 ADVISORY COUNCIL MTG. NOTES

(of) August 20, 2018 (no quorum)

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

2800 W. Burrel Ave.

Visalia, CA 93291

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Marlene Chambers

Dan Fox

Bobbie Wartson

Dr. David Wood

Suzann Wray

**MEMBERS ABSENT**:

Benjamin Cordova

Betsey Foote

Grace Henn

Marsha Calhoun

Sharon Lamagno

Kyle Melton

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Jamie Sharma, Aging Services Manager

Israel Guardado, Analyst

Bonnie Quiroz, Adult Advocate

Christine Tidwell, Administrative Aide

**GUESTS & ALTERNATES PRESENT:**

Albert Cendejas, CSET

1. **Call to Order** – Dr. David Wood, Council Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m. and introduced the
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** – None
4. **Approval of Minutes** – The approval of the minutes was deferred due to the lack of a quorum.
5. **Announcements and Correspondence** – Dr. Wood reported that Council member Betsey Foote would not be in attendance at the meeting. He told the Council that the Chair for the Tule River Elder Council had passed away a few months back and Ms. Foote has accepted that Chair position. Dr. Wood said she had checked in with him to let him know that she would not be in attendance.
6. **Milestone Updates** – None
7. **Candidate for Membership** – The Membership Committee Chair was not at the meeting; however, Suzann Wray, a member of that Committee reported out to the Council. This is an action item, so a vote will be postponed until a following meeting. The candidate’s name is Cecilia (Cece) Bobst. Ms. Bobst is the manager of the Dinuba Senior Center. The City of Dinuba has taken over the Senior Center and Ms. Bobst is managing it. Ms. Wray said that Ms. Bobst is working to build up the Dinuba Senior Center and she is well known in her community. The City has approved and encouraged her involvement on the Council.

In connection to this recruitment, Dr. Wood said that even though the Visalia City Senior Center is not under the umbrella of the K/T AAA, a recruitment effort from the seniors at that center may be successful. Council member Dan Fox said he knows the staff at the center and he will put out a recruitment request. Dr. Wood said the Visalia Center is still part of the dual counties and it would be good to share information. Marlene Chambers said that she also has a perspective candidate from Kings County that is interested in the Council.

1. **Meeting Schedule for the Remainder of 2018 –** Christine Tidwell distributed the schedule for the remainder of 2018 with the dates and times. However, the locations of the meetings for September through December still need to be determined. Additionally, Ms. Tidwell asked if the Council wanted to have its usual December holiday meeting at a restaurant, as in prior years. A location will be scouted out and decided upon on for the Holiday volunteer appreciation meeting in December. Dr. Wood suggested the restaurant, East of Main. The location is *to be determined*. Dr. Wood said that he would like to have this be the target for the completion of the Council’s Annual Report.

Albert Cendejas said that it would be nice to have the November meeting at the Woodlake Center, which will be moving back to a renovated location, so it would be a good opportunity for everyone to see it. It was decided that the November 19th meeting will be at the Woodlake site. Council member Marlene Chambers said she would like to see another meeting convene in Kings County. It was decided that the September 17, 2018 meeting will be held in Kings County at the Hanford Senior Center, 602 9¼ Avenue, Hanford, CA 93230.

1. **Advisory Council Annual Report –** Dr. Wood said the main agenda item for the day’s meeting, although not formally an action item, is the Council Annual Report. This will be a collaborative report, and will include the information sent to TACC on a quarterly basis. It will also include information on the new website (Israel Guardado) and contract information (Matthew Kredit). He also said CSET can report on its involvement with agencies and services related to the aging and aged in the two counties. Ideas are welcome. He said there are several annual report “models” on-line to get an idea of things to include an how it can be organized.

