

Minutes of the Commission On Aging Meeting  
Garvey Center – Leonardtown, Maryland  
Thursday, November 19, 2009

**CALL TO ORDER**

Start Time: 12:30 p.m.  
Location: Garvey Senior Activity Center, Leonardtown, MD  
Chaired By: Kathie Reich - Chair

**PRESENT**

**COA Members:** Sam Brown, Vicki Brown, Claudia Knowlton, Florence Lanham, Elfreda Mathis, Peggy Reardon, Kathie Reich, Sheral St. Clair, Sandra Wheeler

**Department of Aging Staff:** Lori Jennings-Harris, Director; Dana DiGregorio, Sr. Administrative Coordinator.

**GUESTS**

Commissioner Daniel Raley; John Savich, County Administrator; Georgia Nelson; Anne Borgholthaus; Unknown guest

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

No Agenda for this meeting

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Moved to next meeting

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Discussion with the “Board of County Commissioners” regarding Medical Adult Day Service Program:**

- Commissioner Daniel Raley and John Savich, County Administrator, attended this meeting of the Commission On Aging. This was an opportunity for the Commissioners and John Savich to give an update on the Medical Adult Day Service Program and its future through an open dialogue with the Commission On Aging members.
- Kathie Reich started the dialogue with an overview of what the Department of Aging staff has accomplished over the last year including increasing the enrollment, average daily attendance and reducing transportation costs. In addition, the Commission On Aging, and the Friends Of Ripple group have been working over the last several months in order to promote, improve, and enhance the Medical Adult Day Service Program. Kathie Reich asked Commissioner Raley and Mr. Savich to give the Commission members an update on the status of the Medical Adult Day Service Program.
- Commissioner Raley thanked the Commission for being proactive and getting involved in a dialogue with the Board of County Commissioners. Commissioner Raley stated that the Board of County Commissioners is committed to continuing to provide this service to the St. Mary's County community whether it be organized through County Government or as a privatized entity.
- John Savich gave an update as to where the County is in the process. The panel consisting of St. Mary's County executive staff members including John Savich - County Administrator, Elaine Kramer – CFO, Lori Jennings-Harris - Director for the Department of Aging, and Rebecca Kessler - Manager for Home and Community Based Services, has reviewed the Letters of Interest, done initial proposal interviews and second interviews and have narrowed the choice down to two potential candidates. At the current time, staff is reviewing the additional proposal information provided by candidates.
- John Savich noted that the actual transition is the most difficult and most important part of this process. The county needs to do everything it can to make this as smooth a transition as possible.
- Sandra Wheeler asked what will happen if this privatization does not work, the provider pulls out or fails at providing this service after the privatization has taken place. Will the County step back in to reestablish this service? Mr. Savich stated that this is a necessary service and the County will have to develop an emergency plan at that time. The County

needs to include in the agreement/contract that the County will be given a lengthy notice should the company choose to pull out or there will be a substantial penalty.

- Sheral St. Clair noted several reasons and examples of persons within the St. Mary's County who are participants at the Vivian Ripple Medical Adult Day Services Center and that this service keeps the client and their family/caregivers as active, vital members of the community.
- John Savich stated that at the current time the average program costs around the state of Maryland runs about \$70.00 per day, whereas Ripple runs at about \$120.00 per day. By looking into privatizing we are looking into companies that can run these types of programs for about \$70.00 per day without cutting program services or reducing the quality of service. If the companies need to cut service in lieu of a subsidy from the County, then the County may need to consider subsidizing the privately run Medical Adult Day Services in order to keep the program's integrity.
- Commissioner Daniel Raley stated that we do not want to eliminate this service, and he is committed to making this transition work and be the best for the community. Both John Savich and Commissioner Raley would like to have an advisory committee, composed of Commission On Aging Members, involved in the process and to keep the Commissions aware of every step and hurdle.
- Elfreda Mathis noted that "cuts" happen at the lowest, most vulnerable level. Elfreda asked if the County is willing to come in and pick up the pieces to keep this program running as a premium service provided in St. Mary's County. John Savich responded by stating the County will remain involved and this service will continue to be covered by the County. John Savich also stated that part of this process is to make sure we can remain part of the Medical Adult Day Services program even if it does become privatized.
- Sam Brown asked about the people that volunteer at Ripple Center and will they be kept on as a source of assistance. John Savich responded by saying it would be proposed to the entity taking over.
- Sam Brown asked questions regarding budget and balancing the Ripple Enterprise Fund.
- Sam Brown asked what will happen to those who may lose their jobs. John Savich responded by stating that both entities spoke about picking up employees, offering benefits and being competitive with salaries, but the County cannot guarantee anything until the final proposals are received from the interested entities.
- Elfreda Mathis asked if there will be a counseling service provided to the employees to go over retirement issues. Elfreda Mathis proposed a formal evaluation of the program on a regular basis after privatization. Elfreda Mathis also noted that there will always be a transportation issue. John Savich stated that the County should still have a handle on what is happening at the Medical Adult Day Service Center because the program will remain in a County facility and there is the potential that the County will subsidize this program. If the County is subsidizing the program we will most definitely remain involved.

#### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

- The Commission agreed on scheduling the Tri-County Commission On Aging Meeting for Thursday, April 29, 2010 to be held at the Northern Senior Activity Center.
- Sam Brown, Sheral St. Clair and Elfreda Mathis volunteered to be members of the Commission On Aging advisory committee to meet with the Board of County Commissioners and candidates to discuss the privatization of the Medical Adult Day Service Center.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Monday, December 21, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. at the Garvey Senior Activity Center.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Prepared by:  
Dana DiGregorio  
Sr. Administrative Coordinator