

# BREVARD COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES



Building C, Space Coast Room  
Thursday, January 11, 2024  
3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

**CHAIR:** Dr. John Potomski, **Vice Chair:** TBD

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Lisa Noble, Sandy Stauffer, Judy Healy, Marisol Martinez, Kia Quintana, Will Scheiner, Yvonne Minus, Laura Anderson, Terry Stone, Tom Kammerdener, and Nancy Deardorff

**GUESTS PRESENT:** Russ Lewey, Barbara Fradkin, Carlos Cuesta, Kelli McGuire, Deidra Shubert, and Corina Sevela.

## 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 December 14, 2023:** Minutes were reviewed by all members. **Kia Ramos** said Patricia Seibert wanted the word flu added to her member report in the minutes, and **Dr. Potomski** asked that Joe Steckler's birthday age to be corrected to 90; motion to approve minutes with noted corrections made by **Sandy Stauffer**; seconded by **Judy Healy**; approved by consensus.

**Guest speakers:** **Barbara Fradkin** and **Russ Lewey** from Brevard Parkinson's Alliance wanted to share the story of their non-profit, which began 20 years ago as a support group, and their story about the disease. **Barbara Fradkin** said that Parkinson's is a chronic, progressive, neurological disease, and over a million people in the US, 10 million worldwide, have been diagnosed with this disease that has no cure. She added that Florida has approximately 90,000-up from 64,000, diagnosed people, only second to California.

**Russ Lewey** said exercise is the number one thing that has been proven to help those with Parkinson's. **Barbara Fradkin** went on to say that it is very challenging to diagnose

because there are different ways Parkinson's can mimic other diseases. She provided many symptom examples of the disease, and how to recognize these symptoms. **Dr. Potomski** said there is usually a root cause of people's issues, and it's not just their "age". He went on to explain some of the symptoms that he has seen while working, and how the disease progresses in some people. Lack of facial expression is a big sign for most of the people who have it and shaking or tremors are not always a sure sign of this disease. **Dr. Potomski** discussed several examples of different people he has seen in his career. **Barbara Fradkin** addressed the subject of hallucinations and different ways to address it with people who have Parkinson's. **Dr. Potomski** addressed the psychosis and spoke about a current drug that is helping some people but not all. The cost for treating Parkinson's is expensive, the medication alone averages about \$2500 per year. **Barbara Fradkin** spoke about their Support Groups throughout Brevard County. She continued to describe how the program, Rock Steady Boxing, is all about using the boxing exercises to help keep Parkinson's from getting worse. This works because it is a forced, intentional exercise routine that helps with balance and coordination. **Russ Lewey** said there is no fee to the boxers in Titusville because he volunteers his time and uses a County Parks facility to provide this service. **Russ Lewey** provided examples of how the boxing exercises improves the lives of people with Parkinson's.

**Russ Lewey** showed a video from Channel 6's Getting Results that showcased Rock Steady and the exercise facility. Everyone enjoyed the video! **Barbara Fradkin** said that if someone that has Parkinson's can't afford the boxing exercise class, the non-profit will provide a scholarship for them. **Russ Lewey** and **Barbara Fradkin** spoke about their current fundraisers and how they go throughout the county to educate about Parkinson's. **Nancy Deardorff** asked if **Barbara Fradkin** could speak to the relationship to the disease especially with things like pesticides, and farmers? **Barbara Fradkin** said they have found a link with farmers in the Midwest, and there is still more research happening. **Barbara Fradkin** spoke about Michael J. Fox and all the research he is doing through the Parkinson's Foundation. **Russ Lewey** recommended the movie "Still" to really learn more about Parkinson's. He said that the Davis Phinney Foundation is another resource. They gave more examples of places to research.

**Judy Healy** spoke about a friend having a DBS brain surgery for his Parkinson's, and **Russ Lewey** explained how the Deep Brain Stimulation procedure works and can help with quality of life. **Deidra Shubert** asked them to talk about their "kits". **Barbara Fradkin** explained that it's a Care Kit that helps people who need their medications on a different schedule than what is usually in a hospital setting. **Dr. Potomski** said it's all about education and training when it comes to the facilities. **Barbara Fradkin** asked the members for help getting the word out about what they do, or to consider attending one of their fundraisers. **Dr. Potomski** thanked them both for coming and the work they are doing.