Dr. Wood said the California Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards and Commissions has copies of annual reports from Mental Health Boards across the State, including Tulare County, on its website, which can be circulated to Council members. He said that report has an overview of Tulare County. Similarly, he suggested that the Council report should have a brief overview, with details about the Kings/Tulare region, demographically. Council member, Dan Fox has already submitted a summary on the efforts being made toward transportation solutions to help seniors. He requested that each Council member take time to write up what he or she has been working on or participating in, in terms of the community. For instance, he said that he has been attending an Older Adult Sub-committee for Mental Health.

Another suggestion was to create a draft statement from each member, which could be crafted into a consolidated statement regarding how each member considers the “mandate” of the Council and his or her respective personal vision of services for the region and goals.

Dr. Wood said, on a brief digression, that the current K/T AAA 4-year Area Plan is done in June 2020. So, the Agency will be updating its Plan and would welcome participation from the Advisory Council. He encouraged anyone interested in stepping up and working on that to let it be known. And in looking to the future, the Advisory Council Orientation Manual, which could be looked at again to make sure it is current. Ms. Sharma said this could be a project for Kali Carson to help with in making the updates as it would be a great learning opportunity. Additionally, Dr. Wood said the Bylaws can also probably be reviewed to see if they warrant any changes. These can be considered goals for this year’s report – tasks set by the Council for its tackling in the next 12 months beginning January 2019. The Bylaws were most recently updated in 2013.

Dr. Wood reiterated this will be a *landmark* document that each year can be the basic information, with yearly updates. Basic information on the Council, as in: “Who we are, where we are going, and what we might do next.”

Ms. Tidwell said that she had written down several ideas that could be considered: including, a blurb on the Holiday Senior Stocking Project in December. The Council participates with this project and it is a collaborative effort among several organizations, including Kaweah Delta. Additionally, K/T AAA’s participation in TACC can be included; participation on Committees, such as the RFP review committee; the expansion of the distribution of Farmers Market coupons in novel ways; the new website; CSET statistics and projects, including the volunteers manning the volunteer income tax assistance (VITA) program; Senior Days in the Park (both Counties); Ms. Wartson’s meeting with Congressman, Andy Vidak; the Property Tax Postponement (waiver) program (Kings Co.); the collaboration and expansion of the Farmers Market distribution to the Aging in Community (AIC) organization in the community of Three Rivers; participation in the food distribution (Bonnie Quiroz-Tulare Co. and Ms. Bobbie Wartson-Kings Co.); any cooperation between the Tule River Tribe and K/T AAA. Also, general information on the Council’s effort to become more knowledgeable on services so its members can be better information brokers for the community. Dr. Wood suggested this could be under the heading of *Training Topics* and include the agenda’s from 2018. For example, the trainings from: Christi Hutson on Elder Abuse; Ken Cruickshank, (VSO) onVeterans Services; Noah Whitaker on Suicide Prevention; and Nicole Burnham from the District Attorney Victim Witness Program - to carry information forward.

Council member Suzann Wray said she sits on the Board for Open Gate – she said the organization is trying to get the house back up and running. Ms. Wray had suggested getting ahold of Nicole Burnham, the speaker from the District Attorney’s office of Victims Witness program, regarding possible housing/beds for seniors, if there can be a coordinated effort. She noted that this was an instance of bringing helpful information to the community from the Council. The Chair suggested she write a sentence or two about that communication. He said there are so many circumstances of senior abuse, and yet there is no availability of alternate housing for them. He said it is striking that on one hand we talk about elders being victims of abuse, but there is no alternate housing available for them. He said that is the type of thing that as an Advisory Council need to take that to the Governing Board, Hey, guys we need to be looking at grant opportunities and/or other ways of maneuvering money and to create a particular category of housing. In response to an event that Suzann Wray related, he said that it should be written down as a “consideration” – that we need to increase the amount of training for law enforcement and other agencies about elder abuse. For example, there has been a significant amount of work training Peace Officers for mental health issues. We need to continue to reinforce that. For instance in public schools, teachers should be aware that they are mandated reporters, but children come to school, unclothed, unfed and uncared for, bruised and the like, but still the teacher will not make a report. Mandated reporter includes Tulare County employees, and Dr. Wood said that even as a citizen, a person is technically a mandated reporter. If a person has occasion to believe someone is being victimized, it is incumbent upon he or she to report suspected abuse.

