

# Advisory Committee on Aging (ACA) Meeting Summary

Friday, January 26, 2024

If you have difficulty using this document's content, please email [access@drcog.org](mailto:access@drcog.org) or call 303-455-1000.

## Members Present

Ada Anderson	Douglas County
Andrea Suhaka	Arapahoe County
Barbara Boyer	Arapahoe County
Bob Brocker	Denver
Chris Lynn	Jefferson County
Connie Ward	Jefferson County
Dave Appel	Jefferson County
Dawn Perez	Adams County
Donna Mullins	Jefferson County
Gretchen Lopez	Douglas County
Jim Dale	Jefferson County
Karie Erickson	Douglas County
Perla Gheiler	City and County of Denver
Phil Cernanec	At Large – Arapahoe County
Sharon Tessier	City and County of Broomfield
Steve Conklin	DRCOG Board – Edgewater
Valerie Robson	At Large – Jefferson County
Wynne Shaw	DRCOG Board – Lone Tree

## Guests Present

Allison Cutting, Douglas County, Debbi Haynie, Castle Rock Senior Center, Jennifer D'Ambrosio, Douglas County, Tex Elam, private citizen.

## DRCOG Staff Present

AJ Diamontopoulos, Senior Management Analyst, Doug Rex, DRCOG Executive Director, Erika Dubray, ADRC Manager, Fonda Buckles, ADRC Manager, Jayla Sanchez- Warren, AAA Division Director, Jennifer Reeves, Veterans & Community Options Manager, Kelly Roberts, Community Resource Specialist, Malorie Miller, Transportation Program Manager, Mindy Patton, Division Assistant, Rich Mauro, Director Legislative Affairs, Shannon Gimbel, Ombudsman Manager, Sharon Day, AAA Business Operations Manager

## Call to Order

Karie Erickson Committee Chair called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m.

## Public Comment Period (Non-ACA Members)

Allison Cutting from Douglas County told the committee Douglas County planned to have an older adult town hall On February 29<sup>th</sup> in Castle Rock. They will be discussing

the outcome of their older adult initiative. They would like to have as many people attend as possible. Start time will be 4 30 p.m. and will be in person and online.

### **Report of the Chair – Karie Erickson**

- Chair Erickson remarked about the beautiful celebration of life that was held for ACA member and former Centennial Mayor Cathy Noon. Cathy was beloved by many and will always be with the ACA in spirit. Members have all learned a lot from her guidance and leadership and her caring heart.
- Chair Erickson found out about a transportation company called Med Ride. They serve the entire State of Colorado and employ 300 staff. They have 250 vehicles with cameras inside and outside of the vehicles and have door through door service. Chair Erickson thought they would be good for short trips but would be cost prohibitive for longer trips.

### **Report of the AAA Director – Jayla Sanchez-Warren**

- Jayla provided a short tribute to Cathy Noon. She shared pictures of Cathy through the years and said how lucky we were to have known her, worked with her, and laughed with her. She will be missed.
- Jayla had a meeting with TF and Associates, the consultant hired to help the AAA develop partnerships with hospitals and insurance companies.
  - Accomplishments so far are:
    - The consultant did a workforce and provider capacity analysis.
    - Reviewed opportunities in the market.
    - Reviewed the AAA operational elements that might need to be adjusted should the AAA partner in this space.
    - Developed a pay and outreach plan, the goal is to generate more funding for services.
  - TF and Associates initial findings and recommendations are for the AAA to keep doing more of what they are doing now and to get paid for services.
- Jayla met with Kristine Burrows, the new Senior Specialist on Aging at the Department of Human Services. Kristine has worked at Jewish Family Services, Next 50 and Easter Seals.
  - Kristine is working on a strategic plan on aging for the State.
  - Jayla and Kristine discussed the needs and challenges in the region and in the State as identified in the CASOA report.
  - They discussed public and private partnerships.
  - The new regulations that will be coming from the Administration on Community Living (ACL) will change the way the AAA does their work, and they talked about how they will accomplish the changes without more funding.
- Jayla, Doug Rex, DRCOG Executive Director, Ron Papsdorf, Director of Transportation and Sheila Lynch, Director of Regional Planning and Development

met with Congresswoman Caraveo. They talked about what DRCOG is doing in the area of transportation, regional planning, and in the area of aging. Congresswoman Caraveo was interested in what happened with Senior Hub's meal program and how the AAA would work with Adams County and other contractors to continue the meal service that Senior Hub would no longer be providing.

- Jayla reminded the committee that the general enrollment period for Medicare Advantage Programs is underway from January through March 31st. This is the time changes can be made to the Medicare Advantage Program.
- Jayla received the semi-annual report from Nymb1, the fall prevention balance program that DRCOG helps fund. Nymb1 signed up 4,154 new participants and reactivated 5,500 current enrollee's. This continues to be the largest fall prevention program in the country.

### **Move to approve consent agenda**

Items on the consent agenda included: December 1, 2023, meeting summary.

Barbara Boyer motioned for approval. Wynne Shaw seconded the motion; the consent agenda was unanimously approved.

Agendas and summaries are posted on the [DRCOG website](#) from the link choose the month and date of the meeting, click on the event. Once clicked, you will find the link to the meeting for that month.

