

North Carolina Coalition on Aging

Minutes – Friday, June 22, 2018 (10:00 a.m.)

Room 104, Brown Building (801 Biggs Drive on Dix Campus)

In attendance: Mary Bethel (President), Janice Tyler (Vice-President; NCAOA), Alan Winstead (Treasurer; Wake Meals on Wheels), Bill Lamb (Past President; FOR in LTC), Pam Palmer (Triangle J AAA), Margaret Toman (Advocate and FOR in LTC), Karen Apport (SGS), Ray Riordan (TCC), Frances Messer (NCALA), Laura Jane Ward (Individual Member/NCRHLA), Joan Pelletier (NC Partnership to Address Adult Abuse), John Thoma (Transitions LifeCare), Swarna Reddy (NC DAAS), Kay Castillo (NASW-NC), Les Geller (SAGE/RFS), Kent Earnhardt (Individual Member), Martha Fowler (SEANC), Sarah Hammond (CSS of Johnston County/NC Senior Center Alliance), Nancy Francis (Center for Volunteer Caregiving), Hank Bowers (NC DAAS), Leah Proctor (NC 2-1-1), Amanda Borer (Charles House/NC Eldercare Work Force Coalition), Renee Myatt (Center for Volunteer Caregiving), Roger Manus (Governor's Advisory Council on Aging), Paola Learoyd (RCA), Lisa Riegel (AARP NC), Charmaine Fuller Cooper (AARP NC), Chad Walker (Transitions LifeCare), Melinda Munden (NC SHIP), Richard Rogers (NCGREA), NCRGEA intern, Chanelle Croxton (Careworkers in Action NC), Ana Pardo (NC Justice Center), Ellen Schneider (UNC-CH), Mary Edwards (NC DAAS), Jeff Horton (NC Senior Living Association), Leslie Jones (NC DAAS), Joe Breen (NC DAAS), Joseph Wheeler (SAGE), Robin Porter (NC PACE Association), and Sandy Gregory (NC BAM)

On phone: Marty Lamb (Secretary), Julie Wiggins (NC Assoc. of AAAs), Suzanne Martin (NC Oral Health Collaborative), Janeen Gordon (Durham Co. DSS), Dee Hatch (Individual Member) and Dick Hatch (Individual Member)

Opening Remarks and Introductions – Mary Bethel, President

Approval of Minutes from May 20, 2018 Meeting

Review of Treasurer's Report – Alan Winstead, Treasurer. The current balance is \$16,384.97.

Activities and Updates Since May Meeting – Mary Bethel – was brief on this as lot to cover today and most things will be covered when discussing other agenda items.

- June *Update* should be sent out next week – waiting for close of session
- Lots of e-mails with information on timely things going on have been sent out
- She talked yesterday with the NC MH, Substance Use, and Aging Coalition

Feedback on Virtual Advocacy Day held on May 22 and Day at the Legislature held on June 6 – There were a few comments from those who participated in the activities. Both were low-key considering this how this short session is shaping up.

Update from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) – Hank Bowers, Assistant Director of NC DAAS shared that the new Division Director for DAAS has still not been appointed but that announcement is

expected in the near future. He also provides updates on the State Plan Listening Session in Charlotte, the Interagency Council for Homeliness, and HB 630 developments. He reported that Christian Linke Young, Deputy Secretary at NC DHHS, is leaving this position and returning to D.C. Susan Perry Manning will be assuming this position. Things are moving forward with the move to Medicaid managed care with RFI's being issues. Lisa Lewis has joined the staff at DAAS as the Business Services Coordinator.

Report on the Short Legislative Session from Members Who "Work" the Legislature

An updated summary of the budget was sent out by Mary. The Technical Corrections Bill for the Budget (SB 335) contains a few items of interest to us:

- Appropriated \$5,500,000 in recurring funds for fiscal year 2018-2019 to be used to increase the rate for in-home services provided under CAP-DA. Rate with the increase is to be no more than \$3.90 per 15-minute billing unit. Special thanks to Tracy Colvard and his colleagues at the Assoc. for Home and Hospice Care of NC for getting this in the budget. This is a priority issue for the Coalition
- The Technical Corrections bill also included \$2 million in recurring funds to be used to provide adult optical Medicaid coverage effective January 1, 2019. This had been a covered service under Medicaid but was removed several years ago during the downturn in the economy when the Medicaid budget had huge costs.
- There are also provisions in the budget related to providing state match for the construction of two new State veterans homes in the Triangle and the Triad Regions and several other appropriations related to veterans programs.

