

**Minutes of the Commission On Aging Meeting
Garvey Building – Room 1
Monday, November 22, 2004**

CALL TO ORDER

Start Time: 1:30 p.m.
Chaired By: Mary Ruth Horton, Chairperson
Recorded By: Sherrie Wooldridge, Senior Administrative Coordinator

PRESENT

Members: Mary Ruth Horton, Ardith Young, Pat Myers, Kitty Turner, Larry Younger and Mary Ann Grusholt.

Guests: Daniel Hinz

Staff: Julie Van Orden, Gene Carter, and Ted Grant

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Pat Myers made a motion to approve the agenda which was seconded by Ardith Young. Motion unanimously approved by COA member vote.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER MINUTES

Pat Myers suggested changes to the October meeting minutes. Mary Ann Grusholt also provided some changes to be incorporated in the minutes. A member also asked that the minutes be kept to one to two pages if possible. Pat Myers moved to approve the October minutes as corrected. The motion was seconded by Mary Ann Grusholt. The October minutes were unanimously approved by COA member vote.

OLD BUSINESS

Senior Tax Cap Status

Pat Myers reported that a St. Mary's County Senior Property Tax Credit Task Group meeting was held that morning to discuss feedback from the Teams visits to the MD Senators on the Budget & Taxation Committee. Senator Dyson, Delegate O'Donnell and Gene Carter were also in attendance. Delegates Wood and Bohanan had prior commitments and could not make the meeting. Feedback from the Teams visits was provided. Pat indicated that Senator Dyson was going to prefile his bill by December 3, Delegate Wood also did not see any problems with getting the bill through and Delegate Bohanan will support it. It was a very encouraging meeting. When a date is scheduled for a hearing on the Bill, Pat suggested that a large group of individuals go to Annapolis to show support for the initiative. Pat also pointed out recent newspaper articles in the Maryland Independent and Washington Post about senior tax initiatives in Charles County and Frederick, MD.

Mary Ruth told the members about a letter written from NARFE to the BOCC regarding a proposed amendment to the county Senior Tax Ordinance. She asked Pat to explain the purpose of the letter. Pat said that it was understood that all Commissioners supported the concept of the initiative but not all supported the contents of the Ordinance as now written. It was felt the chances of success with the Maryland General Assembly in this effort would be greater if all Commissioners would support the legislation. NARFE 969 Board members sent a letter to the BOCC proposing an amendment to the Ordinance. Gene Carter read the letter to the COA group.

Mary Ruth asked the COA members if they wanted her to send a letter to the commissioners supporting NARFE's proposed amendment. Ardith Young moved to join with NARFE in writing a letter of support for the amendment, and Larry Younger seconded the motion. COA members unanimously approved this motion.

Survey of Senior Service Priorities Update

This tool will assist the COA in knowing what the seniors want to concentrate on and what resources may be available. Mary Ruth is pleased that some have been sent in, although not a great response from the Retired Teachers. Daniel Hinz will distribute to his community in December and has done Hollywood United Methodist Church. Pat Myers reported survey forms have been inserted in the November NARFE newsletter and were provided to Our Lady of the Wayside Church in Chaptico. Libraries will also receive copies. Mary Ruth asked if the survey would make it into the Department of Aging January/February newsletter and Gene Carter assured her it would. Ardith Young recommended Newtowne Village, Pegg Road Apartments and Cedar Lane and offered to distribute the survey. Mary Ruth will do Loffler, Garvey and Oakley. Gene Carter suggested the survey be distributed at the DoA Christmas Party and LIFE classes (stamped LIFE or a different color for comparison of particular groups of seniors).

NEW BUSINESS

SENIOR SUMMIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Housing: Mary Ruth Horton and Kitty Turner attended the monthly housing meeting at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. The project for the lower end of the county may move forward. They have the land and it has perked. Stavros, one possible builder, has indicated that there may not be enough need in the lower end of the county. Kitty has concerns about traffic. The next housing meeting will be a lunch meeting and if anyone wants to attend reservations are needed. Pat Myers is working with a group for the next steps to be taken for housing in the northern part of the county.

