House.

Priority 2) - Recognize and Support Caregivers.- This would bring an increase to our caregiver support options and aid to help alleviate the stress and burden of caregiving. If approved, this funding would increase reimbursement rates for providers and double the funding for the caregiver support programs to \$410 million. The current funding limits the amount of support able to be provided to caregivers.

Priority 3) - Prioritize Medicaid Home and Community-Based Service Options to reduce unnecessary institutionalization by keeping seniors in their homes. It is more cost effective for medicaid and individuals to stay in their homes. People want to stay in their homes and be in a place they feel comfortable. This would also allow for the increase for service providers as well.

Priority 4) - Connect Health Care and Aging services to improve care and reduce costs and simplify information and referral program access. The eldercare locator tool is a resource developed by US Aging and is a way for seniors to locate their local AAA and elder care providers.

The US Aging website offers an option to sign up for policy and advocacy alerts, which is a great way to stay informed. AAA employees are limited in what they can share options about, but Paul encouraged the board to get involved because they can bring more awareness.

US Aging is involved in many different programs throughout the nation to support the aging population. All of the efforts are there to support the local areas on aging and start different conversations in local communities. Paul highlighted the housing program that US Aging is involved in. It would aid in the affordability of housing and help combat the challenges that the aging community is facing.

The US Aging Conference is coming to SLC for the first time in 30 years! It attracts professionals in the aging community from all over the nation. It is a great way to learn from one another and network. It is a great way to be informed and trained on how to better serve the aging community. It will be held July 16-19 at the Hyatt connected to the Salt Palace. Mary Lucero mentioned that anyone interested in attending the conference from the council should let MAG know.

U4A- (Utah Association of Area Agencies on Aging)- In total there are 12 AAA's in Utah, with the three largest being located along the Wasatch front. The goal is to support each other and prioritize what is needed within the state. Nutrition funding is a great concern amongst the state and, with counsel from the other AAA's, new insights can be given and pursued. Paul mentioned how MAG has aided the U4A and how Mary has been a great asset.

Caregiver Coalition Activities and Washington DC Trip - Geri Lehnardt

Geri shared that the MAG Caregiver Program held an event in March called Caregivers at the Movies. 40 caregivers and those who they care for attended in the middle of a snow storm. The

movies that were shown were “Some like it Hot” and “The Lost City”. There will also be another event which will be a Caregiver Picnic located in Heber City at Summerhouse Farms in June. The picnic lunch is going to be provided by the Wasatch senior center. It is hoped that 60 people are going to be in attendance. There are connections with various senior centers and assisted living facilities that have agreed to bring people to the event.

Caregiver support groups also occur on a regular basis. The groups started close to when COVID started and, once COVID hit, the groups were shifted to a virtual format. They used to be held twice a week and now have shifted to virtual groups held once a week with more in person options. There are currently two in person groups in Utah County with the hopes of starting another in person group in Wasatch County. MAG also assists other support groups run by other organizations.

Education classes are also offered. They are taught and focused on helping caregivers shift their views of caregiving. It is encouraged for the caregivers to take care of themselves so that they can then take care of their loved ones longer. The caregivers tend to gain a better sense of empathy and understanding for what their loved ones are going through. The current classes that are being offered are: Dealing with Dementia, Stress Busting and Dementia Dialogs for Professionals.

The MAG Caregiver annual conference occurs during the first week in November usually held on the first Friday. In the years past, it has been hosted at doTERRA in Pleasant Grove. This year's conference is going to be another hybrid option that is more heavily focused on dementia education. The keynote speakers have been secured and various books they have written about dementia will be distributed to the attendees. The official date of this year's conference has not been confirmed due to doTERRA not allowing reservations until July. Gena Bertelsen also offered the Orem Friendship Center as a backup location if doTERRA falls through.

Geri reported on the Alzheimer's forum in DC that she was invited to attend. Only 4 people were invited to attend from Utah. While in DC, there were a few different legislative funding requests, which would aid those with Alzherimers.

Legislative Asks-

- 1) The Alzheimer's Association has developed a new medication that is approved by the FDA and VA but not CMS (Medicare/Medicaid). The request would be that CMS approve the medication so that those who could benefit from it get the help they need. Purchased on its own the medication would cost \$2,500 a year. It was agreed that CMS would approve the medication if the Alzheimer's Association took various steps provided by CMS. However, once the steps were taken the medication was still not approved. The medication is suited for those with early stages of Alzheimer's and could delay the worsening effects of the disease for 6 to 8 months.
- 2) NAPA (National Alzheimer's Project Act) is a strategic research effort that allows funding to be allocated nationwide. Areas funded focus on specific areas of Alzheimers. \$321 million was requested so that more research could be done.
- 3) The Comprehensive Care Management Act helps individuals with caregivers. Many caregivers do not access the care or take advantage of the aid available to them. This act would ask Medicare and Medicaid to give doctors an incentive to provide 1-2 hours of education to the patients who are diagnosed with Alzherimers or Dementia.

