

# BREVARD COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES



**Building C, Space Coast Room  
Thursday, May 11, 2023  
3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

**CHAIR:** Dr. John Potomski, **Vice Chair:** Phil Koechlein

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Lisa Noble, Patricia Seibert, Sandy Stauffer, Terry Stone, Ina Fritsch, Will Scheiner, Ashley Underhill, Yvonne Minus, Kerry Fink, and Deidra Schubert

**GUESTS PRESENT:** Karen Civitate, Doris Varner, Lisa Hanko, Danny Callan, Allison Adler, Daniel McDow, Joe Rowlette, Liz White, Lizzy Johnson, and Gina, Steve English

## **SUMMARY:**

**BREVARD COUNTY STAFF:** Cindy Short

**Call to Order / Introductions:** Dr. Potomski called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm. Roll call occurred by everyone present.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes for April 13, 2023:** Minutes were reviewed by all members. Terry Stone made the motion to accept the minutes to accept as presented; Sandy Stauffer seconded the motion; minutes approved by consensus.

**Guest speaker: Phil Koechlein** introduced Karen Civitate from American Association of Retired (AARP) and she began her presentation with new trends in scams affecting seniors. She explained the difference between Identity Thefts and Imposter schemes. She also spoke about the Tech scams, and how easy they can fool you. Ms. Civitate explained most scams are successful because they work on people's emotions and most times their trust. She showed a short video about a scam artist telling the truth about how they scam people. She stated that most people don't want to admit or report that they have been scammed. Ms. Civitate gave more examples, and told everyone that AARP has a Fraud Watch Network website (<https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/about-fraud-watch-network/>) with great information and a toll free phone number to call (877-908-3360 <https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/helpline/>). She added to always protect your personal information, be smart, use good software, don't share passwords and make them very hard for someone to figure out. Staff asked about being

scammed by a family member; she said most need to have their banks locked down. Some may even need an advocate. **Will Scheiner** stated that most people he prosecutes are family members, and gave suggestions to help when “family” calls for help. Lizzy Johnson from Community Legal Services of Mid Florida gave some additional suggestions regarding solutions to scams as well. **Phil Koechlein** added it helps to keep credit cards safe in a special wallet designed to protect them. **Dr. Potomski** thanked Karen Civitate for coming out to talk to the group, and all of the very good and timely information.

**Legislative update:** **Phil Koechlein** spoke about State bills regarding housing assistance. He said there is more rental assistance coming, and down payment assistance for first time homebuyers. He said there is also a bill regarding CNA’s and how they care for those in nursing homes. Additionally, there is a bill regarding vulnerable adults. He went on to speak about other bills like Broadband, Veteran’s services for adult daycare, and a new elder abuse program to keep track of the deaths of those abused here in Florida. **Dr. Potomski** asked about the bill concerning rent controls, and AARP’s opinion of such. **Phil Koechlein** said he believed they were in support of that not passing but he is not sure.

**Advocacy:** **Phil Koechlein** spoke about the housing situation and how to work on an awareness campaign to continue the conversation about what is happening with the housing situation and how seniors are being affected. **Dr. Potomski** spoke about the need for assistance and awareness for those with mental health issues, including dementia. He suggested a candidate’s forum for the fall, where we can host a meeting and speak about various issues. **Phil Koechlein** wants to write an article for July about the housing issue. Staff addressed the Section 202 elder housing funding from HUD, which was brought up by a public citizen at the last BCOA meeting; after research, these funds went away in 2012. However, staff shared that funding does come from the Federal Housing Trust Fund from HUD to the states for affordable housing.

**BCOA Newsletter:** **Sandy Stauffer** spoke to everyone about the upcoming WEAAD event since that was May’s article in Senior Life. Staff stated the need an article for Senior Life for the June edition; after discussion among members, **Terry Stone** said she would reach out to Tim at Brevard Alzheimer’s regarding an article about Hurricane and Shelter preparedness for seniors.

**Staff Update:** Staff thanked everyone that was present for the resolution presentation, especially since Mr. Phillips couldn’t attend. **Yvonne Minus** gave everyone an update about his wife. Staff stated the plan is to have him come to the June meeting with his family, and HHS Director Ian Golden would be there to present the resolution to him. Staff also reported the numbers from the DEA Takeback day; 8 locations throughout Brevard County collected 114 bags or boxes, and over 2000 pounds of old medications. These numbers were reported by the Brevard Prevention Coalition.

**Member Updates:** **Sandy Stauffer** said May 23<sup>rd</sup> is the Caregiver Café, with Dr. Rosemary Laird, happening at Brevard Alzheimer’s beginning at 6 pm. until 8pm. Dinner will be provided, and respite care will be available, per Sandy, for no charge. **Patricia**

**Seibert** said she is glad to be back. Also, there is a new Health Officer, Dr. Kristine Zonka, at the Health Department. She also reminded everyone that Hurricane season begins June 1<sup>st</sup>. **Terry Stone** went to her first meeting with the West Melbourne S.A.L.T. Council, and she said the room was packed with seniors! She also stated that she would be at the WEAAD event representing Aging Matters of Brevard. **Phil Koechlein** said AARP has a national program to provide free movies in various communities. Phil said that on June 12<sup>th</sup>, the movie, "Book Club, Next Chapter" will be showing that evening at 7 pm and you can register online for the movie. **Dr. Potomski** talked about his statement he provided to the Board of County Commissioners when the group accepted the resolution at their meeting. He plans to continue to advocate with each of the Commissioners regarding the needs of elders in our community. **Yvonne Minus** spoke about attending the grand opening on May 4<sup>th</sup> that was very well attended, at the Palms of University in Melbourne. She asked that Joe's Club to let her know when there is anything happening that she can attend and support. Yvonne said on May 24<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. there will be a concert happening at the Melbourne Auditorium, free to everyone. She said there is always a great turnout by seniors and welcomed everyone to attend. **Kerry Fink** spoke about their Resource Center with Helping Seniors of Brevard. He said their Housing Task Force is continuing to shine a light on the need for more affordable housing in Brevard. He said on Wednesday, May 31<sup>st</sup>, **Deidra Schubert** will be on their radio show and it will be all about World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

**Public Announcements and Comments:** The first person to address the committee, Lisa Hanko, spoke about Walmart charging people \$1.50 for a money order to pay her bills. She said this is outrageous because she doesn't have the money for this. Questions from the members were about the "government issued" card she kept referring to; Ms. Hanko showed it to **Dr. Potomski**, and he stated it came from United Health. **Dr. Potomski** stated he would look into her complaint. Ms. Hanko also complained about Community Action, and staff told her that they would look into her complaint and call her about it, and to provide her phone number on the speaker card.

Other public comment came from Doris Varner. Mrs. Varner spoke about working in the food pantry at her church, East Coast Christian Church on Merritt Island, stating the church now serves more than 550 to 600 people each Tuesday. She gave examples of who they are currently helping: large numbers of homeless seniors on Merritt Island. She stated the homeless are living in their cars because they can't afford the rents on the island now. Mrs. Varner also spoke about and gave various examples of people having their Deeds sold out from underneath them and there's nothing they (the church) can do to help them. Ms. Varner added there is nowhere for them to go and wanted the BCOA to help them. Discussion continued among the members regarding solutions for her to recommend to those who need assistance and **Dr. Potomski** said the members will follow up.

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

**Next Meeting: July 13, 2023, 3:00 pm. Government Center 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Building C-Space Coast Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Viera, FL 32940.**

**Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm.