



Assistance. Advocacy. Answers on Aging.



AAC members = 20  
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: May 6, 2022

Hybrid Meeting

In person at Via (2855 63<sup>rd</sup> St, Boulder, 80301) - Virtual via Zoom

**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, Arlene Zortman

**Staff Present:** Michael Chifalo, Erica Corson, Carol Cross, Corrin Godar, Candice Long, Lindsay Neville, Tyler Schenkel, Christine Vogel

**Excused:** Carren Williams, Karla Garcia-Velez

**Guests:** Lisa Bitzer, Martha Lugo with APS, Frank Bruno

**Welcome and Comments from the Co-Chair – Dena Boutwell:**

Dena is the Safety Director at Via Mobility and introduced Via’s CEO, Frank Bruno. Frank discussed the following:

- Via Mobility is a 42 y/o nonprofit transit and paratransit shuttle service provider.
- Via started as special transit/paratransit in 1978. First rides were in 1979.
- Over time Via started taking on contract responsibilities with RTD, Access-a-Ride, and Flex Ride; Via is door-through-door and Access-a-Ride is door-to-door,
- 1994 started what is now known as the Hop. Just put three electric buses on Hop route.
- New shuttles and contracts work with Firestone, Frederick, and Dacono into Longmont; 80% Longmont and 20% Boulder
- Just bought property across the street which will allow Via expansion – electric charging stations, hydrogen fuel cells for motorhomes, natural gas, etc. Currently working on agreements
- Hiring drivers has been a challenge since the Great Resignation which started during COVID.

Dena discussed May is Older Americans Month with this year's focus being aging in place - how older adults can plan to stay in their homes and live independently in their communities for as long as possible.

- Nearly 70k older adults in Boulder County
- Boulder County has programs that encourage and support independence, physical, mental, social and emotional wellbeing, engage the community in anti-ageist discussion and work, connect people across age and social constructs with opportunities to share their time, experience and talents, and ensure activities are responsive to individual's needs and preferences, and increasing access to services that support aging in place.
- These focus points are all topics the AAC has been discussing over the past few years. AAC deemed the following focuses as main priorities - housing, transportation, and all things needed to age safely in place and in the home.

Dena shared a recent article about food insecurity and the impact COVID has had on food insecurity.

- 5.2 million older Americans = 7.1% of older Americans faced food insecurity in 2019
- Mostly affects:
  - people ages 60-69
  - People who rent vs own their own home
- Complex issue:
  - Significantly affects those whose income is less than 2x the poverty line,
  - Other factors include: social isolation, chronic or acute health conditions, high healthcare expenses, lack of affordable housing, and systematic racism and racial discrimination

#### **Public Comments and Correspondence:**

None.

#### **Additions to the Agenda:**

None.

#### **Approve April Minutes:**

Dena prompted for a motion to approve the April minutes. Jeff motioned to approve the April minutes; Cindy seconded the motion. The AAC motion passed unanimously.

#### **BCAAA Caregiver Program Overview – Corrin Godar, Clinical Case Management Supervisor, BCAA**

Mission is to empower and support caregivers or care partners throughout their caregiving journey.

- Who are caregivers? – Most are informal caregivers such as adult children, neighbors, informal caregiver in the community. Targeted at informal and not paid caregivers, or someone who may not even identify as caregiver. Target group to try and support them.
- Do this by providing information, resources and referrals.

- Host ongoing educational events and special events
- Programs are offered to caregivers of any age that assist a person age 60 or older, or that assists anyone that has any kind of cognitive deficiency/decline, such as dementia.

#### Coordination of Resources for Caregivers:

- Team is available to meet 1:1 with caregiver to develop individualized plan to accommodate the needs of the caregiver
- Services may include: referral to Medicare counseling, transportation, getting meals set up, etc.
- Can give information and assistance with respite

#### Caregiver educational series through the 'Age Well' series:

- Online - 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month, 10-11:30am – found on Age well Website or caregiving website - <https://boco.org/AgeWellSeries>
- Classes focus on providing informative and interactive classes, presentations and trainings to increase caregiver confidence, developing more confidence for hands on care, coping skills, and to improve self-care and overall quality of life for the caregiver and thus the recipient.

#### Ongoing/Series classes:

- Dairy Arts Center, Grace Graham Theater, June 14<sup>th</sup> 1-5 p.m., in collaboration w/ Alzheimer's Association: "Living Well with Dementia"
- July 21<sup>st</sup>. Dealing with Dementia class – tip and strategies for caregivers on how to care for their loved ones.
- Lindsay dropped info on upcoming events in chat and will send email w/info.
- Business results team is working on getting videos uploaded for the 'Age Well' Series so folks can watch at any time.