Kay Castillo, NASW-NC; Lisa Riegel, AARP NC; Charmaine Fuller Cooper, AARP NC; and Richard Rogers with NCRGEA provided updates on several bills pending and actions already taken by the General Assembly.

There was particular discussion about the Voter ID proposed constitutional amendment and the income tax cap proposed constitution amendment. Concern was shared that the Voter ID amendment leaves it to the General Assembly to determine provisions regard the ID including what constitutes a valid ID. A motion was made by Alan Winstead and seconded by Kay Castillo that the Coalition write a letter to the legislative leadership asking for input into the development of the ID provisions as they pertain to older adults. The motion was approved.

Update on Federal and State Developments – Mary Bethel and Others Who Track Federal and State Issues

State

- The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Aging and Adult Services is partnering with the N.C. Area Agencies on Aging and local service providers to distribute fans through Operation Fan Heat Relief until October 31. People 60 and older, as well as adults with disabilities, are eligible to sign up for assistance through the end of October at local aging agencies across the state.
- Governor Cooper has announced \$1.5 million in grant awards to 12 community partners to implement projects that combat the opioid crisis by advancing the goals of the [NC Opioid Action Plan](#). The one-time, state-funded grants of up to \$150,000 from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services enable partner organizations to

implement activities in their community which improve access to harm reduction, treatment and recovery supports.

- The Rethinking Guardianship: Building a Case for Less Restrictive Alternatives Final Report is out.

Federal

- Social Security and Medicare Trustees Reports were released on June 5.
- The House passed the Farm Bill on Thursday (yesterday) with the controversial food stamp changes, including work requirements.
- On Wednesday the Senate rejected spending cuts proposed by the Trump administrations – wanted to claw back \$15 billion in spending previously approved by Congress. Two Republicans joined the Democrats in voting no for the legislation including Sen. Richard Burr.

Feedback on Senior Food Insecurity from Last Meeting

- Tommy Goldsmith with *NC Health News* did a nice article on May 29 titled “State Funding Lags as NC Seniors Face threat of Hunger.”
- Mary will contact NC DHHS to express the Coalition’s concern about senior food insecurity after the legislative session concludes.

Report from Coalition’s Workgroup on Organizational Structure and Resource

Development – John Thoma, Workgroup Member provided an update on the efforts of the Workgroup and reviewed the draft recommended By-laws. The draft By-Laws were e-mailed to Coalition members prior to the meeting.

There was good discussion about the recommended By-laws. Dick Hatch raised a question about annual report requirements and there was a discussion about associate membership. It was recommended from the floor that the quorum for action by members be increased from 10% to 25% of eligible voting members. It was suggested that raising this number might provide motivation for members to attend meetings. A motion was made by Frances Messer and seconded by Martha Fowler to increase the quorum to 25%. The motion was approved by all voting. A second motion was made by Robin Porter and seconded by Joan Pellettier to add a provision to the section (Article VI, Section 2) which notes that the Chair Elect shall automatically become Chair. The motion was to add the provision “unless there are extenuating circumstances.” The motion was approved by all voting. There being no more discussion, Joan

Pellettier made a motion to approve the By-laws which was seconded by Frances Messer. The motion was approved by all.

Discussion of Annual Meeting – Mary provided an update.

- Reminder that it will be at NCSU University Club on Friday, Sept. 28th
- Registration will be the same as last year - \$20 for members and \$30 for non-members
- Looking at several potential speakers including Howard Bedlin, Vice-President for Public Policy and Advocacy with NCOA.
- Sponsorships levels were shared with Coalition members this week – platinum, gold, silver, and bronze (Sponsorships are a fundraiser for the Coalition and additional sponsorships are still being sought).

