 GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES

*To be approved on:* Minutes of the March 15, 2021, meeting

May 17, 2021 Tele-conference

**GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Craig Pedersen, Kings Co. – Dist. 4

Larry Micari, Tulare Co. – Dist. 1

Eddie Valero, Tulare Co. – Dist. 4

Richard Fagundes, Kings Co. – Dist. 5

Pete Vander Poel, – Dist. 2

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Ms. Bobbie Wartson, Chair & KCCOA Director

Dan Fox, Vice Chair, Adv Council

**STAFF PRESENT:**

John Mauro, Adult Services, Deputy Director

Dayna Wild, Division Mgr., Adult Srvcs.

Ms. Jamie Sharma, Mgr., Aging Services

Krissie Leach, Deputy Dir., Admin Programs

Bonnie Quiroz, Senior Advocate

Christa Cardoza, Admin Specialist, Aging

Israel Guardado, Staff Analyst

Jeannie White, Administrative Aide

Christine Tidwell, Administrative Aide

Lorna Sartuche, Administrative Aide

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Albert Cendejas, CSET Senior Services

Raquel Gomez, CSET

Monica Connor, Kings County

Rosemary Caso, United Way, Tulare Co.

1. **Call to Order** – Vice Chair, Supervisor Valero called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.
2. **Introductions** – Attendance and introductions, as above. Ms. Sharma called the roll, reading the meeting participant attendee list, and introducing Krissie Leach, the Tulare County Deputy Director of Administrative Programs, who is joining the Board meeting to provide a vaccination update.
3. **Board Member Comments** – None.
4. **Public Comment**

* Albert Cendejas, CSET, reported that the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program is up and running, providing tax returns for the community; the program is doing its best to provide support for both Tulare and Kings Counties, working with guidance from the IRS. He also recognized the Kings County Community Action organization for working hard with limited volunteers and staff. VITA is open for business Monday through Friday in five Tulare County locations including: Tulare, Pixley, Porterville, Cutler-Orosi, and Visalia. Clients can get a get an information packet and then drop off needed documents. He noted that Kings Co. is operating on an appointment basis, in Avenal, Corcoran, and Hanford. Already 360 returns have been completed for senior clients.
* Regarding other senior services, the Home-Delivered-Meals (HDM) Program is operational throughout Tulare County; with additional boxed meals being provided as emergency meals to ensure each client has a good amount of food in the pantry. Also, seniors that were affected by the senior center closures as a result of COVID, are also receiving a quantity of frozen meals and 3 boxes of emergency meals to make sure they also have enough food supply.

Supervisor Valero gave a “thank you” for all the work being done in the trenches to make sure everyone has adequate provisions.

* Ms. Bobbie Wartson, Director of the Kings County Commission on Aging (KCCOA), reported that the VITA tax program is being done in Kings County for its seniors on Monday and Wednesday.
* Regarding the Home-Delivered-Meal Program, there are approximately 450 clients on the program, receiving 7 meals per week. KCCOA staff also participate in the food bank distribution on the 1st of every month.
* Ms. Wartson announced that the Tachi Palace casino has chosen KCCOA as one of the beneficiary recipients of its charity golf tournament, this year.

1. **Approval of Minutes of January 25, 2021** – A motion to approve the minutes of the January 2021, meeting was made by Supervisor Vander Poel and seconded by Supervisor Pedersen. On a motion and a second, the minutes were approved unanimously.
2. **Approval of K/T AAA Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Budget** – Israel Guardado presented the upcoming FY 2021/2022 budget overview. This is an action item. He explained that this budget is done early in the year, so it can be determined how much K/T AAA needs to request from each of the Counties (Kings and Tulare) for match dollars. The main purpose is to be able to send out the match letters and to allow each county plenty of time to plan and budget for their fiscal year. The budget is built on what is known at the time – with no additional funding, currently as 4.9 million dollars (46% Federal funds; 37% State funds; and County contributions of $222,250). Per the Joint Powers Agreement, the budget is split based on senior population, which has remained relatively stable – Kings County now receives 23% and Tulare County, 77%. This is 1 percent change from the previous, 22%; 78 % ratio. The match requests are $51,378 from Kings County and $170,872 from Tulare County. Of the current contractors: City of Tulare, Valley Caregiver Resource Center, Valley Adult Day Services, Kings County Commission on Aging, and CSET; CSET receives the largest amount of funding at 57% of K/T AAA funding; with KCCOA receiving 29% of the funding. On a motion by Supervisor Vander Poel and a second by Supervisory Pedersen, the action carried, with no abstentions. **(Vander Poel/Pedersen Res. No. 21-003)**