It was noted that many citizens report suspected or suspicious circumstances to the Commission on Aging, even on Sunday or after hours. Ms. Chambers said that recently during the extreme heat wave, she reported that a mother had brought a new born child out in the severe heat and the child was distraught. Ms. Chambers said that her background as a Social Worker prompted her to report the incident. Dr. Wood said that we make a report, we are not the investigating officer or agency and we do not have to know that there is abuse; the report is that we suspect there is abuse or dangerous situation.

The Chair said he would like to have each Council member write a brief biography (paragraph) about him or herself; for example: these are the things I am involved in and this is why I am requested appointment to the Advisory Council.

Part of the idea is to explore, what is the status of services to this target population from the perspective of the Agency; from the perspective of the contractors; from the Advisory Council members?

Additionally, in 2017, two members of the Advisory Council went to the C4A conference in Los Angeles. Ms. Jamie Sharma said it important for this Annual Report that feedback from the Council is imperative. She said that staff is happy to pull together any information and that staff is involved in a lot of it, so it is fine to take point on that, but there a lot of wonderful things that Council members are doing that need to be highlighted. She said that even if each Council member submits bullet points of ideas and/or information that will be helpful. It doesn’t need to be complicated. It can then be written up in paragraph form by staff. Making sure all the things being done by Council members are captured is the important thing and will make the report valuable.

Dr. Wood commented that the Supervisors from each County don’t know what isn’t brought to their attention and made known to them. This is an opportunity to brag about the Council’s accomplishments and make available to the TACC organization what the Council does; plus it encourages other AAAs to consider doing the same. It is K/T AAA taking the position of leadership within the State. It can also serve as a “needs analysis.”

Also, looking forward, Dr. Wood said the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) sets aside lot of funding for mental health services to be provided across different categories. One of the categories of Proposition 63 is innovation projects. The Tulare County Mental Health (MH) Board just signed off on throwing it open for community discussion on 14 million dollars, which should be kept in Tulare County versus going back to Sacramento. “Innovative projects” are those kinds of outreach efforts, which have yet to be done, which are worth pursuing that can be supported by the funding and can potentially be more self-supporting. With all due respect, MH does depression screening with clients at the Dinuba Clinic for older adults. Dr. Wood said there needs to be a look at the demographics of how many are actually being served (in relation to the population) and there are a large number of aging parents of aging chronically mentally ill persons - adult “kids” aged in their 40s and 50s. Most people have challenges of how are we going to take care of kids when we are “gone” and how they will do. Think about the parent of a chronically mentally ill person on conservatorship, who you have had to fight the better part of your life as a parent to protect that child (now a grown up). Dr. Wood suggested that issue is something that we as K/T AAA could provide more input into and take some initiative – perhaps one of the innovative projects MH could look at is how to extend the family network for the aging parents of these ageing patients.

Ms. Sharma asked what the time line is for proposals for the innovative projects? Dr. Wood said he thought the first community meeting was at the end of the current month (August). She said we would like to be include in that conversation.

Dr. Wood said basically there were 4 proposals that were “thought” pieces about ides that could be implemented.

Bonnie Quiroz, Aging Services Client Advocate, said she has had two clients that she has been trying to assist that in the process of getting help, and which has been tangled up into what we can and can’t do. One of the clients is 85 years old, taking care of a 50 year old child. Ms. Quiroz said it is a very challenging situation.