Senior Health Challenge- *Jimmy Golding*

The Senior Health challenge is in its 5th year and evolved during the pandemic when a lot of people decreased their physical activity due to isolation requirements. For this year's challenge, people are setting their own goals which include physical, mental or emotional. The hope is that the goals that they are setting will become lasting habits. There will be one goal set every week which results in an

entry to an event raffle. There will also be extra tasks which will grant additional raffle entries. Partnerships with various organizations such as pickleball locations, bowling alleys, and regional recreational facilities have been arranged. Event presentations have been set up at all regional senior centers to allow for increased participation. At the end of the challenge, there will be a celebration party up Provo Canyon for all of those who participated. During the party, a raffle will be held for various prizes such as rec center passes, exercise equipment, water bottles, etc. It was suggested that people get prizes based on activity level or preference. People need to be 50 years or older to participate and will no longer be separated by age group to help with participation motivation.

It was suggested by the council to look at ways to get people who have similar interests connected so they can participate in the challenge together. This way people can build lasting friendships and connections beyond the challenge. There is a Facebook group for registered participants that allows for them to post and motivate each other. It was also suggested that Meetup.com be used to possibly increase participation.

The University of Utah is also researching the challenge over the next 3 years so that over time it can become evidence based.

MAG 4-Year Plan- *Mary Lucero*

Mary presented the newly completed 4-year plan. The plan included the following areas of focus: fundraising, malnutrition, social isolation, integrated health care and identify/build partnerships. The 4-year plan is created to help foster direction, then each year it is reviewed and developed further.

Highlights of achievements from the previous year:

- 1) **Fundraising efforts for Meals on Wheels** A nonprofit organization established to help with fundraising efforts to aid in the cost of the Meals on Wheels program. Part of this effort will be having new truck wraps done that allow for various companies to use the wraps as advertisement space for sponsorships. With the truck wrap, there will be a few features that will stay in place so that seniors can recognize the trucks. The trucks will have no advertisements for the first 12 months and then FY25 sponsorships will begin.
- 2) **Caregivers at the Movies** 40 people were in attendance for this year's event with the hope that funding will be available for future events. The Water Gardens theater in Pleasant Grove was donated for the event.
- 3) **Education** MAG leads the way in its educational classes. Faylene Weinman, who leads the Stress Busting class is currently being trained on a version for professionals who work in the aging field and are exposed to various trauma.
- 4) **Caregiver Conference** It is a well known conference and is the most attended caregiver conference in the state.
- 5) **March for Meals** MAG is currently the only AAA that participates in this event. Overall, there were 30 officials that participated from all 3 counties in the MAG region. It is a great way to educate elected officials about Meals on Wheels.
- 6) **Geri Goes to Washington** Geri Lehnardt was invited to go to DC and advocate with the Alzheimer's Association.
- 7) **Senior Health Challenge** Jimmy Golding heads developed the annual senior health challenge and it is a very unique challenge that MAG puts on. The event continues to grow annually.
- 8) **72-Hour Emergency Meal Kits** Heather Dorius noticed that there would be a need for meal kits for the rurally located seniors if bad weather prohibited meal delivery. Some items were donated and the kits were put together by the MAG staff and dropped off by the Weatherization team. 110 boxes were delivered to vulnerable seniors located throughout the MAG region.

- 9) Angel Tree & Sub for Santa 2022 The Angel Tree is a Sub for Santa effort in partnership with United Way and Covington Senior Living in Lehi to provide support to vulnerable in-home clients. These clients often are ones that do not have a family or funds.
- 10) Senior Help Guide The guide is a great resource for seniors in the area and provides valuable service options. It is being improved this year with the addition of tabs and a separate section for Summit/Wasatch county resources. 4,000 copies are going to be printed this year. The new addition should be available in a couple of months.
- 11) Sock Fest RSVP hosted a sock and food drive that yielded 1,146 lbs. of donated goods.
- 12) Aging Retreat In October, the Aging team had a retreat in Midway. This coming year's retreat will be an overnight retreat to all the staff to get away and strategically plan for the upcoming FY.
- 13) Ombudsman Program Linda Cole, Aging the Deputy Director heads up the Ombudsman program. It is one of the most respected programs in the state. They are vital to providing advocacy to the seniors in long term care facilities.

Gena Bertelsen made a motion to approve the MAG 4-year plan and Gale Pace seconded the motion. The MAG 4-year plan was approved. It will then be brought to the executive council for approval.

Roundtable discussion

Cheri Tuckett mentioned that the CEO of Americorps visited and gave some awards to the Senior Companions program. He was very impressed with the volunteers and invited one to come to the conference in DC and be on a panel at the conference.

Gena Bertelsen told the council that the Orem Friendship Center was awarded the best programming award from the Utah Parks and Rec Department for its Brilliant University program. Brilliant University has 12 week classes that are done twice a year. Various classes have been offered such as astronomy, raising chickens, or playing the ukulele. The instructors are all volunteers who have experience in the field they are teaching. This program is a branch off of elder quest.

Wasatch Senior Center recently started a grief group that is held at the center and led by a local chaplain. Currently, it is every other week and only has 4 ladies. It is currently held at 2 PM.

Gena Bertelsen made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Carla Merrill seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

**Next Meeting – July 13th 2023 - 1:30 pm
MAG Main Office and Zoom**