**MINUTES**

APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

REGIONAL AGING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2023 – 10:30 A.M.

APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARDROOM

GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

### Members Present:

### Glenda Manigault, Barbara Jardno, Edna Pitts-Reid, Steve Luck, Charles Pinson, Pat Grate, Bob Briggs, Judy Caywood

### Members Absentee:

### Jane Hall, Dorothy Manning, Beth Grant, J. T. Boseman, Joe Dill, Mae Frances Sarratt

### Guests Present:

Irene Gwinn, A.T. Caywood, Robin Reed

### Staff Present:

Shelly Mitchell, Terry Mendola, Shonda Whitaker, Dani Vankirk, Pam Eaker, Jessica Winters, Dorinne Dubois

In Mr. Dill’s absence, the meeting was called to order at 10:31am by Ms. Manigault and an invocation was offered by Mr. Pinson. Prior minutes from February 22, 2023 were approved by Mr. Briggs and a second was offered by Mr. Pinson. The minutes were approved unanimously.

### Recognition of Guests: Shelly Mitchell, Aging Grants Manager recognized and welcomed:

### Judy and A.T. Caywood has joined us after a brief break in attendance. Robin Reed has once again joined the committee meeting.

Tim is in Washington at a USAging Policy Matters Briefing representing our region. We have been able to fill the vacancy we had in the SHIP department with an internal candidate, Shonda Whitaker. Shonda shared a little of her background and experience.

We have updated the by-laws for the Regional Area Advisory Committee and found through this process we have not appointed a Vice-Chair to the committee. The Chair position is designated by our Board, but the Vice-Chair is selected by this committee.

The agenda items today include a RAAC vote for the outstanding procurement for Oconee County and require a vote headed by the RAAC Chair. In Mr Dill’s absence, we have asked Glenda Manigault to fill in as Vice-Chair to officiate the meeting and request the approval for Senior Solution to hold the bid for the meal provider in Oconee County.

### Family Caregiver Update:Dorinne Dubois presented:

Dorinne visits caregiver homes to provide education and training. When a caregiver contacts our office for respite, the advocates let them know we have the added piece of in home education. We get to learn the struggles that each individual caregiver is experiencing so training is custom to their needs. Educational trainings are limited to one a day as there is no time limit to the time spent one on one with the caregiver. We are able to provide weekend and evening visits if that timeframe works for them. If visiting the home isn’t the best option, we can meet offsite. Currently, we have assisted 120 caregivers in this capacity over a year and a half. The survey feedback we have received has been positive. While at a home visit, the care recipient is evaluated to see if they would be a good candidate for a companion animal or baby. Dorinne is certified to teach Dementia Dialogs training and has worked with the Furman Ollie group and others.

In June, we will begin a caregiver connect group which will include a once a month meeting to promote self-care. We will work with the caregiver to provide funding for a sitter so they can attend the “support” events.

The educational and training meetings cover the entire six county region. There is currently a waitlist for this service.

### Procurement Presentation:

As presented in previous RAAC meetings, we went out on procurement for meals in Oconee County. We have received one bid for meals, Senior Solutions. We need the bid to be voted on by the RAAC so they can be presented as a recommendation to the Board on Friday. Dani Vankirk and Glenda Manigault reviewed the submitted packet and will provide their review.

Dani Vankirk reiterated that we previously held a contract with Trio, which was terminated last year. We went under an emergency contract with Doug Wright with Senior Solutions at that time. The timeframe to hold a temporary contract has expired and we went out for procurement. Doug was the only person that submitted an RFP for this service. Doug has been successful in providing this service to the community. Doug isn’t increasing the unit rate for meals and he is interested in creating a choice program for his meal service.

Glenda Manigault added that she has reviewed the RFP packet and that it was complete. The proposal met all requirements of the procurement process. The winner of the bid will be in effect July 1, 2023.

Glenda asked for questions then requested a motion to vote for the recommendation to the COG Board on Friday. Mr. Pinson gave the vote, second by Mr. Luck.

### Aging Program Update: Shelly Mitchell, Aging Grants Manager presented:

As announced in earlier meetings, we will go out for procurement for all services in all counties in December of this year. The bid packets will be due February 2024 and the contracts will go into effect July 1, 2024.

Rebuild Upstate is now the contract holder for minor home repairs in Anderson County. With this addition, they will serve Greenville, Pickens, Oconee, and Anderson. AIM is no longer in the picture.

The work on the Easley YMCA is moving steadily. Pickens County Meals on Wheels is looking to apply for a PIP grant next year for renovations for the portion to be purposed as a senior center. She has good letters of support and had obtained her match money.

The Area Plan was presented to the State Office and was well received. They have asked for some elaborations to the plan to reflect the positives we are doing as an agency. We have posted the revisions to the website.