Dr. Wood said these experience need to be taken as examples and written up in the form of proposals. He said this is a topic to be targeted. It can be said, for example, “in the next calendar year, we can take a more assertive role …..for instance, he said we do an acceptable amount of service to the Hispanic community, but we could do better and also for the Asian community and the African American community. The elderly population itself can also be considered a minority population and are not getting adequate service provision. Dr. Wood said it needs to be looked at how we chose to interface with mental health issues, including simple things like loneliness and connecting people on-line with some of the chat groups that are available and making people aware of those services. Also, looking at the proportion of individuals in the community who are elderly – and considering 14 million dollars being available – he said he has no problem saying that we want a piece of the funding. The Department of MH is responsible for not sending back 14 million dollars to the State if it can avoid it. However, it doesn’t mean there are necessarily solid, firmed up program ideas. If Tulare Co. does not provide compelling proposals to the MH Services Oversight and Accountability Commission, then the dollars will revert. He noted that our area is in competition with other areas, like Los Angeles, San Diego, etc.

Ms. Tidwell said, in spreading that word, our providers, such as Lorraine Zorn (Tulare Senior Center) and other providers and groups should be included and made aware of it. Dr. Wood said he thinks the MH group is going to be having better collaboration with the Tule River Tribe about native customs and traditions interfacing with mental health services.

Ms. Sharma commented that we are having also connected the Tule River Tribe with Veterans Services via Mental Health Services.

Albert Cendejas suggested it might be good to brainstorm connection that could be made through the administration of the Behavior Health (BHS) screens and assessments. There may be an innovative way to better help the client, once screened, if there is funding. Currently they are referred to a MH professional, but might there be something more we can do to help them, especially people that may be falling through the proverbial cracks and coming up against the gaps in service that seniors may need, but are not getting and are stuck with out (such as dental services). Also many seniors do not fall within the boundary of the economic range for which help is available, but they are on the cusp and thus are deemed ineligible for the help.

Mr. Cendejas said that even in purchasing transportation (bus) passes for seniors, it is still truly an amount that is often above and beyond what many seniors can afford. He said that the bus service still needs to meet its guidelines in regard to ridership and income that is brought in. Also, he said many seniors face the problem of being removed from the ability to drive and have a driver’s license and they have to rely on public transportation, but they can’t afford it. Another contributing factor is that many places are food deserts, so a person faces not having adequate food available and no transportation available to get to a food source.

Dr. Wood suggested including in the Annual Report, the *gray zone*, or those persons between age 50 to 60 years of age, who don’t quite hit the cut off in terms of income, and other thresholds of eligibility. He said that innovation, for instance, means that K/T AAA collaborates with the Department of MH and between them a position is funded for a case manager for elderly issues. That is what innovation is about – creating something that was not done before.

Ms. Quiroz said that many seniors in the area are still not aware that K/T AAA and its services even exits.

Ms. Sharma said in the conversations, she has heard quite a few great ideas brought forward for potential innovative projects. She said putting together an innovative project proposal, in part is, “painting an accurate picture” with all of the information in a linear thought process so that it creates a picture of the unmet need. And then you put forward a proposal as to how you might go about filling that unmet need. She said it is amazing how infrequent those types of thought out proposals are, but with the experience available within this group, a proposal could easily be put together, project (program) proposals that would go a long way to success and have a huge impact on the services provided.

Mr. Cendejas said that through the Information and Assistance line (I & A), CSET has received multiple inquiries about housing. Housing is a critical factor that is difficult to solve. Dr. Wood suggested there could be collaboration with Habitat for Humanity. A plug needs to be made for senior housing.

Ms. Sharma said, to make the Council aware, she continues to sit on the Kings/Tulare Homeless Alliance to bring aging to that conversation. There is roughly 359 million dollars that came through in the Governor’s budget, this year, related to housing. She said distinguishing the aging and elderly population from the disabled community in most forums and conversations – there is often not a distinction between them and there should be, specifically as it relates to housing. She noted that often landlords get a higher rental amount for persons that are disabled, that for those who are elderly. Many funds are earmarked for the elderly, but is actually going to younger people dealing with a substance abuse-related issue. She said as a bi-County region the group is trying to figure out how and where do the Counties want to see their portion of the funding used. Ms. Sharma commented that many housing facilities will not rent to people using Methadone.

Dr. Wood said that it is incumbent upon us to do more than just talking around the table – these reports can provide a blue print and reference point for some of the elderly issues.

