 GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES

*To be approved on:* Minutes of the October 18, 2021, meeting

January 24, 2022 In-person & tele-conference access

**GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Craig Pedersen, Kings Co. – Dist. 4

Larry Micari, Tulare Co. – Dist. 1

Eddie Valero, Tulare Co. – Dist. 4

Pete Vander Poel, – Dist. 2

**GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Richard Fagundes, Kings Co. – Dist. 5

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Ms. Bobbie Wartson, Chair & KCCOA Director

Dan Fox, Vice Chair, Adv Council

Suzann Wray

Mary Thomas

Marianne Osborne

Betsey Foote

**STAFF PRESENT:**

John Mauro, Adult Services, Deputy Director

Dayna Wild, Division Mgr., Adult Srvcs.

Ms. Jamie Sharma, Mgr., Aging Services

Christa Cardoza, Budget Officer

Israel Guardado, Admin Specialist, Aging

Christine Tidwell, Administrative Aide

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Albert Cendejas, CSET Senior Services

Raquel Gomez, CSET

Rosemary Caso, United Way

Monica Connor, Kings Co.

Jason Kemp Van Ee, Kings Co.

1. **Call to Order** – Chair, Supervisor Valero called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

The meeting was held at the Tulare Co. General Services building, Kaweah Conference room as an in-person meeting with tele-conferencing (Zoom) access.

1. **Introductions –** Attendance was announced by Ms. Sharma who called roll and read the Zoom attendee list. Attendees as above listed.
2. **Board Member Comments** – None
3. **Public Comment**

* Albert Cendejas, CSET, reported that the Exeter Senior Center Site Manager, Veronica Franco, had passed away, the day prior, on October 17, 2021. He said she has worked under the K/T AAA Senior Services umbrella since early 2000. And that the hearts of all who worked with her go out to her and her family at this time. Supervisor Valero also sent condolences to her family on behalf of the K/T AAA.
* Mr. Cendejas reported that CSET has started its recruiting efforts for Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA). He noted that last year, the program handled 3,800 taxes, 700 of them for senior clients.

1. **Approval of Minutes of July 19, 2021** – A motion to approve the minutes of the July 19, 2021, meeting was made by Supervisor Vander Poel and seconded by Supervisor Micari. On a motion and a second, the minutes were approved 4/0. Supervisor Fagundes was not present.
2. **Approval of the California Dept. of Aging (CDA) FY 20/21 Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act ((MIPPA) contract** – Israel Guardado reported that this is an annual contract with a fairly routine amount and requirements. It is in connection to the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP), which is primarily a volunteer program. The money from this contract is used, in part, to pay for HICAP’s Volunteer Coordinator position. A motion to approve the contract was given by Supervisor Micari, seconded by Supervisor Vander Poel; motion carried 4/0. **(Micari/Vander Poel Res. No. 21-011)**
3. **CDA Area Plan Contract Amendment #1 for Increased Funding –** Mr. Guardado reported that this amendment increases the K/T AAA Area Plan contract (AP-2122-15) by $363,361. Most of this is One-Time-Only (OTO) funding and baseline adjustments. The initial contracts are based on estimates; once budgets are approved the baselines are adjusted so this amendment is about $15,000 OTO money, with the rest being base line adjustments. He noted that of the $300,000, $100,000 is for Administration. He said this is the first time there has been an increase in Administration funding in about 30 years, and it will be used to staff up positions so the Agency can be more efficient. The majority of the rest will be used for the Nutrition Program and the $15,000 OTO will be going to the Ombudsman Program. The K/T AAA Director signed to accept this amendment, as it was within the funding limitation for her authorization to do so.
4. **Vaccine Access Funds –** Mr. Guardado explained that K/T AAA has received additional Covid prevention funding in the amount of $49,000 which is to be used for vaccine outreach. He noted that there is a list of allowable uses, which is very restrictive, and specific for vaccine access and outreach. He said staff is still working on the distribution plan and exactly how to use the funding. The Board previously gave the K/T AAA Director authority to accept Covid-related funding, so the Director has signed for this funding. Ms. Sharma, the Aging Services Manager, commented that because Tulare County has done a good job in getting its seniors vaccinated, (at more than 80 percent); there is discussion that this money might be used to get homebound senior clients their booster shots.
5. **California Senior Legislature (CSL) –** Jamie Sharma, reported this information item to the Board. The CSL is a group responsible for drafting legislation specific to seniors. Every Planning and Service Area (PSA), has representation in the CSL Senate and Assembly. She reported that the K/T AAA Senator, Dr. David Wood, was resigning, effective, 10/31/2021. K/T AAA is responsible for the CSL elections and electing its representatives.
6. **Staff Reports**