1. **Amendment to FY19/20 California Dept. of Aging (CDA) Area Plan Contract –** Mr. Guardado stated that this is an information item regarding the current fiscal year One-Time-Only (OTO) funding which finally came in early February, at $179,917 for all contracted services, but with the majority for the Senior Nutrition Program. He said K/T AAA has distributed out the funding to its contractors, noting that the Director had accepted the funds.
2. **Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP) Budget Announcement for FY 21/22 –** This is an information item. Israel Guardado stated that CDA has announced the funding for the next fiscal year, at $873,061. This amount remains unchanged from the previous year. He noted the MSSP budget has been approved by CDA. $160,645 is identified for waiver services – those specific to the client, i.e., home renovations, etc. to keep the client safe at home.
3. **Amendment to FY19/20 CDA Dignity at Home Fall Prevention Contract –** Mr. Guardado said the amendment for this contract does not change the funding amount. The timing of the release of this Dignity at Home Fall Prevention contract coincided with the onset of the COVID pandemic, so Area Agencies are having issues spending the money because it is unsafe to get contractors into seniors’ homes for inspections and renovations. In response, the State extended the usage of the funds to March 31, 2022.
4. **Area Plan Update –** Israel reported that K/T AAA does a 4-year Area Plan, then each year within that plan, a yearly update is made. May 1, 2021 is the due date. He noted that the next Governing Board meeting is not until May 17th, so the usual procedure is to turn in a draft version of the Plan on May 1st, then once the Board approves, a final is submitted to the CDA. He said, that as part of the requirements, the K/T AAA holds a Public Hearing for comments, which is normally held in person, with one hearing in each of the two Counites. This year it will be held virtually on April 12, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Login information to the hearing will be posted on the K/T AAA website.

On a slightly different note: Supervisor Valero shared that General Services of Tulare County will be working on improvements to the parking area at the Cutler Senior Center. He thanked Albert Cendejas for bringing the need to the Supervisors’ attention, saying he appreciates the partnership.

1. **COVID-19 Vaccine Update –** Krissie Leach, Deputy HHS Director, Administrative Programs reported on the COVID vaccination efforts in Tulare County, noting that as of today, (March 15) persons ages 16 – 64 are eligible to receive the vaccine. This is effective statewide. She noted that for some 400 plus ZIP codes, a priority effort is being made to get vaccines to those locations. Nineteen of those priority ZIP code areas are in Tulare County. These are areas in which residents may have difficulty getting to vaccine Points of Distribution (POD), like the College of Sequoias or the Ag Center, etc. These include areas such as Lindsay, Goshen, and Traver. She also said the vaccination teams reached out to the homeless population and had administered vaccines to 45 homeless individuals in conjunction with Kaweah Delta.

The County is working with a vendor at the Ag Center POD and that availability will be ramping up from 5 days to 7 days, up to 1,000 doses per day. Statewide, focus will be expanded to work sectors such as transit drivers and Public Workers and Social Services field staff who work with the most vulnerable populations. Seniors are also among the number one priority groups, especially home-bound seniors. The communities of Three Rivers and Springville will also be high priority. She also announced an upcoming Town Hall informational meeting.

Ms. Jamie Sharma thanked Ms. Leach for taking time to give the vaccine update. Ms. Sharma who was reporting from a vaccine distribution site in Alpaugh, said that 75 persons had been inoculated in the first hour of the event.

1. **Ricciardi, Inc. Single Audit Report** –Mr. Guardado reported that the Single Audit is done every year. He noted that it was not complete but that the exit conference was scheduled for the next day (March 16, 2021). Considering that the next Board meeting is not until May, he wanted to give the Board a brief update and share the information that K/T AAA currently had. At this time, there is a draft report, with the final report to come soon. Consensus is that it is going well, with no current findings. Mr. Guardado also noted that Richa Tohan, the K/T AAA Accountant, has been the primary contact with the auditors and has done the majority of the work in respect to preparing for the audit. He commended her on a job well done, especially considering it was her first year doing it. Once a final report is available, a paper copy will be distributed to the Board.
2. **Senior Day in the Park –** John Mauro, Deputy Director of Adult Services announced that the decision had been made to postpone the Senior Day in the Park for 2021. (The 2020 Senior Day in the Park was also cancelled due to the pandemic and the risk it posed for seniors). Mr. Mauro said based on advice from the Public Health branch and out of an abundance of caution, it was decided to delay the event again this year, to keep everyone safe.
3. **Procurement Planned/Request for Proposal (RFP)** – Mr. Guardado reported that due to the pandemic most RFP procurement was suspended; however, the Title V Program, Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) - subsidized community employment training to low-income, unemployed individuals aged 55 and older is housed under the Department of Labor (DOL) at the Federal level and the DOL did not suspend their procurement requirement. In October, when K/T AAA had the CDA monitoring, one of the findings issues was that K/T AAA had to complete an RFP for the Title V program. This is the reason the RFP is being done at this time. It is in the early stages, with the release date planned for April 5, 2021. K/T AAA is requiring a *Letter of Intent*, which will be due to K/T AAA by April 16, 2021. Deadline for proposal submission is May 5, 2021. He said it is expected that the announcement for the award will be at the May 17th Governing Board meeting. The contract start date is July 1, 2021.

Supervisor Vander Poel asked how many proposals K/T AAA anticipates receiving? In answer to that, Mr. Guardado replied that in 2016, K/T AAA received one proposal and it was from the current contractor, so he said he assumes there will be a similar result. Supervisor Vander Poel acknowledged that it is a niche environment.