#### **Via Presentation – Lisa Bitzer, Director of Operations**

During pandemic Via went from moving people to moving food and a lot of it!

Partnerships with community food share, EFAA, Lyons Seniors, and BCFM

- Averaging 330 bags of food from BCFM on Mondays
- Will increase to about 500 during summer to ensure folks get fresh produce.
- Current biggest issue is not having enough drivers.
- Need more drivers to be able to provide more services
- Making some headway by: Raised wages several times over the last year and a half. \$20.50 starting wage for driving.

#### Added service during pandemic:

- Pilot in Northern Front Range with MPO – started in August, ended in February. Need to get funding from Weld County and other municipalities around there. Pilot was extremely successful = around 500 trips from August-February. 74 unduplicated riders  
Covered all the rural areas to give service to area that is very limited.

In negotiation with them to get Via back  
Mon-Fri 8-4:30 - Looking at getting another bus to expand route

- Westminster 8:30-3 M-F starting in July

Mobility Specialist average about 350 new riders a month.

- Mobility Specialist consist of 3 people who deal with 3,200 incoming calls a month
- Call Center has 8 Reservationists who handle the phones = 10k calls both incoming and outgoing monthly
- Mon-Fri 8-4:30 call center open – can leave msg regarding trip
- All 3-mobility specialist are bilingual/fluent in Spanish
- 5 out of 8 Reservations specialist are bilingual as well.

Current scheduling software is called Route Match which is not efficient or user friendly. Bought out by Uber Transit.

- Uber Transit takeover had brought the downfall of Route Match – many people have left. Uber transit refuses to update software which is why Via is looking elsewhere for software.
- Starting process to buy new scheduling software for paratransit and fixed route
- Hopefully by end of year will have new software and better online scheduling and a mobile app.
- With new software will be able to register and cancel trips instantly

Online portal has tripled. Used to be 20 ride requests a day and now have 100+ ride requests online daily.

- Need to get cost down. Boulder County one-way Via trip costs \$67 and Denver Metro \$85.
- Via provides door-through-door service
- Ride is free for the riders, above is just the cost of what it takes.
- No cost for any services including food delivery
- Loss revenue of about \$150k a year since Via does not charge for services.

Volunteer program: COVID cut the volunteers in half.

- Volunteers started food delivery during COVID with just shy of 8,000 trips in 2021.
- Have about 15 volunteers now. Had 30 prior to pandemic.
- Volunteers helped folks during COVID that needed transportation for medical reasons and their destination was not in Via's route.

Family and Friends program: Mileage reimbursement program

- Register with Via and live in BC rural
- Reimburse .50 cents a mile up to \$100 a month.

Scale of operations: Access-a-Ride, paratransit, and the Hop altogether have around 180 vehicles, with 30 vehicles for paratransit

- RTD has cut funding to Via and the Hop and now the city Boulder is getting money.
- The Hop is taking on Y route (Lyons to Boulder) starting in summer/June
- Working w/Ned to start service there in June/July
- The Climb = Gold Hill Route
- HOP 7 days week / times very depending on time of year
- Paratransit service Mon-Fri 8-4:30pm
- Flex is 7 days a week
- Access-a-Ride 7 days week
- Ride free Lafayette: Fixed route system and paratransit. 1800 passengers last month w/one bus. Started off as polit program and has flourished!
- Overall have about 315 employees at Via – need more!
- Assortment of vehicles: Prius, sedans, vans, body on chase buses 4-26 passengers which can hold 1-3 wheelchairs. Scheduling system knows and adjusts how many passengers can fit in a vehicle including wheelchairs.

**LGTBQ+ Programming Overview – Michael Chifalo, LGBTQ+ Specialist BC AAA**  
 Michael discussed the programs and services for LGTBQ+ aging community.

Michael reviewed the Gender Tree and acronyms.

Prevalence:

- The LGBTQ+ community are diverse. Come from all walks of life, and include black/indigenous people of color, and people from all socioeconomic statuses
- An estimated 2.4 million adults age 65+ self-identify as LGBT in the U.S.
- 6% of older adults report their sexual orientation as lesbian, gay, or bisexual.
- 4.6% of Coloradans identify as LGBT
- Older LGTBQ+ adults are at significantly higher risk of being lower income, facing discrimination and stigma, poor health, experiencing social isolation, and premature death.

