

BREVARD COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES



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

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Judy Healy, Lisa Noble, Patricia Seibert, Sandy Stauffer, Terry Stone, Yvonne Minus, Will Scheiner, Kara Pappalardo, Kerry Fink, and Tom Kammerdener

GUESTS PRESENT: Doris Varner, Danny Callan, Corina Savela, Marisol Martinez, Gregory Hullinger, Joe Rowlette, and Kathleen Turnquest

BREVARD COUNTY STAFF: Cindy Short

SUMMARY:

Call to Order / Introductions: Dr. Potomski called the meeting to order at 3:02 pm. Roll call occurred by everyone present.

Approval of Meeting Minutes for May 11, 2023: Minutes were reviewed by all members. Sandy Stauffer stated that she was not present at the last meeting; motion to approve minutes with the necessary corrections made by Phil Koechlein; seconded by Lisa Noble; approved by consensus.

Guest speaker: None

Legislative update: Phil Koechlein shared information from a booklet created by AARP and provided a copy for everyone present. The booklet, titled "Report and Voting Record on Legislative Issues-Florida", details how all members in the State Legislature voted on every law in 2023, and whether or not that law passed or failed. He said that Florida is the first state to provide this information to their members. He added that in the back of the booklet, there is a list of AARP's Legislative Priorities, bills that are not supported by AARP. Dr. Potomski thanked him for providing this great information.

Advocacy: **Kerry Fink** spoke about a report from a webinar that staff provided “The State of the Nation’s Housing 2023” a study from Harvard. He highlighted some of the important facts from the report and staff provided copies of the facts from the report to everyone. He noted the study acknowledges what we already know that the supply of affordable housing is shrinking, and it also acknowledges how it is affecting the low income residents. **Phil Koechlein** spoke about the article in the newsletter reflecting the same numbers based on the count from the Brevard Homeless Coalition. Discussion continued about the SHIP funding expected for Brevard County. Staff encouraged everyone to watch the webinar and if they wanted the link to send an email and staff would provide it. **Kerry Fink** added more regarding cost burdened households, and shrinking supplies of low cost housing everywhere. **Dr. Potomski** reminded everyone that each member can visit their commissioner and advocate about issues affecting seniors in Brevard.

BCOA Newsletter: **Phil Koechlein** pointed the members to the last article in Senior Life and how important it was to get the information out there. **Yvonne Minus** added there will be a new complex in Melbourne, apartment properties at market price, coming where the old Sears building was located, along with a new storage facility. Discussion continued about Melbourne’s approval of the new facility. **Dr. Potomski** asked if there was an article for the next Senior Life and staff provided everyone with the “Seniors and Fall Prevention” article. After member review, **Judy Healy** made the motion to accept the article as presented, seconded by **Yvonne Minus**, with no further discussion, accepted as presented. Staff asked for article ideas for September and October; suggestion was made to cover Alzheimer’s in October for the National Alzheimer’s recognition in November, and after discussion, **Kerry Fink** suggested to consider mental health issues affecting seniors, or perhaps an article about how Brevard Representatives voted on certain legislation. Discussion continued among the members and **Dr. Potomski** spoke about considering having a candidates’ forum. More discussion continued about the forum and staff suggested to form a committee to plan the event and meet in September before the scheduled BCOA meeting.

Staff Update: Staff brought up the fact that Allison Adler from Aging Matters has attended enough meetings to be considered a planning member. Staff introduced the new Executive Director, Tom Kammerdener, and he spoke to the group about his new position with Aging Matters. After committee discussion, **Phil Koechlein** made the motion to have Allison Adler be considered a planning member of the BCOA representing Aging Matters, seconded by **Yvonne Minus**, approved by consensus. Staff also reviewed the newsletter from Brevard Prevention Coalition and encouraged everyone to share with those who may need the information. **Yvonne Minus** asked if seniors that attend seniors at lunch receive the SNAPS information, and Tom from Aging Matters said yes, they do. **Will Scheiner** suggested an upcoming article that contains the information about these services in the community.

Member Updates: **Terry Stone** said there are 4 upcoming symposiums and expos in August and when she gets the dates and time, she will share with everyone. **Phil Koechlein** spoke about a Fall Prevention program with UCF and once the program is developed, he will let us know. Phil also spoke about the next Boomer Event, and there

will be an extra special “Shredding” event coordinated with it. Date is yet to be determined. **Kerry Fink** spoke about an upcoming renter’s workshop for Palm Bay residents, and it will be this coming Saturday, July 15th. There will be a HUD Certified Housing Counselor and an Attorney, who works with the FL Eviction Prevention program. He said this is the first one and they are trying to see how they can help those renters ages 55 and up to stay housed. Call Nancy at Helping Seniors of Brevard at 321-473-7770 for more information and to sign up. He also spoke about their upcoming fundraisers that are happening.

Public Announcements and Comments: Gregory Hullinger, Titusville resident and former government contractor, spoke to the members about how the affordable housing is disappearing in Florida. He spoke about how impacts are happening to affordable housing in our county and all of Florida. He said he went to Tallahassee and described some of the things he saw happening with legislators. He encouraged the members to get more involved and make their voices heard to support seniors. **Dr. Potomski** thanked him for his time. **Yvonne Minus** spoke about the Home Rule, and that it is very much in effect in Brevard County. **Judy Healy** spoke about the lack of rent control and that it has been made illegal in our state. The next speaker, Doris Varner, from East Coast Christian Church on Merritt Island, spoke about how they feed the homeless with food and funds for needed items. She provided statistics regarding how they have served the homeless and said the need continues to grow. She spoke about how the rents are out of control on Merritt Island, and that these homeless seniors don’t know what to do. **Yvonne Minus** gave her the names of some local organizations that will assist the homeless seniors, and suggested that the homeless begin by contacting the Brevard Homeless Coalition. She added there are organizations that can assist, and she asked her to remain, and she will speak to Ms. Varner after today’s meeting. **Will Scheiner** added that National Veteran’s Homeless Support helps homeless Veterans get housed, and Mr. Callan should reach out to that organization. **Dr. Potomski** thanked her for coming.

Upcoming Events

Next Meeting: August 10, 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 4:55 pm.