## **Informational Briefings**

### **Legislative update – Rich Mauro**

- [SB-040](#) the State Funding for Senior Services, is concerning the appropriation for state funding for senior services, in connection with adjusting the general fund appropriation for inflation annually and reviewing the adequacy of the appropriation every three years. This is the bill that DRCOG has been supporting through a public awareness campaign. The appropriation is for \$5 million.
  - Rich Mauro has been invited to attend a meeting with the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) to discuss this bill.
  - On January 25<sup>th</sup> Jayla along with other AAA directors, Chris Lynn from SRC, Frank Bruno from Via, and representatives from several statewide aging advocacy organizations participated in a panel to testify on the need for the additional funding. They received an eight to one vote in favor. The bill will go directly to the Appropriations Committee and will remain there until the end of the long bill process when the JBC will decide on spending.
- [HB24-1052](#) is the Senior Housing Income Tax Credit bill concerning the reinstatement of the income tax credit to help income-qualified seniors afford housing.
- Rich is working with DRCOG lobbyist Jennifer Castle to come up with an idea for emergency funding that would help in situations like what happened with the Senior Hub's meal program in Adams County. Rich and Jennifer worked on a proposal and

gave it to Senator Zenzinger who brought the proposal to the JBC. JBC staff are currently drafting a bill which will be a companion to the supplemental bill.

### **Update on public awareness campaign – Kelly Roberts**

- A toolkit was sent to ACA members, Colorado AAA's, DRCOG AAA staff and a dozen community partners.
- The toolkit contains a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document, a flyer with the Project Angel Heart client story, and an editable flyer which can be customized for individual needs, and social media examples. It also contains a link to a Survey Monkey questionnaire which DRCOG would like a shared input on conversations generated by the advocacy.
- DRCOG is posting weekly on social media sites Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.
- DRCOG will keep the committee informed of changes to any legislative bills as the session progresses.

### **Home delivered meal program in Adams County.– Jayla Sanchez-Warren**

- Before Christmas Jayla found out that Senior Hub could no longer provide home delivered meals to Adams County.
- Senior Hub delivered meals to 550 clients in Adams County. 500 of the meals were being paid for by Adams County, the remaining 50 were for the Eastern Plains and paid for by DRCOG.
- DRCOG quickly began to meet with Adams County to make sure seniors continued to receive meal delivery services.
- Adams County Commissioners stepped up by voting for \$50,000 of emergency funds to be directed to Senior Hub for the Meals on Wheels program. This covered two weeks of meals while a long-term solution could be worked out.
- Adams County partnered with Senior Hub, Volunteers of America, and DRCOG for a long-term solution. Volunteers of America prepared the meals and dropped them off at Senior Hub for volunteers to deliver.
- During this time there was a lot of media attention, the press wanted to give Adams County people a way to help so they asked for interested volunteers to call. At the same time Senior Hub closed for two weeks during the holidays.
- DRCOG became the site that people could call in to volunteer. DRCOG staff managed those calls and delivery of meals to the Eastern Plains.
- Jayla called all the Eastern Plains clients to find out their needs and how to best provide them their meals. It became clear to Jayla that DRCOG was serving the right population because these folks could not afford food or could no longer drive to go out and get food on their own.
- Because the length of delivery time to the Eastern Plains is long, keeping cold foods cold and the hot food hot enough to meet food safety requirements it was decided frozen meals would be the best option.

- On January 9<sup>th</sup> Adams County Commissioners voted to give another \$500,000 to the meal program. These funds will provide meals through May 2024.

### **DRCOG Board Report – DRCOG Board Chair Steve Conklin**

- At their last meeting Steve Conklin, DRCOG Board Chair said the Governor's staff talked to the DRCOG Board about the land use bills. Chair Conklin said that there are some of the same concerns as last year in terms of local preemption where legislation would take away local decision making. Chair Conklin appreciated the Governor's staff coming in to update the Board, he encouraged people to think about the legislation as the process continues, and when they have conversations.
- Chair Conklin told the group that at the February meeting they will elect new officers to the DRCOG Board, and this was his second to last meeting as DRCOG Board Chair. He will continue to serve on the ACA. He said there are new folks that have expressed an interest in the ACA and that we would be seeing some new DRCOG Board members to the ACA in the near future.

### **County Reports**

#### **Adams County – Dawn Perez**

- Adams County will be holding their combined Arapahoe and Adams County Eastern Plains meeting in June. The event is typically well attended by the people on the Eastern Plains.
- Dawn said she was sorry about the problems at Senior Hub but was delighted to hear that the County Commissioners helped out.
- Dawn announced that the Board of County Commissioners has approved a second person to represent Adams County. Greg Kaler is currently the treasurer of the Adams County Aging Network (ACAN) and will join the ACA committee at the next meeting.

#### **Arapahoe County – Barbara Boyer**

- With the loss of Cathy Noon, Arapahoe County is looking for someone to take over her position on the Arapahoe County Council on Aging (ACCoA). They will be looking at a variety of people paying attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

#### **Douglas County – DRCOG Vice Chair Wynne Shaw and Gretchen Lopez**

- Wynne Shaw informed the committee that the Lone Tree City Council approved a two-phase project of 165 affordable senior units, 101 units being built in phase one of the project and 64 units in phase two. Area median income (AMI) will range from 30 to 80 with an average of a 56 AMI. The development will be located at Ridgeway East. There will be a process through Douglas County to get on the waitlist.
- Gretchen Lopez let the group know that the Seniors Council has been in conversation with Nymbly Science about hosting a second meeting of the Allies for Aging in mid-March in Douglas County. They are trying to draw other organizations from the Denver Metro area and Colorado Springs

### **Other Matters by Members**

Tex Elam announced his resignation from the ACA. He said being on the committee the past 15 years has been a wonderful experience and thanked the committee for all their work. Chair Erickson said Tex was amazing as an advocate, a voice for older adults, a visionary, and a leader. She thanked him for being on the committee and said the committee has been blessed, lucky and fortunate to have him.

**Next meeting – February 23, 2024.**

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:58 p.m.