Obstacles:

- Older LGBTQ+ adults experience challenges accessing inclusive, gender-affirming health and social care.
- LGBT people are, on average poorer and have fewer financial resources than their heterosexual counterparts.
- LGBTQ+ caregivers may face limits in their ability to provide care over the long-term, especially if decision-making is required for the care recipient.
- Social isolation is more prevalent for LGBTQ+ older adults than for the general older adult population.

Why?

- Our LGTBQ+ programs and services were created to address the disparities that exist for LGTBQ+ older adults. Our Programs and services are able to respond to the community needs

#### Response:

- Project Visibility: Creating Inclusive Communities for LGBTQ+ Older Adults
  - Live online, train-the-trainer, Documentary
- Rainbow Elders: Community Education and Social Support
  - Newsletter, Facebook, Website.
  - Supper Club/Teatime, WRITING Group, Pride, Lavender Gala (Dec 4<sup>th</sup>)
- Rainbow Connections: Volunteer Program
  - Email, text, phone, video, and in-person

#### History:

- Pride Month: Stonewall Riots; Inequity and Exclusion
- Our Local Story:
  - Rainbow Elders
  - Project Visibility
  - Lavender Gala (22<sup>nd</sup> year this year!)
  - Documentary (3<sup>rd</sup> ed coming out later this year)
  - Rainbow Connections

#### 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

Stay Connected: Newsletter, Facebook pages, Website, Volunteer, Project Visibility Online

#### **Racial Equity Overview – Lindsay Neville and Michael Chifalo**

Lindsay discussed Equity vs Equality

- Equality: Each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities
- Equity: Recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.

Racial Equity Vision: Boulder County is a fully inclusive, anti-racist, multicultural organization in a transformed society.

Pacific Educational Group: Courageous Conversations about Race (CCAR)

- Courageous Conversations is about utilizing the four agreements, six conditions, and compass in order to engage, sustain, deepen interracial dialogue about race.

#### Four Agreements:

1. Stay engaged
2. Speak your truth
3. Experience discomfort
4. Expect and accept non-closure

#### Six Conditions:

1. Focus on personal, local, and immediate.
2. Isolate race
3. Normalize social construction and multiple perspectives
4. Monitor agreements, conditions and establish parameters
5. Use a working definition of race
6. Examine the presence and role of whiteness.

#### The Courageous Conversations Compass Quadrants:

- Emotional, Feeling, Heart
- Moral, Believing, Soul
- Intellectual, Thinking, Head
- Relational, Acting, Hands and Feet

#### White Supremacy Culture, i.e. what gets rewarded in every day work life:

- Perfectionism
- Sense of urgency
- Defensiveness
- Quantity over Quality
- Worship of the written word
- Paternalism
- Either/or thinking
- Power hoarding
- Fear of open conflict
- Individualism
- Progress is bigger, more
- Objectivity
- Right to comfort

#### Cultural Responsiveness & Inclusion Committee (CRIAC):

- Survey re: diversity and diversity trainings at the county
- Committee formed in 2013
- Road Map created May 31, 2016 (Create goals, tangle goals, implementation, measures for accountability, keep initiative alive)

Commissioner Strategic Priorities 2019-2023 have Equity and Justice as one of its main strategic priorities.

Office of Racial Equity: “The initial focus of this team will be to help Boulder County support strategy, tools, and curriculum to advance racial equity internally.”

- 3 positions office: Director, Policy Analyst, Teaching and Learning Analyst

Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE):

- National network of governments working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all
- Training and resources

Community Services Cultural Responsiveness and Inclusion (CS CRI):

- Meet Monthly
- Action Teams: Policy, Affinity Spaces, Learning Team
- Shared leadership
- Internal communication

Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS):

- Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and services to all members of the community
- Ensure all members of the community have an opportunity to participate and/or receive necessary services and resources available to them.
- Provide information and training to BCAA staff, volunteers, and community

CLAS Committee Area of Focus 2022:

- Gendered Language/Pronoun Usage
- Racial Equity Tool
- Courageous Conversations About Race
- White Supremacy Culture

**Closing Summary:**

Dena prompted for a motion to adjourn. Ellen motioned to adjourn, Harriet seconded the motion.

*Meeting adjourned at noon.  
Submitted by Candice Long*

Next meeting of AAC:  
Friday, June 3, 2022  
9 a.m. – noon

Location: HUB (515 Coffman St., Longmont 80501) & Zoom