**Legislative update:** **Dr. Potomski** said the legislators are in session but it's too early to provide a definite update. **Deidra Shubert** spoke about the Rally in Tally or Florida State Advocacy Day happening on February 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. She said you can sign up

<https://alzimpact.org/> to meet with legislators and advocate for critical legislation and funding support for Floridians impacted by Alzheimer's and other dementia.

**Advocacy: Dr. Potomski** spoke about an article published by U-Haul, and it said that more people moved to the Melbourne-Palm Bay area than any other cities in the United States in 2023. The report said their findings were measured by their equipment and customer transactions in 2023.

**BCOA Newsletter: Dr. Potomski** shared the newsletter article that was published in the January Senior Life about the Dementia Live Experience. All the members reviewed the next article for February "Early Detection Health Screening" with the requested information regarding Skin Cancer detection and the suggested the motto. Staff also updated the statistical numbers and the citations for this article. **Laura Anderson** made the motion to approve the article as presented, seconded by **Yvonne Minus**, approved by consensus.

**Barbara Fradkin** asked if she could provide an article about Parkinson's since April is Parkinson's awareness month. **Corina Savela** said she could provide an article for March about Guardianship. **Laura Anderson** asked **Corina Savela** to stress that it is the very last thing anyone wants to do.

**Staff Update: New business:** staff requested a vote from the members to determine having **Dr. Potomski** remain as Chair of the Commission on Aging or did they wish to entertain any nominations; **Yvonne Minus** moved the request as a motion, **Judy Healy** seconded, motion approved by all members. Staff also asked for a motion or vote to entertain a new Vice Chair since **Phil Koechlein** had retired; **Yvonne Minus** moved the motion and nominated **Will Scheiner** as Vice Chair, and he accepted; **Judy Healy** seconded, and the motion was approved by all members.

Staff provided everyone with a copy of the current BCOA resolution and asked them to look at the list of required members that the resolution allows. Staff explained the members currently have a need from two organizations that are not responding to letters requesting a new member: AARP and United Way. Staff asked the members if they know someone in these organizations to reach out and ask if they would consider coming to one of our meetings or become a member. Staff pointed to the fact that Senior Resource Alliance is in Orlando, and how hard it is for her to attend. Staff said they could consider asking member **Karla Radka** to consider appointing someone in Brevard to keep them connected to the BCOA and still follow the resolution. Discussion among the members occurred; **Laura Anderson** said many years ago she was SRA's appointed member here in Brevard. Staff agreed to contact her about the possibility and would keep the members posted. **Terry Stone** said she will try to reach out to AARP.

**Member Updates: Sandy Stauffer** said they are taking the Dementia Live Experience to Helping Seniors of Brevard on January 25<sup>th</sup> and **Nancy Deardorff** added they are really looking forward to it. **Sandy Stauffer** also spoke about their Stressbusters classes for Caregivers and provided a flyer. **Terry Stone** spoke about the Senior Life Valentine event coming up on Valentine's Day at Brevard Zoo. **Terry Stone** said the Boomer Guide Expo event will be in March and a date is forthcoming. **Yvonne Minus**

said that she and Kerry Fink were talking about Joe Steckler's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday and the City of Melbourne gave him a Citizen Award. **Will Scheiner** thanked everyone for the nomination and said he will be speaking at an event on January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 3700 Allen Avenue, Micco about scams for Aging Matters at 11:00 am.

**Public Comments:** None

**Upcoming Events: Senior Life Valentine's Expo** February 14<sup>th</sup> Brevard Zoo, Melbourne 9am until 1pm; Health First Memory Disorder Clinic's **Stress Busting Program for Family Caregivers**, classes beginning January 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Memory Disorder Clinic 3661 S. Babcock St. Melbourne from 10 am until 12 pm for 9 weeks; **Brevard Parkinson's Alliance's Walk/Run**, April 19, 2023.

**Next Meeting: February 8, 2023, 3:00pm**, 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Building C, Space Coast Room, Second Floor Viera, FL 32940.

**Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm.