

Senior Millage Allocation Committee

Friday, March 6, 2020 8:00 am – 9:30 am

Garden Level Conference Room, Marshall County Building

MINUTES

1. **SMAC meeting called to order by Chairperson Gary Tompkins at 8am. Roll called.**
 - **Attending:** Gary Tompkins, Tom Hunsdorfer, Richard Lindsey, Yvonne Chapman, Diane Peters, Jim Powers, Jill Booth, Art Kale, Rochelle Hatcher, Teresa Schell (8:05am), Michelle Hill (8:07am)
 - **Excused:** Bob Lyng, Willie Tabb
2. **Approval of Agenda**
 - Motion to accept agenda – Booth & Lindsey: Motion, Second. Motion carried. Voice vote.
3. **Approval of the minutes of the Feb. 7, 2020 SMAC meeting**
 - Motion to accept minutes – Powers & Booth: Motion, Second. Motion carried. Voice vote.
4. **Introductions and Citizen's Comments**
 - **Introductions:** Dan Pontius, Director of Nutrition, Senior Services of Southwest Michigan; Luann Sommers, Executive Director, Forks Senior Center; Karla Fales, CEO, CareWell Services; Kitty Knoll, Coordinator, Heritage Commons Senior Enrichment Center; Linda Grap, Director, Senior Health Partners; Carl Gibson, Wilder Creek Conservation Club; Sherii Sherban, Co-Chair of Renew for Seniors Campaign
 - **Citizen's Comments:**
 - i. Luann Sommers: On Saturday, March 7, Elvis Impersonator Colin Dexter will be performing at the Marshall Opportunity High School auditorium from 7-9pm. All are welcome.
5. **Reports**
 - a. **Senior millage renewal ballot initiative**

Update given by Richard Lindsey. The ballot initiative committee has met 3 times so far, and the next meeting will be Thursday, March 12, 6:30pm at Heritage Commons. ([Update – the March 12 meeting ended up being canceled and no meetings have been scheduled because of the COVID-19 response.](#))
 - b. **Screening of new Senior Millage Video**

Video was produced by Brick Street Marketing in Albion. After a few edits, the finished video will be shown at presentations around the County and will be posted on Facebook. A 30 second cut is also in the works.
 - c. **Budget Report** – The year to date 2020 budget report was provided.
 - d. **2019 Annual Report**

Review of annual report, and additional maps from GIS. One map showed the distribution of the senior population in Calhoun County, and another map showed the distribution of seniors living at 100% of the federal poverty level.

e. **Manager's Report**

The first Census mailing is expected to arrive in people's mailboxes around March 12th. CareWell Services SW is hosting Senior Count days to ensure seniors are counted. The Census is especially important for the City of Battle Creek, which stands to lose millions in funding if its population drops below 50,000. If any SMAC members are interested in volunteering to help at Census events, please contact Karla Fales or email Helen who will pass it along. ([Update - These Census events were canceled due to the COVID-19 restrictions.](#))

Senior Services and Parks & Recreation are working on an insert for summer tax bills detailing the upcoming August millage vote. Concerns were raised about the Park's Millage being listed first, yellow vs. blue highlighted font, and making it clearer that the Parks is a new millage. Manager Helen Guzzo will report this feedback back to Parks Manager Doug Ferrall.

Advertising spending has been ramping up, the office just received ball caps, notepads, pens, and window clings. The ball caps, notepads, and pens will be handed out to seniors at special events, and the window clings went to vendors to be hung in office windows, transportation vans, etc. Manager Helen Guzzo showed members a recent article that was printed in the *Marshall Ad-visor* about the Board of Commissioners voting to put Senior Millage on the ballot in August, and the Senior Services list of services was translated in Spanish and printed in *Nueva Opinion*.

Community Development staff had a conversation with Jim Dyer, Calhoun County Corporation Counsel, about the rights and responsibilities of County employees during elections. SMAC members should be aware that they cannot wear their Senior Services polo if they are going door-to-door advocating for the Millage renewal but can wear their polos to volunteer at the Senior Fair or Senior Count Days.

Administrative Assistant Lora Steven's retirement party will be on Friday, April 3rd, from 2-4pm in the Garden Level Conference Room. Please attend if you are able and invite others who may want to wish Lora well in her next adventure. The administrative assistant job will be posted next week after the county has transitioned to a new website. ([Update: Lora retired from County employment on April 9. The retirement party was canceled because of the COVID-19 Response. The Senior Services Manager sent Lora flowers on behalf of SMAC thanking her for her service on her last day of employment.](#))

Discussion was had on when to announce the Senior Strategic Project funding decisions. The RFP will be issued at the end of March, vendors will be given a 60-day response period, and then decisions will be made by a special RFP Review subcommittee. If we announce the funding decisions prior to the election, it could create free publicity, but if we wait, we could avoid any controversy. The consensus was to wait until the August SMAC meeting, which is after the election, to announce funding decisions. ([Update: Because of the COVID-19 Response, release of the Senior Strategic Projects RFP was been delayed.](#))

Manager Helen Guzzo asked for five volunteers to serve on the special RFP review subcommittee: Diane Peters, Teresa Schell, Tom Hunsdorfer, Jim Powers, and Rochelle Hatcher, with Yvonne Chapman as an alternative if needed. The regular contractual RFP will not be issued until after the election, and the contractual RFP subcommittee will meet in September/October to make decisions. Manager Helen Guzzo asked for another five volunteers for this subcommittee: Jill Booth, Tom Hunsdorfer, Art Kale, Diane Peters, and Michelle Hill.

f. 2020 Senior Fair, April 8, Marshall Middle School

Registration and planning are well under way, and we are looking forward to another successful Senior Fair. Manager Helen Guzzo passed out a sign-up sheet for SMAC members to sign up to volunteer to man the Senior Services table, answer questions and talk to attendees, and pass out candy, notepads, pens, and reading magnifiers.

