

TRI-COUNTY AGING CONSORTIUM
ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD MEETING

Minutes

May 18, 2020 3:30pm

Note: Meeting held remotely via Zoom

Members Present: Ken Mitchell, Chair Dwight Washington Bryan Crenshaw
Blake Mulder Jeanne Pearl-Wright

Members Absent: Robin Naeyaert Matt Bowen Chris Swope
Patricia Spitzley Adam Hussain

Staff: Marion Owen Kirsten Laing Kate Long
Joe Reeves Tammy Lemmer Tom Smith
Carl Buonodono Andrea Radel Casey Cooper
Robin Webb

Guests: Becky Payne-Field Rep, Aging and Adult Services Agency, MDHHS

Item #1. Call to Order:

K. Mitchell called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

Item #2. Approval of the Agenda:

Motion by B. Crenshaw, supported by J. Pearl-Wright to accept and approve the Agenda. **Motion carried by role call.**

Item #3. Minutes of April 2020 Meeting:

Motion by B. Mulder, supported by J. Pearl-Wright to accept the minutes for April 2020 with the correction of the date of the next meeting (June 15, 2020). **Motion carried by role call.**

Item #5. Public Comment: N/A

Item #6. Director Report: Marion Owen

This update will center on the COVID-19 Crisis

TCOA is continuing to provide essential services to older adults and persons with disabilities during the COVID-19 crisis. There are a few essential staff still working in-office and in the kitchen. Others are working from home if feasible. The recent updates are in “bold”.

Nutrition Program:

- Meals are continuing to be delivered to Meals on Wheels participants with the difference being that they are delivered once per week. There are 5-7 meals delivered and second cold meals if necessary. **Ongoing and the numbers of clients and meals has increased.**

- Meals are delivered by volunteers and we have had a significant increase in volunteers which Casey Cooper will be reporting on. **Continues**
- Assessments and Reassessments are being conducted over the phone as is allowed by AASA (Aging and Adult Services of Michigan) during the crisis. **Continues**
- All the AAA's received funding through AASA from the federal CARES Act for senior nutrition programs (Older Americans Act) in the amount of \$285,000 for VOVID-19 related expenses. **There is additional funding through the federal CARES Act. Joe Reeves will provide an overview of all the COVID-19 federal funding.**
- **AASA did transport the 350 Quarantine Boxes (Q-Boxes) and most, if not all of the boxes have been distributed. The boxes contained shelf stable items for several meals including pasta, sauces, canned meat and fruits.**
- **AASA will be providing fresh fruit and vegetables boxes through a grant from USDA. AASA has contracted with two food vendors to assemble and deliver the boxes to all the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA's) in Michigan. Both vendors are providers of fresh fruit and vegetables to restaurants. We expect to receive our first delivery in a week, and then will continue through September 30 and they may receive an extension through the end of December. TCOA will receive 350 boxes weekly.**

Carl Buonodono will be providing an update on the ongoing activities in the Nutrition program.

Community-Based Services, Project Choices and Community Services:

- Care Managers are continuing to regularly contact clients and conduct reassessments remotely, as allowed by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). Services to clients continue to be monitored, specifically in-home, personal care services. **Care Manager are keeping up with their reassessment and contacts with clients and are doing an excellent job, as are the supervisors.**
- Home care agencies continue to provide services. TCOA has contracts with over 45 provided and with a few exceptions, they are able to sustain their direct care staff. TCOA increased the hourly rates for Home Care providers to support them in retaining their staff who are facing many challenges and are at-risk. The \$.50 per hour increase is to be paid directly to the direct care staff. We hope to provide another increase in a few months. **The MDHHS Medical Services Administration has announced that there will be a \$2 an hour increase for all Direct Care Workers in Medicaid funded programs, including MI Choice/ Project Choices, nursing homes and CMH programs. The logistics of how this pass-through will be applied is still being decided. The increase will be effective April through June. Services eligible are Community Living Services (i.e. personal care) and respite services for caregivers.**
- TCOA staff have secured 1000's of PPE items from various sources including AASA, local Emergency Operations Centers (mainly Clinton County and City of Lansing). Most recently gloves, masks, mask shields, gowns and hand sanitizer were distributed to many of the home care agencies and Adult Foster Care facilities. Staff assembled items in individual boxes. Staff involved are Kirstin and Tom. Joe has been helpful in picking up PPE's and distributing. A big thanks to them. **To date almost 90,000 PPE items have been distributed to home care agencies and Adult The providers have been very appreciative for receiving**

the PPE's. AASA has been providing the most recent supplies consisting of gloves, mask and N95 masks, gowns, shields and hand sanitizer.

- AASA granted TCOA a waiver to provide funds to the Adult Day Care centers for the time they are spending on contacting their clients and providing assistance even though the centers are closed. The waiver allows TCOA to change the definition of "service". **The ADC's are continuing to contact their clients and monitor their situations. Also. The RSVP program is providing friendly visiting as well.**

- AASA has a section on their web site for older adults to fill out a short form if they need food. Tammy Lemmer and Casey Cooper will provide an update. **We received many referrals.**

- AASA has also has volunteers willing to provide direct assistance to clients in their homes. These are health related volunteers and there are Home Care agencies interested in securing these services. **We did receive a few names and one of the providers is connecting with a medical related volunteer as they are short staffed.**

- AASA has also provided volunteers who have signed up on their web site. **We received many new volunteers. Casey will provide information.**

- Telephone reassurance/well-being calls continue to be made to older adults and persons with disabilities. So many older adults live alone, and these calls are critical. Many are from Project Choices and Meals on Wheels but there are many from other sources.

Tammy Lemmer and Casey Cooper will provide an update on this.