The monitoring process by the state office is underway. Our finance monitoring was last week. Monday will include monitoring for family caregiver, nutrition, and IIID evidence based programs. May 31st will include IIIB programing monitoring. May 15th will include the Ombudsman monitoring. We have updated the policy and procedure manuals, grievance policy, and by-laws. We don’t expect any issues with the monitoring events. The website has been updated with the new updates.

The website now has a dedicated area for RAAC. In this area you will be able to see past minutes and agendas of upcoming meetings. This is a move in a positive direction to enhance communication between the office and the committee. There was a question about reviewing the Bi-Laws and the updated document is on the website.

A question was presented about the approval of the Area Plan – at this time the plan has been submitted and elaborated on, but a formal approval has not been received. An approval will be conveyed in June.

We will be asking for unit rates from our providers. While inflation will force the need for an increase, an increase doesn’t result in a budget increase. Ultimately, a rate increase will result in a decrease in clients served if our budget remains stagnate. We want our providers to have the funding to run their program effectively and appropriately, but we also see the waitlist of those that are needing to be served. Stagnate funding doesn’t help bring people off the waitlist and helps those in need.

The federal government has increased our funding slightly due to the census. The meal money will be used to bridge the gap we are currently feeling as clients are taken off of ARP funding. We will be looking at our funding collectively once we receive our funding allocations in July.

### Ombudsman Program Update:Jessica Winters presented:

Currently, we have 8 ombudsman in our office. This program advocates for the rights of residents and the provisions of quality of care. From January – March of 2023:

* 103 cases opened
* 143 complaints investigated
* 94 cases closed
* 299 routine/friendly visits
* 27 volunteers

The top three complaints are:

Nursing Homes

* + Care – 42
  + Environment – 7
  + Autonomy, Choice, Rights – 7

Assisted Living/Resident Care

* + Environment – 9
  + Care – 8
  + Autonomy, Choice, Rights – 5

DDSN

* + Autonomy, Choice, Rights – 17
  + Care – 13
  + Facility Policies – 2

DMH – 1 case – Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation

Ombudsman visits are unannounced. Currently we have funding for 2 employees for DDSN. The Ombudsman funding is based on the beds served. The Ombudsman funding is taken off the top when we are given Federal funding before allocations are made for provider services or in house services.

### Home Care Program Update:Terry Mendola presented:

There is currently an extensive waitlist for the Home Care / Personal Care program. We currently have a total of 9 providers that we contract with at the rate of $23 an hour. For the next fiscal year, we will increase our rate to $25 an hour to remain competitive with Medicare rates. We are struggling with an employee shortage. Currently, the program is on hold to adding new clients to this program. This program doesn’t means test per the Older Americans Act. Going forward, we may need to make the determination that personal care will take precedence over light housekeeping if the waitlist continues to grow.

### IR&A and Assessments:Pam Eaker presented:

All calls that we receive are informed of all serviced that we offer. We have a waitlist for all services except Home Delivered Meals. We are monitoring our funding so we can make recommendations to the providers about adding additional clients.

### Nutrition Management:Dani Vankirk presented:

We have 22 senior centers open. We do not have a waitlist for home delivered meals except for Greenville. Meals on Wheels of Greenville has stepped up and has helped fund the clients that are in most need that we can’t right now. They are looking at moving their facility next year. We visited the Williamston center and they are active, but currently don’t want governmental involvement. Anderson is still looking at areas to open centers under our funding. We are limited in funding so in areas like Spartanburg, they are opening new senior centers without AAA funding.

### Wrap Up on Aging:Shelly Mitchell presented:

We are utilizing our ARP funding in house to provide training for our staff. The SE4A conference will be held in Asheville in July and a large number of staff will be attending. Dani will be attending the NANASP conference in June, I will be attending the HCBS conference in August. The USAging conference will be held in Utah in July and three members of staff will be attending that conference. Some members of the Ombudsman will be attending training in the upcoming months as well. These conferences are not only an important part of training and to stay updated on the movement of the aging community, but it also allows for opportunities for advocacy and conversations with the SCDOA staff since they attend many of these conferences as well.

We will have a provider meeting on May 10th. Robin Reed will be presenting her role as a advocate through the state aging advisory committee. It will be a good opportunity for the providers to meet her and utilize her voice for advocacy.

A broadband survey is being issued across the state to increase the reliability of broadband service. The survey will identify areas of low service and a $500,000 grant is available to enhance internet connectivity. A flyer is available and is being asked that it is dispersed within the community so we can be awarded the grant.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:02pm.

*Next Meeting is June 21, 2023*

Acronym Key:

DDSN – Department of Disabilities and Special Needs

DMH – Department of Mental Health

IR&A – Information, Referral, and Assistance

SCDOA – South Carolina Department on Aging

PIP – Permanent Improvement Program

NANASP – National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Program