

# BREVARD COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES



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

**CHAIR:** Dr. John Potomski **Vice Chair:** William Scheiner

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Laura Anderson, Lisa Noble, Judy Healy, Jill Blue, Sandy Stauffer, Tom Kammerdener, Marisol Martinez, Kia Quintana-Ramos, Yvonne Minus, and Kerry Fink

**GUESTS PRESENT:** Christine Evans, Jodi Pena Castaldi, and Joe Rowlette

## **SUMMARY:**

**BREVARD COUNTY STAFF:** Cindy Short

**Call to Order/Introductions:** Dr. Potomski called the meeting to order at 3:07 pm. Roll call occurred by everyone present.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes for June 13, 2024:** Minutes were reviewed by all members. Motion to approve minutes as presented made by **Judy Healy**; seconded by **Laura Anderson**; approved as presented by consensus.

**Guest speaker: Dr. Potomski** introduced Christine Evans from Companion Animal Care, her local non-profit agency that helps foster or rehome pets for senior citizens unable to care for them due to medical challenges. Ms. Evans began by providing a brief history of her organization, and her attachment to Brevard. She previously worked in Pennsylvania and moved back to Brevard and began her new business. She spoke about her mission of caring for pets and helping seniors in need when they have a medical issue to deal with. Ms. Evans described some of the different pets she has helped to rehome, such as birds, cats, and dogs. The idea is to bring the seniors and families comfort until they can rehome that pet, if necessary, or until that owner can manage a pet again. Most of the pets they receive have to be rehomed, and most of the pets received are cats. She added that this can be hard sometimes. Ms. Evans also has a “Paw Pantry” that provides dog and cat food to food pantries in Brevard County. She said they are the only organization that provides both of these services, and she spoke

about some of her fundraisers to help keep her business going and to market more. **Dr. Potomski** asked where the money for the food comes from, and she told him that it comes from fundraising. She works as a volunteer, along with the others who help her, and all funds go towards assisting seniors and animals in need. **Dr. Potomski** asked if she had business cards or brochures and she provided these for everyone. She thanked everyone for their time and was happy to be able to share her mission with them.

**Legislative update:** No report

**Advocacy:** Staff provided a summary of the new State of the Nation's Housing Report for 2024 from the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University. Staff said if they wanted a copy to email and it would be provided. Staff also spoke about some local numbers for Brevard, that 11730 renter households are severely cost-burdened. **Dr. Potomski** asked about Orchid Lake in Cocoa that is being built and staff told him they are almost finished and should be accepting applications soon.

**BCOA Newsletter:** Staff shared the newsletter article that was published in the June edition of Senior Life titled "**Finding Affordable Housing for Seniors**". Staff provided an article for the August newsletter "**Hurricane Season is here – Are You Prepared**" for the group's review and approval. Tom Kammerdener suggested to add "bring food other than snack items"; **William Scheiner** made the motion to accept the article with the suggested changes; **Yvonne Minus** seconded; approved as amended. There was discussion about the next article for the September Senior Life and **Dr. Potomski** said he would write the article about Falls Prevention, since September is Falls Prevention month. Staff suggested providing the article by the end of July for the August meeting approval. **Dr. Potomski** asked about an article for October; staff asked Christine Evans if she would like to provide an article about her agency and she said yes, absolutely. Discussion continued about November and December articles; staff reminded everyone that November is usually Elves for Elders and Secret Santa. **Kerry Fink** said they are taking on the Secret Santa program and they will provide some information later.

**Staff Update:** No report.

**Member Updates:** **Sandy Stauffer** spoke about the Memory Disorder Clinic partnering with the Alzheimer's Association to provide a new program called "The Empowered Caregiver" to begin August 14<sup>th</sup> and again on August 21<sup>st</sup>. The events begin at 6:00 pm. and run until 7:30 pm. The program will be held at the Center for Family Caregivers on Babcock Street in Melbourne. There will be education about Respite services during the program.

**Dr. Potomski** shared information about the 34<sup>th</sup> annual BCMDA Symposium, and it will be held on November 13<sup>th</sup> this year at the Hilton Rialto. There will be registration information coming October 1<sup>st</sup>. **Dr. Potomski** added there will be a table for the Commission on Aging and the members are welcome to attend.

**Will Scheiner** spoke about the new scams going around, especially one involving housing. He said that people are claiming to own homes that they don't own and then renting them, and scamming people out of a lot of money. He also added that most of the people are young couples thinking they are getting a good deal and find out it's a scam. This scam could affect anyone looking for a place to live.

**Yvonne Minus** shared information regarding a Transportation Planning Organization meeting she attended with the Secretary from FDOT. She said that there were good changes coming to Brevard County, such as widening highway 528, adding the Bright Line train stop in Cocoa, and widening changes to Ellis Rd.

**Kerry Fink** said that at the next meeting he will have more information to share about Secret Santa. **Kerry Fink** said Helping Seniors is doing a 10:00 am fourth Thursday series called Knowledge College, and working with seniors regarding various issues important to seniors. **Kerry Fink** added the 11:00 am fourth Thursday series is the Wellness Series and will have various medical professionals speaking. He encouraged **Dr. Potomski** to come and speak about Falls Prevention. **Kerry Fink** also spoke about their current fundraisers; the "Sip and Stroll" is happening on July 27<sup>th</sup> and is very popular. The annual car raffle is ongoing until the drawing on October 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Jill Blu** said that she is happy to be here, and she shared with everyone about a senior lady who calls her frequently about wanting something to do, especially craft related. **Tom Kammerdener** suggested their Seniors at Lunch program at their Community Center there. **Jill Blu** asked about the activities, and **Tom Kammerdener** said they have a good variety. He suggested that she call their main number at Aging Matters to get more information about it. **Jill Blue** asked if you noticed anything about her that someone could be alerted to check her out further and **Tom Kammerdener** said yes, they can assess her if there is reason to.

**Public Comments:** Jodi Pena Castaldi spoke to the group briefly about her agency Community Legal Services of Mid Florida and gave a summary of their services they provide. She said they receive a lot of calls about people struggling and they also can assist if there is a disaster.

Joe Rowlette spoke about the WEAAD event on June 14<sup>th</sup> at Zon Beachside, and the success of the event. There were more than 60 seniors there, good engagement with all the seniors asking great questions, and the food was very good as well.

### **Upcoming Events:**

**Next Meeting: August 8, 2024, 3:00pm**, 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Building C, Space Coast Room, Second Floor Viera, FL 32940.

**Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 4:19 pm.