

# BREVARD COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES



**Building C, Space Coast Room  
Thursday, October 12, 2023  
3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

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

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Laura Anderson, Lisa Noble, Sandy Stauffer, Terry Stone, Judy Healy, Marisol Martinez, Kia Quintana, Will Scheiner, Yvonne Minus, Allison Adler, and Kerry Fink

**GUESTS PRESENT:** Dorinda Hill, Cheryl Bornemann, Jodi Pena Castaldi, Corina Savela, Erika Orriss, and Joe Rowlette

## **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 September 14, 2023:** Minutes were reviewed by all members. Motion to approve minutes as presented made by **Judy Healy**; seconded by **Lisa Noble**; approved by consensus.

**Guest speakers:** Erika Orriss, running for State Representative, said she wanted to speak to the members about seniors, who make up 25% of our community. She is advocating on their behalf and wants to work for all of us. She spoke about her background, and why she became active politically. Ms. Orriss said she believes she can help fix what is wrong with how seniors are treated. She shared her story about her mother, and the concerns she has for seniors when they lose a loved one, such as a spouse. Ms. Orriss said her mother was financially fit, but there were things that her mother went through that she believes needs to be addressed. She spoke about the burdens of being a Caregiver and the obstacles that are faced daily. When she spoke about Certified Nursing Assistants, **Phil Koechlein** stated they need to be paid more for the jobs they do. **Dr. Potomski** continued that Certified Nursing Assistants are critical to senior care, especially if they live alone. And he also agreed with Phil's statement about paying them more. She also spoke about current reforms that may affect seniors in the

coming future and she said she would keep the members informed about what is coming. The conversation continued about the abuse and exploitation issues. **Lisa Noble** stated the penalties for those who abuse seniors are not strong enough. Ms. Orriss described what it was like for her when she was in a rehab facility, and what she endured from the lack of care in that facility stay. She added she has learned a lot and wants to work with our group to help make a difference in our community. **Dr. Potomski** thanked her for coming and speaking to them.

**Legislative update:** **Phil Koechlein** spoke about the coming legislative session and that it has been pushed up to begin sometime this January. **Dr. Potomski** encouraged everyone to speak to their representatives about more help for seniors in our county.

**Advocacy:** **Dr. Potomski** reminded everyone about the priorities that had been selected and wanted to know if there was an update. **Dr. Potomski** asked about the upcoming Legislative Delegation meeting and staff will research and email with results. **Phil Koechlein** said that just under 320,000 people moved to Florida last year, and Brevard County is 5<sup>th</sup> in the state regarding high housing values. He suggested with the numbers trending as they are, this is the problem with affordable housing. After discussion, **Phil Koechlein** agreed we need to continue to advocate for more affordable housing in Brevard.

**BCOA Newsletter:** **Dr. Potomski** reviewed the Senior Life article in the newsletter provided to them. He loved that there was a school Crossing Guard on the front cover to promote the article on the inside. He added the article was timely and great information to share. **Dr. Potomski** then spoke to everyone about the newsletter articles in front of them for the upcoming Senior Life for Elves for Elders and Senior Santa. After review, **Phil Koechlein** made the motion to approve, and **Sandy Stauffer** seconded; approved by consensus. Staff asked for a suggestion for the December article. Staff reminded the members the article last year was about holidays and depression. After discussion, **Laura Anderson** suggested to add suggestions about what to do about it-for instance, take your neighbor who lives alone to church or invite them over for dinner. Staff said they will research ideas for suggestions.

**Staff Update:** Staff asked the members for a decision regarding the upcoming December meeting. **Dr. Potomski** reminded with the members that he invites the members to a luncheon meeting offsite, and the meeting is publicly noticed in order to conduct business. Discussion continued among the members, and **Terry Stone** motioned to have the meeting at Tuscany Grill, **Will Scheiner** seconded the motion, approved by all.

**Member Updates:** **Dr. Potomski** did a brief presentation to **Phil Koechlein** about his contributions to the Commission on Aging. Specifically, **Dr. Potomski** shared with the group some of his accomplishments. He said that **Phil Koechlein** has been an active member of the BCOA since 2010, and he has served as the AARP District Coordinator since 2006; also, he was recognized in 2017 by the Board of County Commissioners for Older Americans Month, served as Vice Chair since 2017, and has always been an advocate of the elderly. He was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation from all the members. **Dr. Potomski** went on to invite Phil and everyone to his upcoming Space

Coast Medical Directors Symposium and encouraged them to register online at [www.bcnda.org](http://www.bcnda.org). **Terry Stone** reminded everyone about Senior Santa happening currently, and shared that TRIAD, the organization that she represents, will be disbanding at the end of the year due to lack of participation and dedicated volunteers to assist. **Phil Koechlein** asked how this would affect her; she said that she would no longer be on the Commission on Aging. **Dr. Potomski** said it was a very active group, and we need to figure out a way to keep **Terry Stone** on the committee. Staff said we would have to amend the resolution. **Phil Koechlein** spoke about why he was having to retire from the committee, and the life challenges he has currently. **Phil Koechlein** thanked everyone for their hard work. **Dr. Potomski** asked if the Covid Booster is being administered yet, and **Kia Quintana** said she wasn't sure, but she would check. **Will Scheiner** said there are a lot of Robotexts going out and to share this information with their loved ones. He added there are also scam calls to seniors about the relatives in accidents and requesting money to be able to treat them. **Will Scheiner** said it is very prevalent, and to always question anything that is too good to be true. **Phil Koechlein** added that Medicare scams are happening too because of annual enrollment. **Kerry Fink** shared the great news about the Helping Seniors of Brevard recent annual fundraiser, and how successful the car raffle was. **Yvonne Minus** told **Phil Koechlein** how wonderful it was to work with him on the Commission on Aging, and looked forward to seeing him at the upcoming events.

**Public Comments:** **Cheryl Bornemann** from Verus Health Plans spoke to the members about an upcoming lunch and learn event regarding issues surrounding Veterans and their insurance requirements regarding Medicare. She had flyers to share with the group, and the event will be October 27<sup>th</sup> at the Veteran's Memorial Museum in Merritt Island.

**Joe Rowlette**, from Florida Healthcare Plans, reminded everyone about Open Enrollment for seniors and Medicare, and recommended they meet with a representative rather than tackling any changes on their own.

**Jodi Castaldi**, from Community Legal Services of Mid Florida, spoke about their agency working on their Strategic Plan and encouraged the members to go to their website and provide input. The website is: <https://www.clsmf.org/> and the link is on the main page: select "Take our Community Legal Needs Assessment".

**Corina Savela**, Long Term Care, said that Career Source Brevard offers a link for CNA's to be trained and referred for employment.

**Upcoming Events:** **Boomer Guide Event** Space Coast Health Foundation, Friday, **November 10, 2023**, from 9 am until noon; Space Coast Medical Director's Symposium Hilton Rialto, Wednesday, **November 15, 2023**, from 4:30 pm until 10 pm.

**Next Meeting: November 9, 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 4:45 pm.