

AREAWIDE COUNCIL ON AGING OF BROWARD COUNTY, INC.
VIRTUAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
MARCH 11, 2021

PRESENT

Arthur Birken
Alan Brass
Timothy Curtin
William Edelstein
Pauline Grant
David Lieberman
Malena Mendez-Dorn
Dr. Naushira Pandya
John Primeau
Senator Nan Rich
Hon. Ron Rothschild
Kenneth Rubin
Lisa Zucker

EXCUSED ABSENCE

Anthony Brunson
Representative Evan Jenne
Manuel Synalovski
Deborah Rand
Theodora Williams

STAFF

Charlotte Mather-Taylor
Cheryl Morrow

CALL TO ORDER

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Areawide Council on Aging Board of Directors held a Virtual Board Meeting on Thursday, March 11, 2021, utilizing Communications Media Technology (CMT), voted and approved by the Board at the May 14, 2020 Board Meeting through a Resolution.

The meetings are made available to the public, as noted in the Resolution Requirements, so the public has the opportunity to submit comments to the email address referenced.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes for the February 11, 2021 Board Meeting was made by Alan Brass and seconded by Judge Ron Rothschild. Cheryl Morrow called upon each Board member to vote individually. The motion was unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

President Grant called upon William Edelstein, who read the following motion for Board approval:

Due to discussions at the February 11, 2021 Board Meeting regarding the extension of the current officer's positions, I now make a motion to extend the term of the current officers from March 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021, due to the circumstances related to Covid-19.

The motion was seconded by John Primeau. Mrs. Morrow called upon each Board member to vote individually. The motion was unanimously approved.

Prior to continuing with the Executives Director's Report, Senator Nan Rich announced that March is National Women's History Month. At the County Commission meeting on Tuesday, the County had the honor of recommending and choosing the honorees for the first time. Valiant Women of the Vote: Refusing to Be Silenced was this year's theme. Senator Rich shared she had the honor of presenting a proclamation and announced that Charlotte Mather-Taylor was selected as one of the 15 honorees and spoke on behalf of the other women. Senator Rich felt Charlotte was well accomplished on so many different issues relating to women and was well deserved. Congratulations were extended on behalf of the Board Members.

Charlotte commented she was honored to be part of the group and grateful to have been selected to speak before the Commission on behalf of the other women.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Executive Director announced she received word from County officials that they would be extending the funding for the emergency meals program in the amount of 3.81 million dollars which will continue through May 31. Charlotte stated this shows the partnership the County has on behalf of our seniors and knows that the Department of Elder Affairs is very appreciative and extremely impressed with the County Commission and their commitment to ensuring our seniors receive the emergency meals they need. As part of the new contract agreement with the County, anyone who has received their two vaccines and whose income is above 200% of the federal poverty level will be released from the program as they will now be safe to go out in the community. Since the beginning of the meals program, approximately 2,828,163 meals have been served as of this date. Charlotte also announced March 19 is the one-year anniversary of the emergency meal program.

Charlotte indicated that we are also working with the Governor's office and the Department of Elder Affairs, who has asked us to call every recipient involved in any of our programs and anyone receiving our emergency meals to inquire if they have received any vaccines, are they homebound, or are they able to get to a site? A weekly list is being sent to the Governor's office and the Department of Health. The Governor's office is assigning someone to follow-up on the homebound seniors to make sure someone has contacted them.

We are still working with local organizations representing Holocaust survivors who need to receive vaccines and forwarding names to the DOH/Emergency Management for vaccination. Fort Lauderdale EMS team will start going out next week door to door to the homebound. We have been providing them candidates for the homebound program. We have also been working with the City of Oakland Park, which has been accepting people living outside the city to get their vaccines.

Bill Edelstein commented he is deeply concerned by the numbers of individuals who are food insecure, which appears to have dramatically increased since the pandemic. Bill feels the County should take a more reassuring approach to enlighten the community on how they have stepped forward on the feeding program.

Senator Rich responded that the County has been utilizing many county parks for food distribution sites. She stated a substantial amount of money has been given to the Area Agency and Feeding South Florida to help support the meal distribution programs. Since there is a problem with vaccine hesitancy, vaccine education material will also be included at all feeding sites.

The Executive Director reported on the technology projects. The iN2L program is progressing well and we are hearing positive feedback from the projects regarding the tablets. The Uniper program's implementation is delayed due to some company process issues, however those are being addressed and it is moving along now.

Charlotte reported on the Helpline. During February, 4,790 calls were received (about 240 each day), up from January with 233 calls per day. The majority of calls are still related to the meals program, Long Term Care Supportive Services, and our EHEAP program, which helps pay FPL utility bills.

The SHINE Program (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) received 115 requests for Medicare counseling in February. We have maintained 25 of our SHINE volunteers who have been working remotely throughout the pandemic. The Department of Elder Affairs has approved additional monies for technology to purchase new computers and headphones for the volunteers.

Charlotte announced they are working very hard to provide more classes for our GWEP Grant in partnership with Dr. Pandya and Nova Southeastern University.

