

**District of Columbia Commission on Aging  
Meeting Minutes for  
Wednesday, May 23, 2018**

**Attendance**

**Commissioners:** Carolyn Nicholas, Chairwoman; Guleford Bobo, Vice Chairman; Barbara Hair; John Giacomini; Barbara Lee; Marguerite Pridgen; Mary Taylor; George Arnstein; Alice Love; Constance Woody

**Ex-Officio Members:** Councilmember Anita Bonds (DC Council); David Quick (DCPL); Cesar Barreto (DDOT); Veronica Longstreth (DOH);

**Members of the Public:** Randall Rayburn (DBH); Gail Kohn (AFC); Irene Kang (DC Council)

**D.C. Office on Aging (DCOA) Staff Present:** Laura Newland, Executive Director; Garret King, Chief of Staff; Tanya Reid, Administrative Support Manager

**I. Call to Order**

Carolyn Nicholas (Chairwoman) called the meeting to order at approximately 10:07 a.m.

**II. Review and Approval of Minutes**

The meeting minutes from the Commission's April 2018 meeting were reviewed and approved as they were.

**III. Presentations**

**D.C. Office on Aging Update**

Executive Director Laura Newland (Director) gave a brief update on DCOA. She informed the Commission that DCOA would be busy with events in June. She highlighted several events including the Senior Symposium which will focus on technology, senior pride event, Ms. Senior DC, etc.

The Director also talked about program oversight. The impression that some community members have is that DCOA does not do oversight over the programs they fund. She reassured the Commission that DCOA does do program oversight, both financial and programmatic. The agency has both federal and local requirements that must be met, and they vary from program to program. DCOA is working internally and with grantees to improve oversight.

The Director gave an overview of the State Plan draft (handout). The agency used the 1,000+ comments they received to help formulate the state plan draft. She explained the layout of the state plan and encouraged the Commission to provide feedback.

Chairwoman Nicholas asked the Director about the budget. The Director stated that the final vote from Council still needed to happen. She also reminded the Commission of budget items that would affect DCOA, including capital improvements.

Commissioner Hair asked about getting a replacement flag at the Congress Heights Senior Wellness Center. Vice Chair Bobo piggybacked on it. The Director stated she'd get them one.

Vice Chair Bobo asked three questions:

- Does DCOA require the grantees to “purge” their roles? The Director stated that grantees are asked to update their service list once a year. The agency does not call it a purge. The purpose is to balance ease of use and ensure updated information. DCOA is working on universal enrollment across all of their sites. The Director pointed out that enrollment does not necessarily reflect use.
- Is there a plan to address the need for more social workers? The Director has been talking with the lead agencies for over a year and a half about that subject. She stated that not everyone needs a social worker, some needs can be addressed with other types of intervention, like companionship.
- Is the Director familiar with the new laws affecting assisted living facilities (ALF)? She is familiar with it; however, DCOA is not the lead on it. DCOA does not operate, or fund assisted living facilities, but the legislation does impact DCOA's population. Due to concerns about who is monitoring care in assisted living facilities, people drafted legislation to create a regulatory environment that would treat assisted living facilities like nursing homes. Veronica Longstreth (DOH) chimed in and stated DOH has been reaching out to other agencies and people in the assisted living community to ensure that what will be put in place is usable, fair, and does not make the facilities like an institution.

Commissioner Matthews reflected back to the Social Worker question. She stated that sometimes people do not know where to go, potentially creating an in-house directory could help. The Director said the agency is working on it and reminded them the Commission that DCOA's Information and Referral Assistance team is available.

Chairwoman Nicholas asked the difference between case management and social work. The Director informed the Commission that social work is clinical. Social workers can make an assessment, a diagnosis, and put together a plan, using that lens, you realize that most people are receiving care coordination.

Chairwoman Nicholas asked about transportation for the wellness centers. Ward 1 does not have a bus, and she testified that wellness centers should have parking designated on the streets. The Director informed her that DCOA does not control parking DDOT does; however, she has heard more about service level issues rather than parking. Commissioner Matthews chimed in and stated she is talking to Michelle Singleton, Bernice Fonteneau Senior Wellness Center Director, about working with DDOT/MPD to get visitor parking passes. So far, they have been unsuccessful working DDOT. Cesar Barreto (DDOT) said he would connect her with the appropriate DDOT staff personnel.

Commissioner Woody asked Cesar about a truck with Virginia tags parked in the neighborhood since April. Cesar indicated that she should reach out to DPW. Although the issue is related to transportation DPW enforces the DDOT regulations.

Commissioner Arnstein spoke about broken sidewalks in his neighborhood that was marked with white arrows in 2017, but nothing has been done. Cesar asked about the timeframe that markings happened because there were changes in contractors and that may be the reason it has not been repaired. Cesar said that he would look into the matter.

Councilmember Bonds suggested DDOT create a division that is constantly checking the neighborhoods for needed improvements and then give a total markup for what needs to be done. Cesar informed the Commission that a system like Councilmember Bonds suggested currently exists.

