

Citizens Advisory Council
Friday, July 30, 2021

A meeting of the Citizens Advisory Council was held on Friday, July 30, 2021 at the Hopewell Senior Center. The meeting was opened at 10:00 am by President Prudence Harclerode who led the group in the pledge to the flag and prayer. State Representative Rich Irvin, from Huntingdon, was welcomed to the meeting.

ITEM 1 - Approval of minutes. ***MOTION: On a Burr/Blatt motion - The minutes of the May 21, 2021 Citizens Advisory Council meeting are approved. Motion carried unanimously.***

ITEM 2 - Financial report. May financial reports were reviewed and Connie Brode said the Agency is appreciative of the Cares and FFCRA emergency funding, as well as PennDOT's stabilization money. An issue remains with in-home service providers not having enough staff to fill the demand. Bonnie Burr asked about services and Connie explained that lottery funds are received for the Agency's in-home Options services and there is an assessment and enrollment process. The State's Community Health Choices (Waiver) services are funded through the Department of Human Services (DHS), are not the same as Options services and are provided by 3 managed care entities approved by DHS.

ITEM 3 - Representative Rich Irvin. Connie said for years AAAs have done assessment with 98.8% accuracy. The enrollment process is complicated in determining level of care and financial eligibility and is currently administered by Maximus. The State went out for bid on enrollment and included assessment in the request. The PA Association of Area Agencies on Aging (P4A) has applied to be the enrollment broker. If the Agency loses assessment we will no longer be able to advocate for our seniors which is a huge concern. Connie also said assessment generates needed additional funding since AAAs have not received an increase from the lottery in over 10 years, with the exception of special funding with strict parameters. Representative Irvin asked about the reimbursement and Connie said it was over \$100,000 last year.

The Council formed a subcommittee to review assessment that included Mrs. Harclerode and Brenda Gordon. Letters were composed and provided to center participants and others to sign and send to elected officials advocating for AAAs to get the contract. Representative Irvin said Connie reached out to him with her concerns at the start of the bidding process and he had reviewed this with Representative Topper. The Legislature is not endorsing Maximus due to past poor performance and letters have been sent to the Governor and DHS from the House and Senate asking them to not contract with them. He encouraged seniors to also send letters to the Secretaries of DHS and Aging, as well as Governor Wolf's office or to call it at 1-717-787-2500.

Nancy MacNamara said Maximus is about making money, with it noted that they bid low to get the contract, then go back and ask for more money. Mary Gates reflected on the PA Lottery being established strictly for senior services and didn't agree with it being used in other areas. The lottery needs to start emphasizing on services to seniors rather than so many games.

ITEM 4 - PCoA Update. Mrs. Gordon is a member of the PA Council on Aging and had a recent meeting in which it was stated none of the AAAs are in agreement with taking away assessment. There is an advocacy effort to keep this locally and she shared the recommendations that PCoA sent to DHS in support of AAAs. PCoA is also discussing methods to prioritize individuals during enrollment and expanding the long term care Ombudsman program.

ITEM 5 - 4-Year Plan update. Connie said the Agency was finishing its 4-Year Area Plan just as Covid started and some activities were delayed. One goal is education in regard to persons with dementia and staff is going through virtual dementia and dementia friendly training. Plans are to provide this to community businesses to familiarize them with ways to make things easier for dementia individuals who access their establishments. LaVonne Lohr said the FCMC Alzheimer's group gives people a card to show businesses that says they have dementia and that is why their interactions may be different. Connie will keep the group updated on activities.

ITEM 6 - Quality assurance surveys. Consumer surveys are done annually with 20% of service recipients receiving surveys. Agency's volunteers have been working on mailing in-home service surveys. Transportation surveys should go out in a week or two. When results are tabulated Connie will provide them to the Council. The Agency is also compiling a survey for new consumers to rate their initial experience.

ITEM 7 - Transportation - a) Trips. Tony Molinari said Covid greatly affected trips and we are back to 50-60% ridership, with about 300 trips per day as compared to 500 pre-Covid. Prior to this, trips were surpassing previous years, with 3,570 trips in July 2020 and 4,900 in 2021. Connie said federal guidelines still require drivers and passengers to wear masks. The Agency entered into a contract with the Center for Community Action to pay for trips to vaccination sites if the person is not eligible under any other program.

In response to a question by Joanne Mellott, Tony said we need drivers in Bedford. Jobs are posted on Indeed and Career Link. Connie said we need to emphasize that CART is a public transit system and we will haul anyone within our approved area who doesn't qualify under one of the reduced fare programs if they pay the full fare. We are also looking to consolidate our Huntingdon office and Driver's depot at a site that would be more visible to the public.

b) New vehicles. The Agency continues to wait for delivery of new vehicles which are delayed due to the "chip" shortage. Vehicles that have met PennDOT's lifespan will be sold once the new ones are in service. Tony brought a CART vehicle for members to see. New vehicles have all-wheel drive, automatic sanitizers and a fold-up seat for an extra wheelchair.

ITEM 8 - Senior Centers - a) Attendance. Bobbi said all full-time senior centers are open on their regular schedule and satellites should be open September 1. Persons can dine in or pick

up the grab & go meals, although the State plans to end them in December. Bobbi said the grab and go meals have brought in new people, but centers are averaging about 1/4 of their normal attendance. Activities are also being held at the centers, such as Hyndman's armchair traveler in which they highlight a different country each month.

b) Center grants. Bobbi said receipts need to be sent in for the capital assistance grants so she can submit them to the state. The state is considering providing grants to all centers this year rather than competitive bids.

ITEM 9 - Agency/Centers operations. Center staff completed many on-line trainings last year including falls prevention through Healthy Steps, Arthritis exercise and Bingocise. Bobbi said that Nat-e forms must be completed in July by all center participants. There is a suggestion that this not be required every year unless someone's information changes. She also encouraged everyone to take the virtual dementia training when provided. The Young at Heart games will be the week of September 20. There will be only outside games, with no registration fee or banquet.

Mrs. Mellott asked about limitations on center attendance and evening programs. Connie said the Department adjusted their formula for calculating the number of persons who can be in a center, but it is still limited. As for evening activities, she said the Agency's contracts with the centers are from 8:00 am-2:00 pm. The Agency doesn't own the buildings and she said that after-hour activities planned by private senior groups can be up the groups. Centers are sanitized by staff at the end of their day and Connie asks that the center is sanitized by the group after their activity. She recognizes that seniors need socialization, but precautions need to be taken. There was discussion on the future look of senior centers and the Agency is looking at trying breakfast at 3 of the centers as a way to boost attendance.

Having no other business, the Citizens Advisory Council adjourned at 11:30 am. Those in attendance included:

Nancy MacNamara-Huntingdon County
Prudence Harclerode-Bedford County
Joanne Mellott-Fulton County
Imogene Blatt-Huntingdon County
LaVonne Lohr-Fulton County
Brenda Gordon-Fulton County
Representative Rich Irvin
Bobbi Manges-AAA Staff
Cindy Harbaugh-AAA Staff

Mary Gates-Huntingdon County
Don Eisaman-Fulton County
Bonnie Burr-Bedford County
Sarah Locke-Huntingdon County
Jeannie Zimmerman-Bedford County
Pat Goodrich-Chaneysville Center
Tony Molinari-AAA Staff
Lori Heaton-AAA Staff
Connie Brode-AAA Staff