



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: Oct. 7, 2022

Hybrid Meeting (Zoom and Lafayette Senior Center)

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

Excused: Harriet Edelstein

Staff: Carol Cross, Candice Long, Kate LeMere

Guests: Dana Hoffman, Angel Bond, Dr. Jessica Villena Sanchez, Heidi Grove

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

Dena welcomed everyone and highlighted the major themes for the meeting were housing, homelessness, and transportation, which were key challenges as the country emerged from the shadow of Covid. Dena also highlighted that the City of Longmont had been recently awarded \$6k to help fund grocery runs and that the AAA would be working with Jean from the local housing association to deliver the program.

2. Public Comments and Correspondence

Carren highlighted the implications of a local pharmacist refusing to prescribe chronic pain relief drugs to a family member as permitted under the Pharmacy Conscious Act. Arising from a general discussion concerning the drugs industry and the need to help people with pain management, it was **agreed** that the general situation would be monitored to determine if future legislative changes should be proposed.

3. Additions to the Agenda

No additions were proposed to the agenda.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The motion to approve the minutes of the previous meetings (held on Aug. 5 and Sept. 2, 2022) as correct records was **approved**.

5. Lafayette Senior Services - Update

Dana Hoffman introduced herself and provided an update on recent developments delivering services at the Lafayette Senior Center. Arising from her introduction and a general discussion, the following key points were noted:

- A recent SB-290 grant to install air conditioning at the Center had been approved.
- The Center was responding to local concerns and suggestions to improve and expand its services, such as

hosting the first Resources Fair, focusing on fire prevention, recycling plastic bags to help the homeless, and promoting Medicare.

- There had been a significant increase in demand to support people with dementia. The Center was investing in this area to forge ties with local support groups to organize events and strengthen community bonds.
- There was also a significant increase of people visiting the Center seeking temporary refuge and help with the cost of living, housing, Medicaid/Medicare/healthcare funding options, special needs, and supporting those with caring responsibilities.
- Three respite programs were available via the BCAA, including supporting people at home and with day places. A new RFP was being developed to possibly broaden the service involving day places and providing more support to care givers. Care.com was suggested as a useful website resource.

6. Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan - Update

Angel Bond (Ride Free Lafayette) and Dr. Jessica Villena (Mobility & Access for All) provided updates on local transportation issues. Arising from the presentations and a general discussion, the following key points were noted:

- *Ride Free Lafayette* had started in Aug. 2020 and was an on-demand, fare-free, seven days a week, door-to-door transportation service involving two vehicles serving targeted vulnerable and elderly members in the local area. There were three ways to book the service via an app, telephone, or the website, and the most popular pickup/drop-off locations and peak times were mentioned. Additional DRCOG and other sources of funding were being applied for to help integrate and expand the *FlexRide* services within Louisville, Superior and Erie areas.
- *Mobility & Access for All* was a program to improve mobility for all ages and abilities aimed at seniors, people with disabilities, low-income individuals, and youth. A three-minute promotional video was shown and 25 strategy priorities were outlined which included the need to coordinate activities with local community partners to identify and fill service gaps. A transit plan for Boulder County was a key priority alongside an access strategy (to identify safe routes to school and upgrade access routes/bus stops) and cost strategies to expand affordable/free transit fare programs. Supporting driver retention and training were key components of the resource strategy which would help to bridge service gaps. The recent recruitment of a driver would deliver a new service in the mountains shortly, and a pilot program involving health benefits for new drivers was suggested.
- The most relevant current elements of the above strategies for the BCAA were: the opportunities to work on issues relating to land-use elements and zoning; safe biking, lanes and storage for older adults (particularly for e-bikes/e-trikes); modifying existing vehicles to maximize accessibility; and nominating an BCAA representative to the Vision Zero Collaborative.

7. Homeless Solutions for Boulder County – Older Adult Presentation

Heidi Grove (Systems Manager for Homeless Solutions Boulder County (HSBC)) was welcomed to the meeting and provided a presentation on the latest developments shaping homeless solutions for Boulder County. The following issues were highlighted:

- The overall HSBC goal was to provide single adults experiencing homelessness with targeted, responsive services to support quick, stable housing solutions.
- The solutions involved a wide range of program types and services including coordinated entry, diversion and navigation services, and housing focused shelter for the most vulnerable. One-time assistance, rapid rehousing, and permanent voucher support/case management services were also offered by HSBC. A new service (from January 2023) was the sober living program which had been successfully delivered in Denver.
- The Housing First approach revolved around the idea that housing crucially underpins ‘stabilization’ for any person. HSBC had been in operation since Oct. 2017 and was supported by several working groups and

organizations to help deliver services.

- The general challenges faced by HSBC included: competing priorities, funding, cross system and supportive service issues, and competitive landlords. The specific challenges to Boulder related to an over-reliance on landlords, low density housing, the relatively high numbers of college students, and scarcity of resources.
- HSBC's key successes since 2017 were outlined which included: adding 235 new permanent supportive housing vouchers/units; secured funding to acquire units for those hardest to house; and secured funds to expand Street Outreach activities. Overall, 1,570 homeless individuals have been found homes.
- It was difficult to estimate the numbers of people who were homeless in Boulder County but, recently, numbers were increasing. Data relating to family homelessness could be provided on request.
- The aging population was the fastest growing section of the community experiencing homelessness (normally staying in motels and hotels), particularly in the City of Longmont, which was mainly due to substandard/dilapidated housing and increasing costs of living at home. This was an issue that required further deliberation and collective action in the community, particularly for elderly citizens who were vulnerable in terms of living at home but not vulnerable enough to receive skilled nursing.
- There was a general discussion as to how drugs and crime contributed to homelessness and how staff shortages (particularly in nursing and the trades professions) were negatively impacting on the delivery of care services and mobile home improvements.

8. Housing Discussion

Members held a general discussion regarding housing and homelessness, and the following issues relating to housing challenges and opportunities were considered:

- There was a need for additional guidance and support for obtaining and comparing quotes for home improvement works.
- How the BCAAA could secure grants/support and help prevent homes/mobile homes from becoming sub-standard.
- The need to simplify bureaucracy and provide more financial guidance and advice on accessing grants and services to convert homes. It was highlighted that up to \$10k of Medicaid funding was available for everyone to access to improve their own homes for health purposes.
- The need for a stronger advocacy and coordinating role for AAC members to speak-up for seniors at local council meetings.
- Housing affordability remained a key concern particularly in relation to new house building developments. Higher rental properties and the increasing cost of living in your own home were trapping and preventing many seniors from finding more appropriate accommodation.
- Carol highlighted that the above issues would help inform the BCAAA's next four-year plan and future funding.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Friday, Dec. 2, 2022, at 9 a.m. at Lyons Regional Library

Meeting adjourned at noon.