(Update: The 2020 Senior Fair was canceled because of the COVID-19 National Crisis and registrations and sponsorships were refunded the week of March 16.)

6. New Business

a. Mini-Grant: Wilder Creek Conservation Club, Senior Picnic -\$750

The first picnic in 2019 was wildly successful and had more attendees than projected. The picnic could be used as the millage renewal kickoff in Marshall. **Peters & Booth, Motion & Second. Roll call vote taken. Motion carried 11-0, with two excused.** (Update: The Senior Picnic has been canceled for 2020 and Wilder Creek has been asked to refund the Mini-grant.)

b. Renewals of SMAC membership: May 1, 2020 – April 30, 2022

Up for renewal: Jill Booth, Tom Hunsdorfer, Diane Peters & Teresa Shell. **Powers & Lindsey, Motion & Second. Roll call vote taken. Motion carried 11-0, with two excused.**

This recommendation will go to the Board of Commissioners on March 19, 2020.

(Update: The March 19, 2020 Commission meeting was canceled because of COVID-19, the memberships were renewed at the April 14, 2020 Board of Commission virtual meeting.)

7. Vendor Presentation: Meals Program, Home-Delivered and Congregate

Presentation given by Karla Fales, CEO, CareWell Services & Dan Pontius, Director of Nutrition, Senior Services of Southwest Michigan. The meals program is a \$482,000 contract with CareWell Services, and the Millage dollars are matched with state and federal dollars. Because of these matched dollars, there is no waitlist for Meals on Wheels in Calhoun County, which is almost unheard of in the state of Michigan. Additional USDA funds (“NSIP dollars”) are also received for every meal that is provided with funding that flows through CareWell Services. NSIP used to be as much as \$200,000 but continues to decrease as the USDA cuts benefits. The total meals budget is almost \$1 million in direct resources, and over \$1 million if including NSIP dollars. 71,000 additional meals and 558 seniors were served because of Senior Millage funding. Senior Millage funds 48% of each meal served.

Dan Pontius stated he is “proud of being the golden [Meals on Wheels (MOW)] standard” in the state of Michigan. He also shared a story of a MOW client who had broken his arm Wednesday night, and was not found until he called out to his MOW volunteer through his locked door on Thursday. The MOW volunteer promptly called 911, emergency services came, and the client’s son was also contacted. The client is now home and recovering, and credits MOW with saving his life.

Upcoming projects include working to track client’s social and emotional isolation, and the start-up of a “friendly visitor” program in Kalamazoo. Once a model is set in place in Kalamazoo County, Senior Services hopes to roll these programs into Calhoun County.

In Calhoun County, Senior Services is working to build a “much more robust assessment.” How does Senior Services better connect seniors to additional services? As Senior Services sees people throughout the aging process, getting better at knowing when to refer to Waiver, PACE, etc. Starting a restaurant dining program in Athens is awaiting state approval. Discussion on the popularity of this program among older men, who traditionally do not frequent regular congregate

sites, and how much seniors enjoy getting to pick whether they want to use their meal voucher for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. (Update: [Starting the restaurant program has been put on hold until after the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. This program expansion will probably be put off until 2021 now.](#))

Questions were asked about how the coronavirus may affect meal service. As of yet, there is no concrete plan in place, but these conversations are being held at the leadership level. Congregate sites would shut down. MOW delivery drivers are now included in “essential personal” definition in the case of an environmental disaster or pandemic, to ensure that seniors at risk for food insecurity would still receive their food. Emergency meals are available if cook staff cannot report to work.

8. Next SMAC Meeting: Friday, April 3, 2020, 8am, Marshall County Building

9. Upcoming Events: [Note that all these events were canceled because of COVID-19.](#)

- **March 14, Spin for Miles, Battle Creek Family Y Center, 7:30am-12:30am**
- **March 19, Calhoun Professionals in Aging Network, Caretaker & Women’s Issues
Marshall United Methodist Church, 8am-9:30am**
- **March 20, SMAC Strategic Planning, Miller Manor, Battle Creek, 9:30am-3:30pm**
- **April 8, Senior Fair, Marshall Middle School, 10am-1:30am**
- **April 24, Nominations for the Joanne Konkle Senior Service Leadership Award due**
- **April 24, SMAC Tour of the SHARE Center, 125 Grove Street, Battle Creek, 9am**
- **May 21, Centenarian Luncheon, Schuler’s in Marshall**
- **June 4, Senior Picnic at Wilder Creek Conservation Club, Marshall**

10. Adjournment at 9:40am.

Respectfully submitted, Kate Turner