### **Randall Rayburn, Department of Behavioral Health (DBH)**

Randall Rayburn provided his email address, [randall.rayburn@dc.gov](mailto:randall.rayburn@dc.gov) and informed the Commission that he is the Mental Health Rehabilitation Services Coordinator. DBH refers to the people they serve as consumers or individuals in care. They serve around 30,000 people with Medicaid; they bill about \$120,000,000. He gave an overview of DBH's history. DBH is composed of Department of Mental Health and Addiction Prevention Recovery Administration. On October 1<sup>st</sup> the legal framework will be in place for DBH to have oversight over the freestanding mental health clinics. In general, DBH does not discriminate by age; however, they do not have a specific point of contact for the aging population.

Chairwoman Nicholas asked what the total number of consumers DBH serves. Mr. Rayburn did not have an actual, but he informed her that roughly 10% of the \$120,000,000 billed came from local dollars.

Chairwoman Nicholas about the closure of St. Elizabeth's. Mr. Rayburn informed that St. Elizabeth's hospital did not close, it moved to a new building; however, the older buildings were consolidated into one building. St. Elizabeth's has three types of populations: consumers who have checked themselves in, civilly committed - consumers who have been detained against their will, and the forensically involved population - consumers who have been found not guilty by reason of insanity or people who are there for competency restoration.

Chairwoman Nicholas asked about the large outplacement under Marion Barry. Mr. Rayburn said since the Dixon lawsuit the movement has been to right size the hospital. Some people did not require the hospital level of care.

Chairwoman Nicholas asked if there was a plan for the deinstitutionalized who did not have a place to go. Mr. Rayburn stated that in general, when people get discharged safe living should be arranged. If the person does not have to go to a group home, they receive a voucher. He also pointed out that some consumers do not want to go to group homes and choose to live on the street, and that is their right.

Councilmember Bonds asked if group homes were expanding and how many were in each ward. Mr. Rayburn said he would get back to the Commission.

Commissioner Matthews asked about the monitoring of group homes; she is aware of employees who are not getting paid the appropriate wages, do not have proper identification, etc. Mr. Rayburn indicated he would follow up.

An extensive conversation about homelessness and group homes ensued.

Mr. Rayburn suggested getting DBH's Housing Director to come to a Commission on Aging meeting.

Vice Chair Bobo asked if Community Connections was affiliated with DBH. Mr. Rayburn said it was.

### **Gail Kohn, Age-Friendly City DC (AFC)**

Gail reminded the Commission that between 2012 & 2017 DC worked to become an Age-Friendly City. In 2017, DC submitted its reports to the World Health Organization and received kudos for its accomplishment. DCOA is one of 55 agencies working towards an Age-Friendly City. She informed the Commission that they are welcomed to attend AFC domain meetings. A plan is being developed to move DC to be an easier city to live. The plan will be completed in August 2018.

Ms. Kohn named a few standout agencies including DCOA, DC Public Library, and the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Commissioner Matthews asked Councilmember Bonds about real property taxes; she wanted to know why couldn't seniors property tax remain steady, or possibly have a tiered approach. Councilmember Bonds stated that tiered approach might work, she has proposed a bill that if your income is below is \$18,000 you would 10% of what the property is taxed. The next level you would pay 25%. Councilmember Bonds has been talking with her colleagues to get the bill passed. The bill is in Councilmember Jack Evan's committee.

## **IV. New Business**

### **2018 Retreat**

Chairwoman Nicholas recommends focusing on Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation. Commissioner Hair recommended focusing on outreach and informed the Commission that she received a list of registered voters 60 and over and gave the list to Tanya Reid. Ms. Reid indicated that the list contained approximately 109,000 names and that she broke the list down by ward.

Councilmember Bonds recommended the Commission focus on how they can get a quick response to complaints. She also informed the Commission that the voter list is public information.

Commissioner Matthews said if the retreat is about elder abuse it may be worthwhile to talk about bullying amongst seniors.

The Commission developed a retreat sub-committee to discuss venues, topics, etc.

Commissioner Giacomini informed the Commission about the Pension Benefits Exclusion bill 22-0321, once you reach age 65, you can exclude up to \$20,000 of pension income from DC taxes. Councilmember Jack Evans needs to be jolted to push the bill forward.

Commissioner Arnstein suggested that the transportation subcommittee change its name to the mobility committee. He also informed the Commission that he is submitting his resignation.

**V. Committee Reports**

Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation: Chairwoman informed the Commission that she testified about each of the Commission's goals, and that the goal to enforce the L-21 legislation got action. Council allotted two prosecutors and one investigator to establish a unit similar to what Montgomery County has.

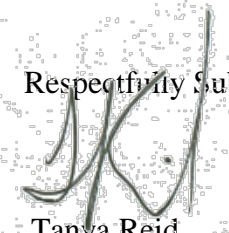
Transportation: The committee is scheduled to meet after the commission meeting.

**VI. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 PM.

These minutes were recorded by Tanya Reid, Administrative Support Manager, Office on Aging, and were formally approved by the Commission on Aging on June 27, 2018.

Respectfully Submitted,



Tanya Reid  
Administrative Support Manager  
District of Columbia Office on Aging