 ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

(of) July 16, 2018

Tulare Co. Board of Supervisors, Conf. Room A/B

2800 W. Burrel Ave.

Visalia, CA 93291

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Marlene Chambers

Dan Fox

Sharon Lamagno

Kyle Melton

Bobbie Wartson

Dr. David Wood

Suzann Wray

**MEMBERS ABSENT**:

Benjamin Cordova

Betsey Foote

Grace Henn

Marsha Calhoun

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Juliet Webb, K/T AAA Director

Jamie Sharma, Aging Services Manager

Israel Guardado, Analyst

Bonnie Quiroz, Adult Advocate

Kali Carson, Aging Services

Christine Tidwell, Administrative Aide

**GUESTS & ALTERNATES PRESENT:**

Albert Cendejas, CSET

Cece Bobst, Dinuba Sr. Citizen’s Center, Mgr.

Nicole Burnham, Tulare County District

Attorney’s Office, Victim Advocate

1. **Call to Order** – Dr. David Wood, Council Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m. and introduced the guest speaker, Ms. Nicole Burnham from the Victims Witness Assistance Division of the District Attorney’s Office.
2. **Introductions of Council Members and Guests** – Introductions were done by Council members, K/T AAA staff, and guests in attendance, as above.
3. **Public Comment** – Albert Cendejas, CSET, reported on the Senior Day in the Park, held in May. He commented that it was great weather, and there were many volunteers who contributed their time and energy and that over 1,100 meals were served at the event. He noted that it couldn’t have been done without the help of staff from the K/T AAA and Kings County Commission on Aging. He thanked these organizations for their support in making the day successful.

Council member, Suzann Wray, commented that it would have been a good addition to have had ice available or ice tea as a beverage option.

Council member, Kyle Melton, said he appreciated the singer, soloist Chloe Gowin, and that she had given a tremendous performance. He recommended her for future *Senior Day* performances.

1. **Approval of Minutes** – Dan Fox motioned to approve the minutes of the May 14, 2018, meeting; the motion was seconded by Marlene Chambers and the minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote. It was noted that a misspelling needed to be corrected.
2. **Announcements and Correspondence** –

* Council member, Dan Fox reported, historically, that two years ago, CSET placed an unmet needs request to Transit, with a request to coordinate a consistent age group definition to designate what is meant by “senior.” This is because one agency has the age of 60; and another agency has, 62; another, 65; etc. to define what age is meant by “senior.” He said 15 years ago, the trend was to define senior as the lowest age possible to where age 55 was, generally, considered a “senior” age. For instance AARP defined age 50 as senior and the trend was to make the defining age younger and younger. Now, because people are living longer, the age range has been trending higher; for example, Social Security is age 66. He said, the Transit agencies are now changing all of their senior fare structures up to age 65. That is an outgrowth of the trend and probably not the direction that was desired, but that is what happened. This will be coming up in a Board agenda item for the County – the request to change the senior designation from age 60 to 65. In order to make the change more palatable, the Transit Department has arranged to distribute promotional items, such as pens, cups, small keychain flashlights, etc. (some of which were distributed to Council members at the meeting). Also, Mr. Fox distributed the new System Map and Transit Guide for Tulare County.

Albert Cendejas, CSET, said that the age designation arose because there was no consistent definition of what was meant by “senior” – no consistent age defined it across localities, whether, is was age 60 or 65, or 55. This presented a challenge for the senior population. Mr. Cendejas asked if the new structure will be implemented everywhere? Mr. Fox stated that it will be throughout Tulare County, except for the city, Dinuba. At this time, it is uncertain if it will be in effect in Dinuba.

Dr. Wood said that at the Mental Health Board, a number of seniors were fairly “fired up” about the age change. Mr. Fox said that there is no age limit for the distinction for persons who are disabled and often aging and disabled persons are considered as one group. He also said there are two kinds of disabled; one type is what normally would be considered disabled and there is the distinction of ADA disabled for someone who has gone through the process of completing an ADA application and is certified with the transit agency.

