ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

(of) January 25, 2016

 2800 W. Burrel Avenue

Visalia, CA 93291

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Marlene Chambers

Sharon DeMasters m

Marsha Calhoun

Dick Johnson

Mary Krieg-Vasquez

Sharon Lamagno

Kyle Melton

Grace Schraa

Cheri Taylor

Don Turner

Dr. David Wood

Maggie Woodhouse

Suzann Wray

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Benjamin Cordova

Fern Haller

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Laura Silva, K/T AAA Director

Christine Tidwell, Administrative Aide

Nancy Aldaoud, Administrative Aide

Matthew Kredit

Israel Guardado

**GUESTS & ALTERNATES PRESENT:**

Mary Escarsega-Fechner, Director, CSET

Albert Cendejas, CSET

Raquel Gomez

Warren Taylor

1. **Call to Order** – Sharon DeMasters, Chair, called the meeting to order at11:45 a.m.
2. **Public Comments**
* Albert Cendejas announced information on the 2016 season of Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) free tax preparation services. Information will be posted at all Senior Centers in Tulare County, including Porterville, Tulare, Visalia, and Cutler-Orosi. Beginning February 1st, volunteers will be available. VITA services will be available in Kings County at the Kings Community Action Organization (KCAO) offices and the Kings County Human Services Agency. The Kings County Commission on Aging (KCCOA) has a VITA volunteer stationed at the Armona Senior Center – appointments are made through KCCOA. Also, volunteers will be in Avenal this year at the WIC office.
* Don Turner introduced Alicia Garcia, a candidate for Council membership.
* Council member Dr. David Wood made the request that if and when a meeting is audio recorded, that a general announcement be made at the meeting, so attendees know a recording is being made.
* Council member Mary Krieg-Vasquez reported that she had participated in the holiday stocking delivery for K/T AAA and found it to be one of the highlights of the season, she enjoyed it so much. She said she enjoyed not only the actual delivery of the gifts, but also the association of other volunteers who were participating. Laura Silva expanded on this idea, inviting any Council member who wishes to participate in the future to do so, as she commented that as Advisory Council members it would be within the scope of confidentiality. It was noted by Sharon DeMasters that KCCOA also does a holiday gift drive for Kings County seniors.
* Council member Marlene Chamber reported that as a participant with the Retired Volunteer Service Program (RSVP) she worked with that organization in the planning an delivery of nearly 400 pairs of new socks for seniors, which were delivered to nursing homes and to veterans.
* Christine Tidwell suggested that perhaps a Council committee could be formed with the purpose of going out to senior residences for the purpose of visiting. Mary Krieg-Vasquez commented that there may be grants available for a Senior Companionship program. She said she would be willing to help with such a program if it was started., noting there are numerous ways to help people continue to feel connected.
1. **Approval of Minutes** – Approval of minutes for the December 2015 meeting was postponed until the next meeting due to late arrival of the agenda packet to many Council members, who therefore did not get a chance to review them. Dr. Wood noted a correction in the wording of item # 10, which should read: Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission.
2. **Announcements and Correspondence** – Christine Tidwell reported that in connection with the Holiday Stocking project, she and Senior Advocate, Bonnie Quiroz visited Council member Fern Haller.
3. **Milestone Updates –** None.
4. **California Senior Legislature (CSL) Update –** Don Turner, CSL Senator said the CSL has produced its 35th Annual Legislative Session 2016 priority proposals. The next step is for a Senators or Representatives to possibly carry one of the bills.

Sharon DeMasters said she is working on a proposal concerning the senior nutrition requirements because it is hard to satisfy the seniors when creating a meal menu. This type of change takes a change of policy, so she is looking into what can be done to get the State to make some adjustments in the requirements. She noted the State food groupings are different than the Federal guidelines. She and Mr. Turner are looking at the regulations in an effort to find out if adjustment can be made. In order to be reimbursed for meal costs, the K/T AAA is required to follow current guidelines, which haven’t been adjusted for a long time. She said if things are not changed, it is likely that attendance at senior centers will wane and Baby Boomers will not participate. She said to improve the guidelines is a big discussion and alternatives need to be considered, but the guidelines will need to be updated if the idea is to continue to attract seniors to the sites. Ms. Silva noted that the Senior Nutrition Program also has the important component of being a socialization program.