Health: Larry Younger provided two documents at the last meeting which seem to emphasize communication, coordination of services and funding as key components. The second document shows what services and amenities are available in counties in MD. Larry asked for direction for future progress of the group. Mary Ruth said that he is in charge of the committee and could explore issues as he decides and feels comfortable with.

Transportation: Mary Ann Grusholt has not talked to Mr. Jarboe, but will get in touch with him about the opening date of the Northern Senior Center to schedule bus service.

Education: This committee has not done anything formalized as they are waiting for results of senior survey.

APPOINTMENT OF A NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Mary Ruth has asked Larry Younger, Pat Myers and Ardith Young to serve on the nominating committee. The three positions are Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Corresponding Secretary. Members can only hold the same office two times in a row. These terms will begin in January of the new year. In the event of inclement weather in December, Mary Ruth asks that the Nominating Committee contact COA members with nominations via email or postal service.

DEPARTMENT OF AGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Gene reported that construction of the new center is moving along great and an opening date of April, 2005 appears to be very realistic. He feels it is going to be a terrific building. He has presented staffing requests to the Board of County Commissioners to include the same staffing profile of the other centers: Operations Manager, Program Specialist, Senior I & A Caseworker, Office Specialist and Food Service Technician. Advertising for these positions will begin in January, 2005.

The opening of the Northern Senior Center will be the last step in the Department of Aging reorganization. There will be a new division called "Senior Center Operations" with a

Manager position which will entail overall responsibility for the senior centers, the nutrition program, the food aspect of MOW program, and coordinate activities and events between all three centers.

The budget process has started although it is very early in the process. The Director of Finance and County Administrator are attempting to encourage the BOCC to agree to a three year operating budget process and eventually lead to a 5 year budgeting process. This would allow a clearer idea of the county's operating budget for several years in the future.

Long range plans for the DoA newsletter include separation into two different publications; One involving activities and calendar events, and the other primarily focusing on information appropriate to the interests of senior citizens. The possibility of obtaining advertisers for the information issue, alternating months of distribution, and sending out for publication are also being pursued.

Gene has been contacted by Phil Rollins about how much the DoA wanted to be in on the master planning and the second building. The only involvement Gene feels the DoA should have would be in regards to future senior housing. The question of connecting the buildings was mentioned; however Gene does not have much enthusiasm for direct connections between multiple buildings. Mary Ruth feels it is best that the senior center is left separate, with the possibility of a connecting walk.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

NORTHERN SENIOR CENTER: Pat Myers felt that this topic was covered thoroughly. She announced the county-wide Christmas Party on Wed., Dec. 15, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the Mechanicsville Moose Lodge. Cost is \$5.00 (catered lunch) and reservations required. See Alice Allen for tickets.

RSVP: George Donely was not available and did not provide a report.

MADS: Julie Van Orden announced that the Medical Adult Day Services monthly enrollment was at 57 participants. Average daily attendance is 39 (with a capacity of 90). Grant waiting list was opened at the beginning of October and other medical assistance clients have been admitted as well. Julie attended a conference where the topic of conversation was the Medicaid Waiver reform and how it will affect Medical Adult Day services and Julie will remain on top of that issue. Mary Ruth offered the support of the COA.

UNITED SENIORS OF MARYLAND: USM Rally is scheduled for January 25, 2005 (Snow date: Feb. 1st) at St. John's College in Annapolis. Car pooling is encouraged as there will not be a bus service provided this year (in the past St. Mary's County has gone 50/50 with Calvert County DoA). Cost of ticket is \$10.00 per person. See Mary Ruth if interested. Mary Ruth is going to create a flyer and try to get an article about the rally in the newspaper. An intern may help with the legislative session to assist the senior groups.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kitty Turner complained that outside of most public buildings there are many cigarette butts littering the ground and feels this is a serious environmental issue.

Mary Ruth announced that Delegate O'Donnell had informed the group in the morning meeting that because of budgetary constraints the tax assistance centers are probably going to be closed. He suggested that a person(s) be made available to assist during tax season. If there is anything we can do to help in this effort, he will let us know.

A motion was made by Pat Myers to adjourn, which was seconded by Mary Ann Grusholt. The meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

The next COA meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 20, 2004 at 1:30 p.m. at Garvey, Room 1.

Prepared by:

Sherrie Wooldridge
Senior Administrative Coordinator, St. Mary's County Department of Aging