

**District of Columbia Commission on Aging  
Meeting Minutes for  
Wednesday, January 23, 2019**

**Attendance**

**Commissioners:** Guleford Bobo, Chairman; Carolyn Matthews, Vice Chairwoman; Alice Love; Lystra Hinds; Barbara Lee; Mary Taylor; Nancy Miranda; Hattie Pierce

**Ex-Officio Members:** Veronica Longstreth (DOH)

**Members of the Public:** Hector Rodriguez (DC Council); Deborah Grimstead (Alzheimer's Association); Jo-Anne Hersh (Ward 2 Resident)

**D.C. Office on Aging (DCOA) Staff Present:** Aurora Delespin-Jones, Deputy Director; Garret King, Chief of Staff; Tanya Reid, Administrative Support Manager; Darlene Nowlin, Community Relations Specialist

**I. Call to Order**

Guleford Bob (Chairman) called the meeting to order at 10:20 am.

**II. Review and Approval of Minutes**

The meeting minutes from the Commission's November 28, 2018 meeting were reviewed and approved without corrections.

**III. Presentation(s)**

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

Chief of Staff Garret King (COS) informed the Commission about a new position, Deputy Chief of Staff, Christian Barrera

The COS gave an update on Arthur Capper. He informed the Commission that DCOA had hired a temporary social worker to help with transitioning seniors into new houses. Of 161 residents displaced by the fire approximately 148 have been placed in new residences, a few went into nursing homes.

The agency's performance oversight hearing will tentatively be held on February 14, 2019 at the Wilson building.

The COS informed the Commission that the agency acquired the George Washington Health Insurance Counseling program. The agency provided grant funding to the program.

He also informed the Commission that the bill to change DCOA to a department did pass and it is currently on the Mayor's desk to sign.

Commissioner Alice Love asked where the residents of Arthur Capper were placed. The COS stated that they are throughout the city, but the majority are in Ward 6.

#### **IV. Open Discussion**

Chairman Bobo had a list of suggested topics to get the agency's feedback on to help Commissioners with answering questions in the community.

#### **Case Management**

The COS commented that the Commission should have their own feedback and opinion on issues. Mr. King informed the Commission that the Director will be addressing case management with the Senior Service Network. Regarding the Ward 8 Lead Agency, the lead agency currently has one social worker; two of their social workers left at the end of the year.

Vice Chairwoman Matthews asked how many case managers there are. COS responded that each ward has 3 – 4 social workers and there are 10 – 12 within DCOA.

Commissioner Love asked if the shortage of staff was due to funding. COS responded that the agency's funding is sufficient; it is more about the process and system.

Chairman Bobo said the lead agencies are having a retention problem. COS responded that the agency is looking at why retention is an issue especially with wards 7 & 8.

#### **Home Delivered Meals**

Chairman Bobo had concern that some wards had waiting lists. Deputy Director Aurora Delespin-Jones informed the Commission that the meals were based on priority. Priority 1s and 2s are worked on first. The agency looked into the waiting list issue and found that some on waiting lists had not been assessed and therefore are not truly on a waitlist. The main objective is to get meals to those that are priority one and two.

Commissioner Love asked how many contractors are providing meals. The COS responded that there are two contractors, Dutch Mill and Mom's Meal. The meal contract was bid on last year.

#### **Senior Housing**

In his visits at various senior housing complexes, Chairman Bobo found that seniors did not feel they could get services through DCOA. The COS encouraged the Commission to direct people the agency to places they believe the agency should do outreach.

## **Safe at Home**

Chairman Bobo wants to make sure that seniors are aware of the change in Area Median Income. The COS mentioned that DCOA was considering a cost sharing portion of Safe at Home through a partnership with Rebuilding Together. Rebuilding Together will present at February's meeting.

## **Senior Employment**

Commissioner Pierce asked if DCOA has a program that helps with senior employment. COS informed the Commission that the agency had two employment specialists about two years ago; however, they were transitioned to the Department of Employment Services (DOES) with the understanding that they still would be assisting seniors. DCOA's Director will meet with the DOES's new Director to make sure seniors have a clear path to receive services from DOES. Several commissioners expressed concern that seniors are not getting the services they need from DOES.

Commissioner Love suggested that DCOA have an employment component and that a taskforce could be put together to look further into the issue. COS is concerned that it would be a duplication of services, especially since DOES has the resources necessary.

## **Wellness Centers**

Vice Chair Matthews said a lot of food is being thrown away due to complaints of the food being "nasty." She also pointed out that home health aides are not staying with their clients. COS said the agency will speak with the wellness center directors to enforce home health aides staying with their clients. He would also talk to the nutritionist about the food.

## **Inclusion of All Seniors**

The Chairman has been receiving emails from former Vice Chair Swanda about LGBTQ seniors and their needs. The COS stated that DCOA had a LGBTQ advisory committee that came up with the three programs: Social eating program, Pride party, and peer to peer counseling.

Vice Chair Matthews brought up bullying; the COS suggested the agency could look into an anti-bullying campaign.

## **Lead Agency**

COS stated there is a lead agency in each ward they do case management, nutrition, outreach, etc. They are a "mini" DCOA in each ward; they are DCOA's community provider.

## **General**

Commissioner Pierce mentioned that buildings were receiving donated food from places like Costco, but the building "leader" was selling the donated food. COS said he could look into it.

## **Attendance**

The Chairman reiterated the importance of attendance and per the by-laws Commissioners must attend at least 70% of the meetings.

**V. Committee Reports**

**Health & Wellness**

The Chairman visited three wellness in the past month and found situations similar to what Vice Chair Matthews mentioned; it appears that some people are using the wellness centers like an adult day health.

Chairman Bobo spoke about the Medstar House Call program. The program provides services by zip code and the zip codes are around Washington Hospital Center. The program needs to expand to more of the city. A commissioner attested that the service was excellent.

**VI. Ward Report**

**Ward 8**

Chairman Bobo stated since the Commissions last meeting, there were at least 20 events for seniors. He felt the programs were very inclusive. The lead agency had an outstanding function, about 400 seniors attended.

**VII. Public Comments**

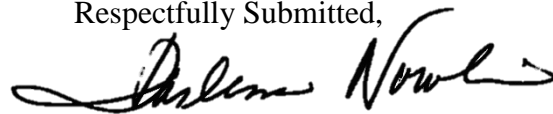
Hector Rodriguez provided a handout of a bill of emergency legislation to protect unpaid federal workers and contractors impacted by the Trump administration shutdown. The bill would require judges to put on hold any motion by a housing provider or lender to evict any federal worker or contractor during the federal shutdown and up to 90 days after the shutdown.

**VIII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:53 AM.

These minutes were recorded by Darlene Nowlin, Community Relations Specialist, Office on Aging, and were formally approved by the Commission on Aging on February 27, 2019.

Respectfully Submitted,



Darlene Nowlin  
Community Relations Specialist  
District of Columbia Office on Aging