Ms. Lamagno said she had heard that Exeter was not going to have any transit services, anymore. Mr. Fox said that Exeter has been having Visalia do its fixed routes all along. Its demand response (Dial-A-Ride) was operated by the City of Exeter; but they decided financially, to let Visalia take that over. He noted this is a good thing for Exeter because previously Exeter could only serve Exeter. Now, Exeter will be part of the Visalia Dial-a-Ride which will be able to get a person to other localities, for example, Farmersville, Visalia, Goshen, and anywhere that Dial-a-ride goes. Exeter was also doing a pre-school bus service, which Visalia will not be doing.

* On a different note, Ms. Bobbie Wartson, said that Kings Area Rural Transit (KART) has given Kings County Commission on Aging (KCCOA) a small bus for the lunch program in Avenal. In 2019, it will help the Commission apply for further funds to get a new one for Hanford.
* Dr. Wood said an article from the Orange County Register newspaper was circulated with the agenda about how fast the elderly population is growing. Also, distributed was the current status of proposed legislation from the California Senior Legislature (CSL). He said either he or Bobbie Wartson would take any consideration from the Council for proposed legislation to present to the CSL. As CSL representatives, they have a responsibility to propose ideas. The CSL committee hearings determine which proposals from the Area Agencies on Aging are worth introducing into actual State or Federal law. The distributed paperwork is the status on the current suggestions that were approved by the CSL to be moved forward at its last meeting and where those are, in terms of being “in committee” or being acted upon to become legislation. Either he or Ms. Wartson will be attending the regional meeting on a quarterly basis. He noted, the California Commission on Aging is currently recruiting a replacement for its retiring Executive Director, which he said he has sent that recruitment notice to several possible candidates in Tulare County to circulate it and get the word out.

1. **Milestone Updates** – Dr. Wood commented that one of the unusual things about being part of the CSL is that he gets regular email notifications every 2 to 3 weeks about the passing of the CSL members, noting that it is a bit of a challenge and it reminds him of the vulnerability of the aging population. He said that among seniors there is a lot of loss and coping challenges people are dealing with that are just beneath the surface.
2. **Video: *Be the Hand that Matters,* a production of HHSA** – Dr. Wood said Tulare County scored a major victory by sweeping all three categories for the Public Service Announcement on elder abuse prevention, winning for video, hash tag, and poster categories. Israel Guardado, Staff Analyst, played the winning video for the Council.

Juliet Webb, the Human Services and K/T AAA Director, said she is very proud of this collaborative effort between Aging Services, the Mental Health Department, the Public Health Department, and the Community Outreach Team – noting that it was a cross-agency effort. Also, Ms. Webb said that there are exceptional artists working with the County, two of which are the staff members from TulareWORKs who put this campaign together. The design will be used by the National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) next year for its campaign, including use of the image on T-Shirts. The design poster was displayed in the hallway outside the Governor’s office during the month of June. Also, she said, numerous counties have reached out to Tulare County for permission to incorporate the design for their own campaigns. It was noted that there were many Elder Abuse Prevention trainings in the County during June to raise awareness of elder abuse and how it can be prevented. She said she is very proud of Tulare County’s effort and accomplishment.

Dr. Wood said it would be nice to get this on a flash drive, along with some hard copies so that either he or Ms. Wartson when they go to the next quarterly meetings can share it with TACC. He said it is important to stand up for Tulare County and to help increase its profile – noting that it can be beneficial in terms of grants, etc.

1. **Presentation by Nicole Burnham, Elder Abuse Victim Advocate –** Dr. Wood introduced speaker, Nicole Burnham, from the Victim Witness Program of the District Attorney’s Office. Ms. Burnham gave a presentation in which she shared information with the Council on her role in assisting victims in criminal investigations that have come forward or a filed case, even if a crime report has not yet been made. This includes helping them to understand what their rights are as a victim. She noted that the California Constitution was amended to include a Victims Bill of Rights, called Marsy’s Law. Part of her job is to educate victims as to their rights, and also to go to court with the victim, if necessary. She said that elder people experience property and financial crimes at a higher rate than the general population, and that in Tulare County the numbers are quite significant and that nationally the toll of elder abuse is staggering, impacting 5 million people each year.