- The 24/365 Crisis Services for the elderly is the back-up for Project Choices with staff on-call rotating coverage. **Continues.**

- Staff are also contacting Adult Fosters Care facilities where we have clients residing to offer assistance (PPE's) and get a sense of how they are doing. **This is ongoing.**

Information and Referral (I&A), options Counseling, MMAP and Crisis Services:

- Information and Referral staff are working from home and handling calls forwarded from the main number by the Receptionists who are monitoring the calls. **This is continuing and calls have increased.**

- MMAP and the Options Counselor are working from home and having regular contact with persons calling the agency. **Ongoing**

- The main TCOA phone #, the 800# and the Crisis Services line have a recording directing callers what number to push leave messages. Staff are monitoring and the receptionists are monitoring the messages to the main number. **Ongoing**

- Staff continue to provide needed services such as medications, transportation, medical supplies. Fortunately, heat and electrical companies have a moratorium of shut offs and water must be restored for those without water. **Ongoing**

Staff and Operations;

- Finance support staff continue to work on-site a couple of days a week to process bills and submit invoices to funding sources. Other days the finance support staff work from home as do the data entry and claims processing staff for Project Choices. Joe Reeves, Finance Director, is on-site daily as is Tammy Lemmer and Carl Buonodono. Also, on-site daily are the kitchen staff including the Food Production Manager, Antoine Johnson, and a

small group of his staff as they continue to assemble and deliver food to the various senior dining sites for pick-up. **Some staff trickle in at different times to pick up items, make copies.**

- Other Leadership staff continue to work from home and are in regular communication. TCOA has a committee for COVID-19 which has been meeting since early March to exchange information, develop and implement plans, The Committee is an extension of the TCOA Safety Committee and consists of the following staff:

- Carl Buonodono (Nutrition Director)
- Joe Reeves (Finance Director)
- Kirsten Laing (Director Project Choices/Care Management)
- Tom Smith (Contract Manager)
- Andrea Radel (Human Resources Manager)
- Andria Platte (Office Manager)
- Kate Long (Planner)
- Judy Wernert (RN Supervisor, Project Choices)
- Alesha Cavanaugh (Social Work Supervisor, Project Choices)
- Ruth Pell (Community Services Coordinator/Crisis Services staff)
- **Dori Branson (Access Manager)**
- **Jim Brandell (Reimbursement Specialist)**
- Marion Owen (Director)

We have added two more staff to the COVID-19 Committee a they are supervisors and the committee is working on a plan for the agency re-opening which we have decided will be in shifts or phases. Once the plan is complete, we will share it with the Board for feedback. We are reviewing all the directives from the state and informational materials from reliable sources.

TCOA and this Director are so fortunate to have the dedicated, creative and talented staff who have gone well over their job descriptions to provide services and support to our clients, their co-workers and the community. All have gone the extra mile and yet maintain a positive outlook. Hats off to all of them!! They are all very appreciated. **Cannot state enough about the staff as they have been rocks! They are a very cohesive and supportive group of people.**

Item #7. Planning, Advocacy & Development:

A. Annual Implementation Plan FY 2021 Review- K. Long gave an overview of the Annual Implementation Plan for FY2021, highlighting the new goal to improve accessibility and services to Michigan's communities and people of color, immigrants, and LGBTQ+ individuals by enhancing training for staff and contractors. TCOA is adding a Community Resource Navigator position who will connect the underserved to existing resources as well as play a big role in health crisis, like the pandemic crisis we are in. A public hearing was held on May 14th, 2020 at 1 pm, as a teleconference. Topics from wages of direct care workers and training, transportation, regional and cross county transportation plan, affects from Covid-19 on TCOA staff, clarification on the volunteer needs and Nutrition. Also written comment that the individual was glad to see that Clinton County services were

addressed in the plan. Advisory council approved and recommend the plan for Board approval in June.

B. Fundraising Update- Volunteer continue to do friendly calls to the MOW clients, Project Choice recipients, case coordination wait list clients, dining site participants, as well as Q-box referrals. C. Cooper gave an update to remind the Board members Golf Outing has been moved to August 25, 2020, and there will be protocols put in place for individual protection. The spring mailing campaign has brought in \$27,000 as of May 1st. This is over the \$26,000 total brought in for last year. \$10,000 was donated by one person. TCOA received \$742 on this past Giving Tuesday (May 12th). T. Lemmer gave an update on solicited and unsolicited grant received. We have received funds from MSUFCU (\$5000), Huntington Bank (\$5000) and Delta Dental (\$2500) for COVID-19 relief. TCOA has applied for and have a tentative approval for a service's grant from Huntington Bank to be used for grocery shopping services.

Item #8. Nutrition Program Update/Covid-19: C. Buonodono thanked Casey and Tammy for managing the volunteers. The Meals on Wheels client count before March was 1150-1200. It is now 1350. Nutrition has added 316 clients since March 15th. There are 24 Congregate meal drop off sites, first serving 252, last week 811 served. The meals provided were frozen, now a combination of frozen, shelf stable, and fruits and vegetables.

Item #9. Finance:

- A. Financial Report March-** J. Reeves presented the March financial reports. Motion by B. Mulder, supported by B. Crenshaw to accept the March reports. (see exhibit 9A1-9A16).
- B. MERS 457-A.** Radel presented another option for employees to contribute to a 457 Through MERS. B. Mulder supported by J. Pearl-Wright to accept the additional employee option for a 457 contribution. Motion carried by role call.
- C. COVID-19 Funding-** J. Reeves presented a handout outlining the new Federal Families First and CARES Act funding sources and allocations to help fund the COVID -19 related expenses, including nutrition, in-home services and community services.

Item #10. General Check Ledger Resolution:

- A. April -** This vote was postponed until next meeting, due to not enough Board member left in the meeting.

NEXT MEETING: June 15th at 3:30 pm