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The Executive Director reported the Northwest Federated Woman's Club had a staff member who tested positive for Covid and was briefly closed but has currently reopened. All of the projects are operating remotely except for Catholic Charities Wilton Manors, Northwest Federated Woman's Club, Northwest Focal Point, TLC, and Noble McArtor, which have opened for clients. All the projects are still providing recreation services, transportation, telephone reassurance, shopping assistance, and caregiver training and support.

Most of the projects are involved with the technology grants to provide services as well. Other projects that are not daycare and senior centers that remained open during the pandemic include Meals on Wheels, Home Touch, Rebuilding Together, Broward County Elderly and Veteran Services, and Broward Health.

Evidence-based classes are still being provided through zoom and seem to be doing fine. Our SNAP Grant that allows us to assist seniors in becoming qualified for food stamps is also going favorably. Since October, staff have assisted 118 older adults who have applied for benefits totaling \$6,800.

The Executive Director announced we are moving forward with the Hall of Fame Luncheon and thanked Judge Ron Rothschild for agreeing to serve on the nominating committee. Charlotte has spoken to Broward County Mayor Steve Geller, who will chair the event. The Mayor indicated he would like to have the committee meet in person and hold the meeting at either the County Commission or Area Agency. The Committee meeting will be held on March 25. The deadline to submit nominations is March 19. So far, 39 nominations have been received. Charlotte stressed if you know of anyone to please send in their names. Sponsorship levels are still available. Lunches will be delivered either to their offices or home that morning to enjoy while watching the event.

Charlotte noted Fair Share contributions are coming in and she is grateful considering how hard the cities have been hit with the pandemic. The majority of the cities have submitted their 2021 allocations except for Cooper City, who had indicated they were not giving money to anyone this year, Dania Beach, Deerfield Beach, Oakland Park, Plantation, Southwest Ranches, West Park, and Wilton Manors. The total received is \$1,246,728.

The Broward Alliance Partners Meeting has invited Charlotte to speak at the April meeting. Since their meeting is at the same time as our Board Meeting, Charlotte has asked if the April 8 Meeting could start at 9:30 or 10:00 am, so she has at least a half-hour to address the group about what the Area Agency has been doing. All members agreed.

Charlotte announced the County has graciously allowed ADRC Staff to sign up for the Dismantling Racism classes they are offering. They have reserved four slots for us in each of the classes. She advised that all staff will be taking the class.

Lastly, Charlotte commented she had again spoken to Julie Klahr, who had confirmed in her opinion it was okay for the Board to vote to extend the officers positions, but stood by her conservative approach to not vote on any financial or contractual issues through zoom until the pandemic is over and the members meet in person.

Senator Rich shared The American Rescue Plan of 2021 will provide \$1.9 trillion nationwide aimed at combating the COVID-19 pandemic. \$350 billion will be distributed to State and Local Governments to respond to the pandemic. Broward County will receive \$378,729,268 in direct federal aid. These funds must be spent by the end of 2024. Cities and other non-county municipalities will receive their own allocations. Cities with populations over 50,000 will receive direct federal aid and populations under 50,000 will receive their distribution through the states 30 days after receipt by the state.

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Senator Rich also noted the funding for Older Americans Act Programs nationwide includes \$740 million for Senior Nutrition Programs, \$470 million for Home and Community Based Support Services, \$145 million for assistance for Grandparents caring for children, and \$14.4 billion to the Veterans administration for healthcare services and related support to eligible veterans.

The relief package includes an important Child Tax Credit Expansion. This increase will provide \$300 monthly checks, per child for eligible families. It is estimated this credit will help eliminate child poverty by about 50%.

The County will be introducing a Vaccine Hesitancy Education Campaign based on the Census model which utilizes trusted figures in each community. In addition to the County, the Health Foundation of South Florida, the Children's Services Council, the Florida Department of Health in Broward, and many other community partners will participate. Tool kits are being developed and will be approved the first week in April. They will be distributed throughout the community. There will also be robust marketing campaign which will include billboards, newspaper ads, radio, TV, and social media.

PRESIDENTS REPORT

Excused Absences included: Representative Evan Jenne, in Tallahassee; Anthony Brunson, Deborah Rand, and Manuel Synalovski had business commitments; Theodora Williams, ill.

President Grant extended happy birthday wishes to Dr. Naushira Pandya, who celebrated her birthday on March 10.

OTHER BUSINESS

Bill Edelstein inquired if Charlotte had any news about Hillmont Gardens. The Executive Director shared she had recently spoken with John Sharkey, who is doing a great job. The residents are fine, indicated most of them had been vaccinated. The Department of Health has also been in contact with him. Charlotte also mentioned that Manny Synalovski contacted her and said he is working with a group interested in buying Hillmont Gardens. Charlotte responded she felt it was not a good time and possibly should be discussed at the June Board Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Since there was no further business, Senator Nan Rich made a motion that the meeting be adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Senator Nan Rich, Secretary

APPROVED _____