



Assistance. Advocacy. Answers on Aging.



AAC members = 21
Quorum = 11

To deliver, fund, and advocate for services that promote well-being, independence, and dignity for older adults, people living with disabilities, family and informal caregivers, and veterans in Boulder County.

BOULDER COUNTY AREA AGENCY ON AGING ADVISORY COUNCIL (AAC)

MINUTES: June 3, 2022
Virtual Meeting

AAC Members Present: Sara Beery, Lisa Bondi, Dena Boutwell, Cindy Brekke, Pamela Christensen, Reed Cobb, Harriet Edelstein, Charles Erdrich, Jeffrey “Jeff” Foster, Amelia Groves, Rose Marie Miller, Emelita Gagne, Diana Mapes, Christina O’Toole, Jeanine Tarrant, Ellen Taxman, Erin Watson, Hope Yasbin-Engel, Carren Williams, Arlene Zortman

Staff Present: Carol Cross, Candice Long, Lindsay Neville, Christine Vogel

Excused:

Guests: Devanand Heins, Trinidad Botello, Ash Wallis, Adam Sutton, Jana Petersen

Welcome and Comments from the Co-Chair – Arlene Zortman:

Arlene highlighted that June is Pride Month and the upcoming events to celebrate Pride: Events and Activities:

- June 1 – Rainbows Over Boulder County
- June 3 – Pride Night at the Rockies
- June 4 – Broomfield Pride
- June 5 – Garden Party
- June 8 – 50+ Mixer
- June 11 – Longmont Pride
- June 12 – Boulder Pride
- June 25/26 – Denver Pride

Arlene attended the Older Coloradans Month event in Denver along with Emelita, Carol, Julia, Lindsay, and Michael. During the event legislators discussed what they are doing to help older Coloradans through legislation. Governor Polis gave a speech to the group. Part of the event was held via Zoom and was about diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Regarding the questions during the last meeting about how AAC members can get more involved and help, Arlene suggested joining the Technical Review Committee (TRC). Information is available through Kate LeMere with BCAA.

Public Comments and Correspondence:

Sara recognized Michelle Waite who retired as director of Longmont Senior Services. Michelle embodied the model of a what a perfect public servant should be. Michelle is featured and recognized in “the Go” Magazine for Senior Services for her work and contributions in Senior Services over the last 40 years.

Additions to the Agenda:

9:45AM - FY23 Funding Request

Approve May Minutes:

Arlene prompted for a motion to approve the May minutes. Rose motioned to approve the May minutes; Jeff seconded the motion. The AAC motion passed unanimously.

Racial Equity Overview: Part 2 – Devanand Heins, Client Service Administrator, Community Justice Services

Discovering and finding your “Why” in Racial Equity work

Played video: “Start with why – how great leaders inspire action” by Simon Sinek

- Golden Circle: Why, how, and what
- Learning to communicate from the inside out
- First step in using Racial Equity Impact Assessment Tool
 - What is your problem statement or problem of practice?
 - What is the decision (solution) under consideration?
 - Who will benefit from this decision?
 - Who will be burdened by this decision?
 - Are there strategies to mitigate unintended consequences of this decision?

FY23 Funding Request – Christine Vogel and Trinidad Botello

Christine and Trinidad provided a brief overview of the BCAA’s state fiscal year 2022-2023 budget. Arlene prompted a motion to approve the FY22-23 budget. Sara motioned to approve budget and Ellen second the motion. The AAC passed the budget motion unanimously.

Veterans Community Project Overview - Ash Wallis, Case Manager, Veterans Community Project

Veterans Community Project (VCP) is a non-profit that started in Kansas City with five combat veterans who wanted to end veteran homelessness.

- Came up with tiny home concept
- Now have 49 tiny homes in Kansas City with an outreach center and are transitioning to a navigation center
- Kansas City has an 85% success rate for moving vets out of the tiny homes and into permanent housing
- VCP serves vets regardless of their discharge status or time served
- VCP started with corporate and individual donations.