Ms. Webb said that when the Governor signed his budget this year, it included 15 million dollars for a program called Home Safe. Tulare County will be applying for some of that funding. Ms. Webb noted that the report Ms. Burnham had shared with the Council would be very informative in that it calls out seniors in crisis – in need of rental assistance, hotel lodging, shelter beds, etc. Ms. Webb said this potentially could be a good partnership and that it would be beneficial to have Ms. Burnham at the table.

Dr. Wood suggested creating a type of program similar to Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for dependent minors, to have an equivalent service for senior citizens, some of whom may not have adequate information or ability to represent him or herself in court, especially victims of abuse or those in a high-risk category; for instance, the cognitively impaired. Dr. Wood recommended the following resources: Prevent Elder Abuse.blogspot.com. In relation to this, he referred to an article, *Prevent Elder Abuse: Getting Our Minds and Laws Around Undue Influence,* in which some of these circumstances are chronicled. It was also commented that the statistics for elder abuse are under reported.

1. **Advisory Council Annual Report –** Dr. Wood said that the Council can take positions of advocacy and that members can help to review grant proposals and can get more educated in learning about future grant proposals. The Council also has the potential, which it has never done before, to create an annual report to present to the Governing Board. He noted that the Mental Health (MH) Board, by law, is expected to submit an annual report to its Governing body. He said at the end of the year, the various committees plug their information, data, and goals in to a larger report. The format can remain the same from year to year. He suggested that the Council consider creating its own Annual Report, and in fact, the beginnings of what could be the Annual Report has already been done in the TACC quarterly report. He said that when the MH Board took its binder to a meeting for the California Association of Mental Health Boards he found that other counties were impressed with the idea of creating a binder, and that the MH annual report is posted on the Association’s website. These are examples of taking the lead on an idea. K/T AAA can lead by example in creating an Annual Report of its activities, achievements, goals, etc. Dr. Wood proposed the question to the Council as to if it should consider creating its own Annual Report. Council members agreed this would be a productive project to highlight what the Council has done throughout the year, detail who the Council is and what it is doing, what it has accomplished, and what it needs to accomplish - what are the things the Council would like to look at, i.e. transportation glitches/issues, crisis housing, etc. This would be a collaborative project including suggestions and recommendations from Kings and Tulare Counties, as well as some “bragging”, such as sweeping the awards for the elder abuse campaign. These are things that should be made part of the “public record”, which an Annual Report would help do. Additionally, it creates a reference document.

Dr. Wood said he would like to talk to CASA about providing support to victims of elder abuse who are going to court and would like to have someone advocate for them. Suzann Wray mentioned advocating in order to help the *Open Gate* facility to remain open, even if its ownership and directorship change hands.

Ms. Webb said she thinks an annual report is an exceptional idea. She said it’s always good to get thoughts collectively in one place - highlights, accomplishments, etc. She said she sees a parallel with what she is currently doing with the Human Services All-Staff event and year-in-review that is being coordinated. She will be talking to 1250 staff about what was done throughout all the programs over the last year and also what it means in looking forward, including what things are needed. She commented that an Annual Report supports the strength of the Council.

Dr. Wood acknowledged that it adds some burden on CSET, although much of the information is probably already collected on a quarterly or semi-annual basis – how funding is being spent on the services it provides. For instance, for Senior Day in the Park, there is already data on that event. Kyle Melton said it’s also important to not have service area “voids”; to note key items where service can be improved to make sure in the big picture that things are not left unaddressed.

In relation to that, Dr. Wood said the report can detail the positive issues that have been addressed in the Counties, as well as the not as positive issues, such as the raising of the age criteria for senior riders, which can, potentially, be detrimental to senior public transportation users. Especially true considering this is one of the poorest counties in the State and transportation is a critical issue.