Special Listening Session for Coalition Members to Provide Input into State Aging Services Plan to Staff of NC Division of Aging and Adult Services (Staff from the Division present – Joe Breen, Chief of Planning, ESG, and Service Support Section and Leslie Jones, Planner/Evaluator with the Section)

Joe Breen offered opening comments about the Listening Sessions and noted that the plan is due to the General Assembly in March of 2019. The Division will continue to accept comments through September at agingplan@dhhs.nc.gov. Issues/themes that have been raised many times in the Listening Sessions are: transportation, housing affordability, expanding meals, personal care services, and caregivers assistance. A survey was distributed by DAAS to those in attendance so they could provide additional input.

Comments from Coalition members at the Special Listening Session were as follows:

Ellen Schneider with the MH, Substance Use and Aging Coalition said opioid crisis interfaces with older adults. Seniors' want pain managed but not with addiction.

Kent Earnhardt spoke to the need for transportation, support for caregivers, and housing.

Bill Lamb executive director of Friends of Residents in Long Term Care spoke about the need for more long term care ombudsmen. The ombudsman program has standards of adequacy (number of ombudsman per number of beds for which they have responsibility), and the landscape has changed because the number of older adult has increased since the program was established. North Carolina is about 12 ombudsmen short to meet national standards. He also shared that the personal needs allowance for residents in nursing homes and adult care homes needs to be increased. We rank last in the U.S. in the amount of personal needs allowance for persons in nursing home and the allowance has not been changed for adult care homes since 2003. He also commented that there is increasing complexity of needs of persons in assisted living as well that may need to be investigated.

Frances Messer with the NC Assisted Living Association supported what Bill Lamb shared about the personal needs allowance.

Laura Jane Ward with the NC Rural Health Leadership Alliance spoke of the needs of older adults in rural areas and said transportation and person centeredness are needed. She noted the importance of telehealth and the impact of the opioid crisis.

Joan Pelletier with the NC Partnership to Address Adult Abuse asked for increased funding for adult protective services. She stated that counties should not have to carry a disproportionate part of the burden for funding.

Joseph Wheeler from SAGE- Raleigh spoke of the fear of discrimination in the LGBT community and this results in LGBT individuals being less likely to seek services. He noted there is no question on the survey on sexual orientation.

Robin Porter with the NC PACE Association spoke about the need for PACE to be statewide and pointed out that the last time the state approved PACE expansion was eight years ago.

Janice Tyler with the Orange County Dept. of Aging/NC AOA spoke to the need for funding for Senior Centers and to the problem of loneliness. She shared that in England there is a Ministry of Loneliness. There has not been new designated senior center funding in many many years. Kent Earnhardt commented about the great senior center in Orange County.

Sarah Hammond with Johnston County Community and Senior Services and the NC Senior Center Alliance supported the need for funding for senior centers.

Chad Walker with Transitions Life Care spoke about the need for assistance and education in navigating the system of supports and the health care system.

Nancy Frances with the Center for Volunteer Caregiving shared that there are many people who fall through the cracks and there is a need for increased funding for existing programs.

Mary Bethel stressed the importance of addressing workforce issues and asked that the plan be more than just something that sits on a desk. It needs to be operationalized. Joe Breen agreed and said that once the Division collects all the data and input, it will be better informed and can set priorities.

Margaret Toman commented about the importance of addressing dental care needs.

Mary commented about the value of the legislative Subcommittee on Aging and how the Plan can be an advisory document for the Subcommittee. She stressed that in formulating the Plan it might be important to focus on short term and long term goals development. Joe noted that the Division of Aging and Adult Services will put out updates and ways to monitor the Plan.

Adjournment – As it was 12:30 p.m. when the Listening Session concluded, there was not time for sharing by Coalition members. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

(There will not be a Coalition meeting in July)

Remaining Meeting Dates for 2018

August 24

September 28 (annual meeting)

October 26

December 7

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Lamb, LCSW (Secretary)