1. **Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC)** – Form 700 is the Statement of Economic interest which Council members complete. Christine Tidwell announced that Tulare County is moving to an electronic filing system, which she will know more about later. Also, some Council members will need to complete the ethics training that is required every two years. Don Turner suggested it might be possible to do it as a group, and this is something that will be looked into. Dr. Wood volunteered to be certified to lead the training if it is. (If a Council member sits on other Boards, it need be taken only once).
2. **2016 Schedule of Meetings –** The current meeting schedule will be revised to reflect the changes that the Governing Board supervisors requested at its meeting – to have two community meetings one in each county, each year, instead of only one in the community in alternating years. Meeting dates on the current calendar will remain the same. The Council meeting schedule usually mirrors the Governing Board schedule, which seems to make it the most efficient way. Dick Johnson motioned to approve the schedule as to the dates and times, with the location revisions to be adjusted. Kyle Melton seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.
3. **Discussion and Review of Committee Appointments** – Ms. DeMasters, Council Chair, requested Council members Marlene Chambers, Dick Johnson, and Kyle Melton to serve as the Nominating Committee to nominate candidates for Council Chair. Under the Bylaws, nominations should have been made and voted on at the December 2015 meeting, but it wasn’t. Elections will take place at the next meeting. The current Chair is eligible to serve another term, if the Council so desires.

Ms. DeMasters asked Council members to come up with committee ideas that will be beneficial to pursue. Ideas can be proposed at the next meeting; for instance, her own idea of reviewing the nutritional requirements of senior meals or, the idea of creating a committee for “Senior Companion” calling. Ms. Kreig-Vasquez said she thought it would be nice to utilize the seniors at the Senior Centers to participate in making calls. Albert Cendejas said CSET senior services has a telephone re-assurance program, noting that participation by the senior is voluntary. These calls include safety calls and “how-are-you-doing” calls, etc. Ms. Krieg-Vasquez said it is important to get the word out that these programs are available (and noting that she wasn’t aware they existed). She said that when RSVP would give talks to Highway Patrol volunteers, it was a big concern for them, and especially that the elderly stay connected to their community. She also suggested that another way to get the word out is through doctors’ offices, especially those doctors who treat elderly clients. This will help the community to become aware of the services.

Ms. Silva said this type of “educating the public” is part of the new messaging effort that Area Agencies are striving to do - to get the word out about services that are provided. She noted that every AAA state wide is having the issue of getting information out, especially to the appropriate target population and audience. The benefit of a senior being in a program already is that it gives the senior the protection of knowing a call is legitimate and isn’t a scam call. Ms. Silva said this issue came up during the holiday stocking delivery in that the seniors have repeatedly heard the message to not answer their door to strangers, so much so, that many were reluctant to talk to people they didn’t recognize who came to their door. This carries over to phone calls also – the idea to not talk to persons you don’t recognize in order to protect yourself from being sucked into a scam.

Dr. Wood said he thinks it would be very worthwhile to create some kind of “contact” program, and the idea could be flipped, so the home-bound senior can have a designated time to contact a specific person who would be working the phone line. If the phone call isn’t received from the “phone buddy” at the appointed time, it would raise concerns and a follow up call would be made to the senior. This way, it would be the senior who initiates the phone call. The issue is, that we do not want to have people isolated – the question is how to create a strategy that will make it work. He said the single-most compelling variable for survival and quality of life is social contact versus isolation.

Ms. Silva said one of the angles the CA Assoc. of Area Agencies on Aging (C4A) is working on in approaching corporate sponsorship, especially in the health care groups, is through providing employee assistance – to help the AAA financially and to be included as part of employees assistance programs, so that employees who are still working will have the assurance that elderly parents are on someone’s radar. She noted it is part of a bigger conversation. She said Valley Caregivers Resource Center (VCRC) receives K/T AAA Mental Health funding for which they do a type of call-in senior center. Although not exactly the same, the idea could be expanded or there may be other models to look at.

The Chair passed around a sign-up sheet for those who are interested in this type of committee, to get the process going. She said next time the Council meets it might be an opportunity to discuss and expand more on the idea. Ms. DeMasters also said she encourages all Council members to visit their own “home town” senior centers. As part of the Council she said it is important to be visible in the senior community and in public, to visiting with the seniors and to find out what they need and want. She encouraged Council members to go have lunch at the senior center and try to generate some conversation.

Ms. Silva brought up the fact that one does not need to be a Council member to sit on a sub-committee, so if a senior is interested, he or she can be invited to sit on a sub-committee.

1. **Staff Reports** – Ms. DeMasters said that along with VITA, the KCCOS is partnering with Adventist Health in providing outreach workshops including, “Eat Smart, Live Long” and “Chat With a Dietician and Friends”.

Ms. Silva announced a Save the Date for the Tulare County Senior Day in the Park on Friday, May 6, 2016 at Mooney Grove. The theme this year is, *Fiesta*.

1. **Additional Member Comments** – Ms. DeMasters said the Kings County Friendship Day will be on May 27th this year and will be held at the Kings County Civic Auditorium. Also, the Kings County Senior Day in the Park at Burris Park will be September, 16, 2016.
2. **Adjourn** – Meeting ended 12:19 p.m.