



**Minutes of the
Snohomish County Council on Aging
April 28, 2021**



CALL TO ORDER

The monthly meeting of the Snohomish County Council on Aging was held via Zoom and convened at 9:04 am with Nixon Opondo presiding.

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Bobbie Constantine	✓	Sunny Strong	✓
Nixon Opondo - Chairperson	✓	Mindy Taylor	✓
Keith Smith	<i>AB</i>	Dennis Wheeler	✓

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE

None

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Linda Vizmanos, Laura White, Cole Caplan, Michal Glauner and Constance Hockett.

Chairperson Nixon Opondo announced that Mike Fear has resigned from the board due to scheduling conflicts. Michal Glauner introduced herself. She has stepped into Janet’s previous position and she will be managing contracts.

PRESENTATIONS

Membership Roles – Dennis Wheeler

Member Dennis Wheeler shared his point of view from when he was a new member, where to locate reference/resource materials, etc. He encouraged members to ask questions. He shared about a bus transportation field trip that the board participated in.

Division Manager, Laura White spoke about the Seniors Survey. She requested members to share with their peer groups. Kelsey Bang-Olsen, Human Services Program Planner, will present and discuss survey results at the next meeting. Laura encouraged members to provide their input on where efforts should be focused after Kelsey’s presentation.

Ombudsman Program – Bobbie Constantine

Member Bobbie Constantine shared a PowerPoint presentation. She reported that she has been an ombudsman for over three years. Bobbie shared some history about the program, what ombudsman do, the cases they see most and other information including the following:

- Medicare/Medicaid Act started in 1965;
- CMS started in 1971 – provided oversight for nursing homes;
- The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program began in 1971 – part of a directive from President Nixon;
- Older Americans Act 1978 enhanced the Ombudsman Program, raised the program to a statutory level & defined activity;

- Federal statute mandated states to put the program into effect at a state level. The program is located in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW); how ombudsman function is located in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC);
- Ombudsmen are not mandated reporters – information cannot be shared with anyone without client’s permission. Confidentiality is strictly maintained; and
- The program has lost more than a one-fourth of the volunteer pool due to COVID. There are 22 full-time staff in 14 regions. Only one state office with a very small budget.

Senior Farmers Market Program (SFMNP) – Linda Vizmanos

Linda shared the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) presentation to COA members. Until 2020, the SFMNP was contracted out to Homage Senior Services. Due to the increased demand of home delivered meals during COVID, the agency does not have the staffing to administer the program. Long Term Care and Agency staff are managing the program again in 2021. Linda shared that eligible low-income seniors will receive ten \$4.00 vouchers to be used at authorized farmers markets and farm stands to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables (including raw honey). Voucher recipients must meet the following criteria:

1. Age 60 and over (by June 30) for non-native Americans; age 55 and over for native Americans;
2. Snohomish County resident; and
3. Income eligible.

Applicants are able to apply online, by phone or submit a paper application. Homage is able to assist with completion of the application for non-English speakers. Friends can help seniors apply but they will need to fill their name in the attestation field. How vouchers are awarded is a two-step process. There is a limited number of vouchers available; they are distributed on a first-come first-serve basis. A proxy can be designated to shop for you. Linda shared how vouchers can be redeemed. They can be used statewide and some helpful tips were mentioned. COA members can help with outreach by sharing with their peer groups. Linda walked members through the online application process for everyone in attendance.

BUSINESS MEETING

Approval of Meeting Minutes

*A motion was made by Mindy Taylor and seconded by Sunny Strong to approve the April 28, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. **Motion carried***

SUB-COMMITTEES

- **Executive:** Nixon Opondo, Chair; Mindy Taylor, Vice Chair; and Bobbie Constantine, Officer at Large. The committee meets one week prior to the COA meeting.
- **Advocacy, Diversity & Outreach:** Mindy Taylor and Sunny Strong. The first committee meeting is scheduled for May 13, 2021.
- **Senior Centers:** Dennis Wheeler and Bobbie Constantine. The first committee meeting is scheduled for May 5, 2021.

Nixon asked sub-committee members to decide who would lead committee activities at this time. Leaders will be part of the Executive Committee.

SPECIAL REPORTS

Chemical Dependency/Mental Health (CDMH) Advisory Board Report – Dennis Wheeler

Dennis reported that the budget situation is not as dire as originally anticipated. Initially departments were asked to submit a contingency plan if cuts to 1/10th of 1% sales tax funding were required. The board will still review proposals submitted. More information will be shared later. The Sheriff's office reported a huge shift in drug arrests from this same time last year from 100% heroin to now 90% fentanyl and 10% heroin.

State Council on Aging Report – Ron Vivion

No report. Mr. Vivion was not in attendance.

Staff Updates

- Cole Caplan shared that Maria Boyer is joining the team as a Human Services Specialist II. Maria previously was an HSSI supporting the home care contracting team. She will be transitioning to a traditional case coordination role starting May 1.
- Laura White shared that there is a lot of work happening with AL TSA right now. We are working on a transition plan of what it would look like shifting back to face to face visits for our MTD & Case Management Programs. Reopening of County offices is also being looked at. A partial reopening may happen in July.

NEW BUSINESS

Recruitment

A discussion was led about effective recruitment of new members for the COA. The following items were discussed:

- Recruitment flyer that members are able to print and distribute/post in libraries, Starbucks;
- Ad in Homage newspaper;
- Radio spot on KSER. Nixon will reach out to former board member, about interviewing Dennis on the radio;
- Members invite a guest to attend an upcoming meeting; and
- Mindy Taylor suggested advertising on social media. The Advocacy, Diversity and Outreach committee could propose something. Nixon mentioned having this group also update the COA webpage.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:59 am. The next meeting will be held on May 26, 2021 from 9:00 to 11:00 am via Zoom.