Council member Dan Fox, said that one of the thinks he thought this Council would do is to advise the Governing Board, but he said he hasn’t seen a lot of that, so he thinks we can probably do a better job of advising the Board of the issues rather than being a rubber stamp to whatever they say. He said directing some of the Council’s plans to the Board members before meetings so they can digest them and work the ideas into their thoughts. Dr. Wood said that at the July Governing Board meeting (rescheduled to July 30) he told the Board what they will be doing as far as creating the report, including the state of the Agency and the state of services, along with recommendations. This can be a starting point.

Dr. Wood noted that the Mental Health Board Advisory Board has an Executive Committee, which meets monthly to talk about the agenda items, etc. We could discuss that idea.

1. **Staff Reports**

Ms. Sharma said she had a recent update about a local gentleman by the name of George Simms, 83, who was missing, but who has now been found.

Matthew Kredit, K/T AAA Administrative Specialist reported that the K/T AAA Area Plan funding, last year because the budget was kicked down the road so many times and all the political talk was about cuts, but we ended up being funded at a higher percentage last year than was expected, but the year was “over,” so the funding didn’t become available until recently – funding that was from last year, but is being rolled over to this year. He said we have very strict rules about how the Agency operates its programs, so sometimes it is difficult to get the funding spent. The funding should become available in October, 2018,

Dr. Wood said in regard to this, that the Council can identify needs and advise the Board that if and when extra funding becomes available, the Council can recommend that there is an emphasis placed on repairing and replacing deficits in infra-structure.

Albert Cendejas suggest it would be a good idea to have a MH emergency task force for those in dire need or is a an extreme point, such as the Psychiatric Emergency Team (PET) crisis team. He said it wouldn’t be a bad idea to have one on the Senior Services side. Mr. Cendejas said CSET has received calls where clients have been without meals and have no food, no light, no gas, and no basic necessities. This is something to look at, to ameliorate these situations.

Mr. Cendejas said that the future of Meals on Wheels programs is going to be making collaborative arrangements with hospitals (to help clients who are being released). Part of this will also be to have a connection so that meal delivery can be a reimbursable cost through Medi-cal. It will require a change in the business process. Mr. Cendejas also reiterated that home delivery of meals serves as a wellness check for the receiving clients, and it not just about food delivery.

Bonnie Quiroz suggested Mr. Cendejas present on Senior Services at the next *Bridge* meeting, which includes 6 staff from Kaweah Delta Hospital.

Dr. Wood asked if there would be potentially a benefit of having an elderly focused Multi-Disciplinary Team. Ms. Sharma said she and several others attend a Multi-Disciplinary team to be the voice of the aging and elderly, but if it got to the point where there was enough conversation happening, that it would definitely be a good idea. She said that the Multi-Disciplinary Team that John Mauro hosts is growing exponentially, so other key players could be brought into that group.

1. **Development of the September 2018 Council Agenda** –Dr. Wood asked that by the first week of September, Council members should send him or Ms. Tidwell ideas for the Annual Report, including a draft biography paragraph. He will coordinate the editing. The more information, the better. He will send out a reference to the CA Association of the local Behavioral Health Boards.

1. **Additional member Comments –** Ms. Sharma said that the K/T AAA move back to Government Plaza is scheduled for the coming week, in case there is a lapse of connecting to anyone on the K/T AAA team. If that happens, please email her as she has access remotely.

Additionally, she shared information put out by the C4A organization on senior demographics. Ms. Sharma also said the C4A conference is coming up in November and invited any Council members interested in attending to let her know.

Lastly, Ms. Sharma said she will be pulling together a committee of people to work on the Holiday Stocking project soon and would love to have help from the Advisory Council.

Dan Fox also mention that one of the TCAG transit committees is soliciting for additional members. Part of the criteria for some of the members is that some members need to be from a social services agency – there are 3 openings for persons that work with social services agencies. The committee is focused on transportation and unmet needs. Ms. Sharma said she would love to have someone from the Aging Services team be involved.

1. **Adjourn –** The meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.