

**Minutes of the Commission On Aging Meeting
Garvey Center – Leonardtown, Maryland
Monday, March 14, 2005**

CALL TO ORDER

Start Time: 1:30 p.m.
Location: Garvey Senior Center, Leonardtown, MD
Chaired By: Mary Ruth Horton, Chairperson

PRESENT

COA Members: Mary Ruth Horton, Pat Myers, Mary Ann Grusholt, Ray Cooper, Arlene Cooper, Ardith Young, Daniel Hinz, Kitty Turner, and Larry Younger. (100% member attendance!)

Guests: Commissioner McKay

Department of Aging Staff: Ted Grant, Gene Carter, Jennie Page and Julie VanOrden.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Agenda approved and accepted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Pat Myers to approve the minutes of 12.20.2005 (Due to inclement weather, the January and February 2005 meetings were cancelled). The motion was seconded by Kitty Turner. Unanimously approved by COA members.

GUEST SPEAKER

Commissioner McKay made a presentation which included viewing the St. Mary's County video. He also answered questions from COA members and Department of Aging staff who were present.

Mary Ruth Horton thanked Commissioner McKay for his presentation as well as the support the commissioners have shown for the Senior Tax Credit Bill, approving revisions to the Bylaws, staggering COA member terms and the appointment members. Mr. Hinz added his appreciation of the support the commissioners have given toward the Meals On Wheels March For Meals program.

OLD BUSINESS

Senior Tax Credit Status

Pat Myers, Mary Ruth Horton, Debbie Barker and Gene Carter went up to Annapolis to testify in support of the Senior Tax Bill SB 18 and HB 121. Senator Dyson is working very hard to encourage a positive vote from the Senate. Pat Myers said that NARFE is providing a bus to attend the testimony at the House Ways and Means Committee with the hearings.

Survey of Senior Service Priorities Update

Raymond Cooper has compiled and charted the responses to the Survey of Senior Service Priorities, to which over 400 people responded, according to the highest priorities:

1. Property Tax Relief
2. Health Care Resources
3. Crime and Personal Safety
4. Assisted Living

NEW BUSINESS

Mary Ruth asked how the Commission members would like to take the results of the Senior Service Priorities survey and provide a workshop environment (possibly at the new Northern Senior Center) where groups of seniors would be able to brainstorm solutions to major issues with COA members serving as group facilitators. This would serve as a follow-up to the Senior Summit information as well as facilitate getting the commissioners before the senior citizen community. Kitty Turner said there will be a seminar dealing with many of these issues on April 3rd with Debbie and Dr. Grant presenting.

Gene Carter mentioned that the "Lunch With Your Commissioners" is up in the air due to the official "grand opening" kickoff of the Northern Senior Center scheduled for June 7th.

Gene Carter updated the COA on the state of the Northern Senior Center facility. Furniture deliveries should be in April with anticipation of beginning operations there in early May. There has been no authorization by the Board of County Commissioners for NSC staff at this time.

Raymond Cooper asked about transportation to the new center. Gene said the commissioners have indicated that there will be adequate service provided up there.

Mary Ruth suggested meeting as committees to get some questions and topics together for the "workshop", however Gene is uncomfortable scheduling events at the new center until a clear signal comes from the BOCC regarding staffing. Mary Ruth emphasized the importance that staff be in place when the Northern Center opens. Pat Myers said that volunteers have signed up for assisting with the receptionist position. Mary Ruth asked if the COA should write a letter regarding the discussion at most meeting regarding encouraging the BOCC to move forward in funding the hiring for the center. This would allow activities to get up and going for community use. Ardith placed the motion to write a letter to expedite the process of funding, seconded by Mary Ann. Unanimously approved by members. Mary Ruth will draft a polite, yet firm, letter and email it out for member's input stating these requests to begin funding for staff.

Mary Ruth asked if July might be a good time for the workshop. Gene recommended shooting for June with the option of moving the date if necessary.

DEPARTMENT OF AGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Gene Carter said there do not seem to be any problematic issues with the budget except for requesting the funding for hiring. Perhaps after the recommended budget has been adopted the COA may need to be of assistance.

Mary Ruth asked about the current Meals On Wheels status. Gene Carter said that St. Mary's County meal count is up to 260 a day; however a home delivered client reassessment has recently begun. This should be done annually but appropriate action seems to have been somewhat overlooked in the past. Julie Van Orden explained the assessment process and emphasized that this is a standard reassessment to determine a client's disability level. Ardith asked if taking someone off the meal delivery list could create a set-back for their health which Julie acknowledged could certainly occur. Letters informing clients and families will be going out this week and there is a time period they can respond. Gene feels this reassessment will help make the daily meal number manageable (around daily 210 clients).

State grant funds are needed to continue with successful department programs. There has been a 12 % state budget cut. The United Seniors of Maryland will be holding a press conference on March 22 up in Annapolis to bring notice to this issue. Kitty Turner made the motion that Mary Ruth represents the COA at this event. It was seconded and passed.

Jennie Page mentioned the need for Meals On Wheels Volunteer drivers and Pat Myers said she will bring the issue up at the next NARFE meeting.

Election of Officers

Pat Myers asked the COA members to vote on the candidates who have agreed to remain in their current positions: Mary Ruth Horton, Chairperson, Raymond Cooper, Vice-Chairperson, and Mary Ann Grusholt, Corresponding Secretary. Unanimously approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

New RSVP Director will be hired soon.

Caregivers Conference will be at Chancellor's Run Activity Center on Friday, April 29.

Daniel Hinz was welcomed as the newest appointed member to COA.

Larry Younger announced that he has resigned from the Charlotte Hall Veteran's Home and assumed a new position of Administrator at the Bayside Care Center.

Since the next meeting is scheduled in just two weeks, the members unanimously voted to wait to meet until the last Monday in April.

Mary Ann Grusholt will prepare thank you notes to all the locations and organizations who allowed the COA to place the surveys.

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NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 25, 2005 at 1:30 p.m. at Garvey, Room 1.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Pat Myers to adjourn, which was seconded and passed. The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Prepared by:

Sherrie Wooldridge

Senior Administrative Coordinator, St. Mary's County Department of Aging