- Due to Kansas City's success and the expansion to other states, VCP is starting to see more federal and state grants. Working on changing the eligibility for federal and state funding to open up regardless of discharge status or time served
- Longmont is first expansion city
- Since VCP came to Longmont they have served over 280 veterans in Colorado
 - Housed 38 veterans with more pending
 - Outreach center opened on Main St. in Longmont in November 2021
 - Building a tiny home village behind Target and Home Depot off Hover and Anderson
 - Going to have 26 tiny homes with 5 being family units, and a 3,000 sqft community center
 - Community Center will have coffee and conversations, financial experts who can provide workshops on budgeting, VA peer support specialists who can provide extra support, and provide a gathering place for veterans
 - Tiny homes will be built with trauma in mind. Bed in back and able to see door and windows. Bathroom, kitchenette, desk, tv that swivels, vets can choose if they want a table or recliner (most choose recliner).
 - When vets leave the tiny home and are permanently housed, they can take all of their furnishings with them, so they are not starting from scratch.
 - While vets are at the tiny home village, they will have a case manager who works with them on their goals such as identifying what caused their homelessness so that when they leave the program they are fully supported and are able to make and reach sustainable goals.
 - Case workers provide follow-ups up to a year after vets leave the program to ensure they are not slipping and that they know they are always a part of the vet family and can come back to the village for coffee and conversation at the community center.
- Veterans can go to Longmont VCP outreach center and get snack bags, hygiene kits, food boxes, request a copy of DD214 (military service records), and referrals to agencies.
- VCP provides warm hand-offs for veterans to agencies
- Recently received a grant for VHOT (Veterans Homeless Outreach Team). Tentative launch of August.
 - VHOT has an ADA accessible van
 - Collaborating with mountain outreach specialists from county and EFFA to help join forces and see what veterans are needing in the mountain communities
 - Help get veterans on housing lists
- Barriers and Gaps
 - Affordable housing
 - Transportation, especially to doctor appointments and in mountain/rural communities.
 - Being disabled, having a service pet, and or/not being a senior are obstacles veterans face when it comes to qualifying for local transportation services

- Transitional housing options for those who are waiting on housing voucher approval. Getting a voucher and being homeless means the veteran is still homeless until they're able to find affordable housing with the voucher
- Shelters that accommodate families having more safe lots
- Trying to find landlords that are willing to work with case managers and willing to overlook a person's past such as little to no renting history, evictions, felonies, bad or little credit
- Rely on volunteers and community; 70% of tiny home community in Kansas was built by volunteers and many are waiting to help with building the tiny home village in Longmont

Veteran Services Officers (VSO) Overview – Adam Sutton

Veterans Service Officers (VSOs) are liaisons between veterans applying for services and the VA.

- Three administrations that makeup the VA:
 - Health Care Administration
 - Benefits Administration
 - Cemetery Administration
- Some of the services provided by the VA are pensions, disability, education, and home loans
- VA educates community partners like the aging community about services that are offered like pension programs.
- Educate dependents and would like to educate parents of those who recently signed up to serve before they start serving
- Gaps in Services:
 - Time it takes for services to start once the veteran applies for services
 - Immediate need for services like housing, health care, respite care, etc. is when the Veteran Service Officers can assist and work with the resource navigators like an Ombudsman to expedite services
- VSOs can help with education piece and forms, making sure the forms are completed correctly and have all the evidence needed for submission.
 - VSOs submit forms for veterans and track them through the system while application is being considered.
 - Answer any questions
 - Communicate with VA when necessary on veteran's behalf
 - If case is denied, then VSO will represent veteran in case of appeals
- BC veterans differ from other Colorado vets in that they are more difficult to get to as they tend to live in rural areas, and they are more resistant to services.
- <https://boco.org/VeteranServices>

Discussion with Boulder County's Administrator, Jana Petersen

County Administrator role was created in January 2020 to be chief administrative officer for business organization so the commissioners can focus on "what are we going to do and how are we going to do it".

- County Administrator works with all county departments in making sure there are no obstacles in the way of getting the work done

- Focus on how to get things done at the county
- COVID-19 Pandemic has shifted focus and impacted community members in deep and lasting ways
- What can county government do as recourse to community members to provide important services in whatever ways we can
- Aging community has been significantly impacted by pandemic and county administrator is working with commissioners on implementing important programs as a result of ARPA federal funding
- Marshall fire recovery:
 - Private property Debris Removal program (PPDR); 600 out of 1000 property owners have opted in to this program
 - So far 60 of the 600 properties have had their debris removed
 - PPDR Program expected to last through August weather permitting
 - PPDR is paid primarily by FEMA at about 90%.
 - Working with Community Foundation of BC in contracting with Volunteer Organization Active in Disaster (VOADS), mostly faith-based organizations across the country that respond after disasters happen to provide assistance to residence
 - Contracting with Lutheran Family Services for a \$1.5 million program to hire a team of seven resource navigators who will provide individual coaching and assistance to Marshall fire survivors
 - Resource navigators will work with property owners and renters to help connect them to resources
 - Several pots of money particularly to help residents who want to rebuild such as underinsured and low-income households
 - Going to be launching virtual intake process for Marshall fire survivors to connect with resource navigators.
 - Working on translating applications to other languages to make it easier
 - Opening physical location in Louisville in July so people can meet in-person with Resource Navigators.
- Commissioners have identified focus area for ARPA funds for county in general

Closing Summary:

Arlene prompted for a motion to adjourn. Christina motioned to adjourn; Ellen seconded the motion.

*Meeting adjourned at 11:30AM.
Submitted by Candice Long*

Next meeting of AAC:
Friday, Aug. 5, 2022
9 a.m. – noon
Location: Zoom