Mr. Guardado said one of the things K/T AAA has done with its RFPs is to make a *Letter of Intent* for proposals a mandatory requirement to bid. This allows staff to know where interest and response is slow; if there is only one *Letter of Intent* it can rather safely be assumed that there will only be one proposal. With the *Letter of Intent* being due on April 16th, it allows K/T AAA to move into a non-competitive award – and cancelling the rest of the RFP. This process of requiring a *Letter of Intent* was encouraged by the CDA, to minimize the amount of time expended and simplify the move to a non-competitive process. Supervisor Vander Poel said that we are fortunate to have CSET, but he wondered if we had any expectation of additional interest.

1. **Staff Reports**

* Farmers Market Coupon Program **–** Bonnie Quiroz, the Aging and Adult Advocate, reported that California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has said there will be no Farmers Market Coupons for the 2021 season. At this point, the program is on hold again this year and CDFA will continue to work with food banks and other community partners. Funding that would typically go to the coupon vouchers will instead go to the food banks.
* John Mauro reported out on this item, on behalf of the K/T AAA Director, Anita Ortiz. The State Association of Counties (CSAC) will likely be reaching out to county Boards of Supervisors regarding the current AAA’s structure to get an idea if the current system is working and if bringing the Area Agencies under individual County jurisdiction would be a good idea – this idea is being proposed as part of the Governor’s Master Plan on Aging. There is an initiative in it that asks that leadership of the AAA structure be looked at, including designations and funding formulas. Mr. Mauro said this information is being brought to the Board just to advise it that it may be approached by CSAC about this issue and to assure the Board that staff is available as a resource to provide any presentations or documentation that may be requested.

Supervisor Vander Poel commented that, typically, economies of scale make a lot of sense, especially for smaller counties like Kings County; and that another structure would be duplicative and cost prohibitive. Additionally, it would be a concern on the part of Tulare and Kings Counties because currently services are being done efficiently under the umbrella that K/T AAA provides, saving both counties money under the current administrative structure. He said there would be concern about the administrative costs that would be incurred by smaller counties. In reply, Mr. Mauro said that most of the feedback he is hearing from smaller and medium- sized Counties reflect that opinion also.

* Senior Nutrition –Ms. Sharma said she wanted to clarify what has been in the news recently regarding the increased need to feed the senior population, because the need has increased drastically during the pandemic. She said a small team of people has been pulled together to analyze the numbers very closely and figure out what the coming year will look like if there is available Federal Emergency funding; and/or, if there is not additional funding. The idea being to make senior nutrition financially sustainable moving forward. Continued information will be brought to the Board as it is available. Supervisor Valero thanked staff for being proactive and for its work on the “front lines”
* Senior Rally Day, May 4, 2021 via Zoom – This event is hosted by the California Senior Legislature (CSL). It brings together key players in the arenas pertaining to seniors and several legislators and their staff. The event will take place via Zoom on May 4 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. It is open to all interested persons. Kim McCoy Wade, Executive Director of the CDA is slated as the keynote speaker.
* Digital divide – Ms. Sharma reported that previously it has been shared with the Board some of the efforts going on around the digital divide, as it pertains to seniors, including that Google had donated Smart Speakers and that CDA has partnered with AT&T to make iPad bundles available to the Area Agencies. These efforts are on-going - to get technology and technical assistance, devices, and all the connectivity pieces into the hands of seniors.

Something new Ms. Sharma reported on is that she is researching the use of robotic “pets” to assist with some of the social isolation and loneliness aspects that have seen especially during the pandemic. She explained that that there may be an opportunity for a partnership with the company, Ageless Innovations, the creators of the “pets”. The robotic pets were initially provided for the Alzheimer’s and dementia population. The company is now branching out into the market of social isolation and loneliness. Currently, one of these robotic dogs going to local seniors to test the product and get feedback. Staff will continue to research to see if it is something that could benefit the seniors in our community.

* Senior Outreach – Ms. Sharma explained more of the efforts around reaching the senior population regarding vaccinations. She said a flier had been created with the help of Cory Silva and his Community Outreach Team. The fliers, in both Spanish and English include information on vaccine hesitancy and vaccine registration. She said CSET and United Way have done an incredible job of getting the fliers into the hands of the community, including postings in local grocery stores and various other locations. Additionally, there have been outreach efforts, both internal and through our community partners with calls going out to seniors who struggle with using technology, in order to get them signed up.

1. **Advisory Council Report –** Council Chair, Bobbie Wartson said the Council meetings have been suspended at this time due to COVID, so there are no reports. She noted that Council members Mary Thomas and Marlene Chambers had applied for re-appointment to their seats.
2. **Adjourn –** On a motion by Supervisor Pedersen; seconded by Supervisor Vander Poel, the meeting was adjourned by voice vote at 10:48 a.m. There were no abstentions.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Ortiz, K/T AAA Director

Ms. Jamie Sharma, Aging Services Manager (designee)