

BREVARD COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES



Building C, Space Coast Room
Thursday, April 13, 2023
3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

CHAIR: Dr. Potomski **Vice Chair:** absent

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lisa Noble, Laura Anderson, Judy Healy, Sandy Stauffer, Kara Papalardo, Kia Quintana Ramos, Terry Stone, Yvonne Minus, Kerry Fink, and Deidra Schubert

GUESTS PRESENT: Doris Varner, Danny Callan, Allison Adler, Traci Graf, Daniel McDow, Scott Noy, Joe Rowlette, Amber Carroll, Kim Wilson, Corina Savela, Aly Elmasian, and Kendra Clark-Branton

SUMMARY:

BREVARD COUNTY STAFF: Cindy Short

Call to Order / Introductions: Dr. Potomski called the meeting to order at 3:10 pm. Roll call occurred by everyone present.

Approval of Meeting Minutes for March 9, 2023: Minutes were reviewed by all members once quorum was attained. **Laura Anderson** made the motion to accept the minutes to accept as presented; **Yvonne Minus** seconded the motion; minutes approved by consensus.

Guest speaker: None

Legislative update: **Phil Koechlein** is currently in Tallahassee advocating with AARP, so **Dr. Potomski** asked if **Deidra Shubert** wanted to give an update. **Deidra Shubert** spoke about how HB299 made it to the house floor, and if approved, will add the mandatory training for health care workers and she believes if it is approved, it will help prevent neglect. She gave additional updates about several House Bills that affect seniors and the bills movements so far. Staff spoke about SB 102 regarding the fact that it has passed and already signed by the Governor. Staff added the specifics about this

bill which provides non-recurring funds for SHIP and SAIL programs along with other provisions surrounding affordable housing. Staff also provided copies for everyone attending. There was a question from a member of the audience about the approved bill; staff repeated the name of the bill for the audience member. The audience member questioned if the bill will help seniors and staff responded that it should.

Advocacy: Kerry Fink spoke about what the sub-committee discussed earlier; he shared that focus on seniors and homelessness is coming to the forefront, and the good conversations about affordable housing currently happening in Brevard. He gave an example about the differences between homeless seniors and younger homeless situations and the problems affecting seniors today due to the lack of affordable housing. Kerry added the group discussed working on how to bring awareness to these issues.

BCOA Newsletter: Staff provided the newsletter submission, an article about World Elder Abuse Awareness, for the group to review and approve. While it was being reviewed, staff updated everyone about the community reaching out about the last article and the positive feedback that was given from these residents. After the members reviewed the article provided, **Terry Stone** made the motion to accept the article as presented. **Yvonne Minus** seconded, and the article was approved by consensus. Staff also reminded everyone of the BCOA Statistical page in the Boomer Guide they were provided.

Staff Update: Staff reminded everyone about the upcoming Housing Summit happening on May 18th at the Cocoa Civic Center and that they will need to register on Eventbrite. Staff provided everyone a copy of the resolution for Older Americans Month happening in May. **Laura Anderson** requested that paragraph four be reworded, and after discussion, the group suggested “and by his example remains engaged and successful in his community”. **Yvonne Minus** made the motion to accept the proclamation as amended, **Judy Healy** seconded, approved by all. Staff reminded everyone that an email will be sent out to remind everyone about the presentation at the Commissioner’s meeting on May 9th at 9:00 am. Staff also gave a reminder about the upcoming World Elder Abuse Awareness event in June. Staff also informed everyone about having a guest speaker for the May meeting.

Member Updates: **Terry Stone** from Aging Matters spoke about an upcoming Fundraiser they are having on April 27th. The event will be at Blaze Pizza in Viera, and a portion of your bill will go to Aging Matters. Also, Terry brought with her an updated phone listing for Aging Matters, for each of their programs. **Terry Stone** also shared information about caregiver support for Brevard Alzheimer’s free Fearless Caregiver Conference in Melbourne on May 4th from 10 am. until 2pm. This event will be happening at Ascension Catholic Church, and you can call Brevard Alzheimer’s Foundation for more information. **Dr. Potomski** said there have been meetings within the medical community about getting people stabilized before these patients get sent on to the rehabilitation centers, and they are collaborating to make this happen. **Yvonne Minus** shared some Brightline brochures, which are the new fast trains coming through Brevard and going to Tampa from Miami. **Dr. Potomski** and **Kia Quintana Ramos**

spoke about former Commissioner Zonka becoming the new Brevard County Health Department Health Officer. **Kerry Fink** spoke about Helping Seniors of Brevard moving into their new resource center. He added they are developing a Senior Housing Taskforce as well. He shared information about Golden Providers as well. Amber Carroll from the Brevard Homeless Coalition asked **Kerry Fink** if she can be included in the Housing Taskforce discussions, and they agreed to exchange contact information.

Public Announcements and Comments: The first speaker, Doris Varner, spoke about working in the food pantry at her church, East Coast Christian Church, stating the church now serves more than 500 people each week. She gave examples of what she is seeing, with the large numbers of homeless seniors on Merritt Island and how they are living in their cars because they can't afford the rents anywhere now.

The next speaker, Scott Noy, spoke to the members about the increase in the number of families the church is feeding and asking for prayers regarding housing. Mr. Noy asked for someone to come and speak to people in need, like an outreach person or case manager. **Kerry Fink** responded about the need for awareness in our community.

Yvonne Minus asked the Chair if Amber Carroll from the Brevard Homeless Coalition could answer the pastor's question. Another person from the audience, Traci Graf, asked if she could speak first so Amber could address all of their issues. Chair agreed.

Ms. Graf began by saying eight "low income" housing complexes on Merritt Island have been purchased by an out of state LLC, did some repairs, and raised the rent to unaffordable levels for these fixed income seniors. She went on to say there is nowhere for these seniors to go. She added that something must be done. Discussion among the group continued.

Dr. Potomski invited Ms. Carrol to address the group. Amber Carroll spoke to everyone about the work the Brevard Homeless Coalition is currently doing, and what they have been working on in previous years. She did address the fact that this didn't happen overnight, and added that she is encouraged by the collaborations they are seeing come forth. She addressed the numbers from the not yet released Point in Time Count numbers, stating an increase in homelessness of 15%, and that 30% of the total counted are in the age 55 and up group. Amber Carroll also spoke about their strategic plan, "Housed and Healthy in Brevard". She spoke about the priorities, and how they are working together on addressing the needs in our community. Ms. Carroll asked for advocates, just like Ms. Graf, who can make their voices heard in the community.

Upcoming Events: World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, June 15th at Space Coast Health Foundation, Rockledge from 9 am. until noon.

Next Meeting: May 11, 2023, 3:00 pm. Government Center 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Building C-Space Coast Room, 2nd floor, Viera, FL 32940.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 5:03 pm.