Dr. Wood said that he recently went before the Tulare County Board of Supervisors arguing that the community of Three Rivers generates 2 million dollars in Transient Occupancy Tax each year from Air B & B and vacation rentals. The proposed argument is to have Three Rivers receive 5 percent of that to hold in an investment account to hedge against costs for, example, to develop public parks or an urban town center. He noted, the Board was not comfortable setting that precedent with an unincorporated area, but the reality is that 2 million dollars go to the general fund. Given as an example of advocacy, this would be an example of advocating for a cause related to senior needs, such as in considering how to use the funds; for instance, to consider transportation needs in the area of Three Rivers. Council member, Sharon Lamagno, also pointed out that the County receives a lot of funding to help alleviate the homeless population’s problems and that many homeless people are elderly.

Her point is that some advocacy efforts could be directed to canvassing for some of that funding to help influence where and how it is spent to help homeless seniors.

Dr. Wood entertained a motion for the Advisory Council to prepare an Annual Report to submit to its K/T AAA Governing Board. Suzann Wray motioned to create the report, with Sharon Lamagno seconding the motion. The vote was unanimous in its acceptance. Dr. Wood will assume responsibility as point person to get the project coordinated, but he said that it requires everyone’s participation. Information and suggestions can be forwarded to him via email. Dan Fox asked if the report would be presented in December or at the turn of the fiscal year (June/July). Dr. Wood said the Council can begin working on it now, but noting that the County works on a fiscal year. The target for this project should be to have it completed by the end of the calendar year. From there, the time frame can be re-visited. So, a “landmark” document will be created, initially, with annual additions or changes edited as needs be.

1. **Staff Reports –** Bonnie Quiroz, Senior Advocate reported that to help expand the reach of the Farmers Market Coupon program, by dint of the program’s proxy forms, she will be taking the forms to the seniors in some of the rural areas, including Three Rivers, Goshen, and Earlimart. The recipients of the Home bound meals delivery program can also participate via proxy arrangement. She noted that arranging for transportation presented a problem in that often the market hours are after 5 p.m. or at other irregular hours. The Tulare Farmers Market distribution schedule is up on the K/T AAA website. Ms. Quiroz also said that K/T AAA has been given a second distribution amount of coupons (200 booklets) due to its successful distribution/redemption rate. The booklets are valued at $20, in increments of five, $4 coupons to purchase fruits, vegetables, herbs, or honey at certified markets. Each person is permitted to receive one booklet per season according to the program’s requirements.

Ms. Wartson, Kings County Commission on Aging (KCCOA), Director, reported that Kings County has distributed 160 voucher booklets, and staff will be out again on July 26 to continue distribution.

On a different note, Dr. Wood asked Staff Analyst, Israel Guardado if there was any data on the number of people accessing the K/T AAA website. Ms. Sharma, Aging Services Manager, said that she has access to it, but does not currently have the information available. Ms. Webb noted that would be good information to include on the annual report – tracking the usage of the website, (which was recently renovated and updated).

* Ms. Wartson said that she had a wonderful meeting with Senator Vidak last Friday, (July 13, 2018). On a visit to Sacramento she had tried to meet with him, but he was not available, so she requested him to come visit her in Armona. Thereafter, she received an email to set up an appointment from him, to meet. The meeting lasted approximately 45 minutes. She is enlisting his help to sponsor a Senate Bill. Work on this effort will continue. Dr. Wood said this is a good example of how each and every Council member can approach his or her representative by phone, letter, or email and that is part of the purpose of an Advisory Council – to advocate.

1. **Development of the August 2018 Council Agenda** –Dr. Wood, as Chair said it would be good to talk about and get started on the Annual Report. This meeting will be a brainstorming period and opportunity to create an outline, to develop and decide what the components of the report should be. This will be the primary focus of the September meeting.

1. **Additional member Comments –** Suzanne Wray asked, since the Council will be working on its Annual report in August, where will the meeting be taking place? This is important because of the nature of the conversation and that it might be difficult to do it at a senior center and not conducive to the objective. It was decided that if the room is available to have it at the Board of Supervisors, Conference Rooms A/B. The meeting date and time will be Monday, August 20, 2018 at 10 a.m. at the Board of Supervisors building, 2800 W. Burrel Avenue, Visalia, CA 93291.
2. **Adjourn –** The meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m.