* **KNP Complex Fire Update –** Dayna Wild, reported to the Board that thankfully some fire precautionary measures have been able to be scaled back recently, but services that had been expanded included additional hours for the senior Information and Assistance phone lines – the hours for this service, which is manned by CSET staff, had been increase from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to 4 a.m. to 10 p.m. She said kudos to CSET for making this extra support available to seniors. Also, she noted that air purifiers had been distributed to seniors that had difficulty breathing the smoke and ash-laden air. Additionally, K/T AAA personnel (notably John Mauro), attended Three Rivers Town Hall meetings to answer questions.

K/T AAA also partnered with the Tulare County Resource Management Agency (RMA) for transportation needs because some seniors were concerned about getting to shelters. Supervisors Valero and Vander Poel thanked staff for being so integral to the effort and making the required support available to the seniors.

* **Community Care Coalition (CCC) Town Hall –** Jamie Sharma reported that the CCC, (facilitated by Rosemary Caso and Francena Martinez) will be doing a Town Hall meeting in which Aging is going to be a significant component. In part, discussion will include senior loneliness, seasonal blues, and opportunities available for people to connect, in order to bring a spot of cheer at a time that isn’t always pleasant for everyone. The exact date and time will be provided later. She noted that there will be K/T AAA representation.

Supervisors Valero gave a shout out to Rosemary Caso in appreciation for all the efforts that she leads across the entire County of Tulare; Rosemary responded that it is an honor.

* **Master Plan for Aging Partnership –** Jamie Sharma said that California’s Master Plan for Aging continues rolling out and has been for some time. She noted that it is quite an undertaking – to have, by 2030, every community and jurisdiction in the State as age and disability friendly as possible. It requires figuring out which partners need to be at the table (noting that it is going to be a huge “table”) and who must be involved, including interests in transportation, the digital divide – technology, etc. The Scan Foundation, an independent public charity, through a grant opportunity has chosen the K/T AAA as one of the rural AAAs they want to work with in a consultant fashion, to take point on brining all the key players to the table and drawing out a formal plan, i.e., a blueprint document. The Scan Foundation has determined that the K/T AAA is one of the best Area Agencies to work with Scan. This would be about a two-year process. There is no cost involved for the K/T AAA. Supervisor Valero thanked Ms. Sharma for helping partner with other agencies to better the ways in which we can serve our aging population.
* **Stockings for Seniors 2021 –** Ms. Wild said that K/T AAA is gearing up for its holiday Stocking Drive. This year Ashley Bier, from the Public Guardian and Bonnie Quiroz, the Aging Services Advocate, are taking the lead on the project. Last year, approximately 2,000 stockings were given out, although, this year, the intention is to scale back to minimize possible Covid exposure. She said it is still a great time to be able to distribute holiday cheer and visit with seniors on their terms, noting that sometimes that means six feet out the door. But the visit still provides an opportunity for a wellness check to make sure they are good.

1. **Advisory Council Report –** Council Chair, Bobbie Wartson reported that Kings County will also be distributing holiday stockings – the Hanford Rotary has generously donated to this cause, as it has in other years. She was also able to secure 240 holiday gift cards from the City of Hanford that will provide pre-holiday meals from Savemart.

It was noted that the Advisory Council has again started having its meetings, which had been suspended due to Covid risk. Additionally, the ABC Council sub-committee has resumed having its meetings. Dan Fox reported on the ABC committee, including an explanation for the ABC acronym - noting the A is for the Area Plan, which is the defining document; B is for budget issues; and C is for Contracts (ABC Committee). The Committee works on these issues as well as looking at other solutions to senior concerns. It has scheduled its meeting for two weeks prior to each Governing Board meeting. Dan Fox, Committee Chair said that one topic the Committee wants to research is how nursing homes handled the Covid-19 epidemic and if it could have been handled better for the patients. The Committee would like to distribute a questionnaire to the Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) in both Counties and based on the answers, if there are any red flags, submit to the Grand Jury to look into it further. He also said he was hoping the Governing Board would give its blessings to the effort.

Supervisor Valero commented that when Covid first made its appearance in the Counties, the Governing Board did not have a lot of say in what could and could not be done at the State level with those types of programs; so if anything, it may be informative, but because of the “powers that be” at the State, there is only so much that the County can do to try to create change. Additionally, Supervisor Vander Poel said that he wished the Board (and County) had more authority over the SNFs – noting that the County has authority over Environmental Health and schools, and various health settings, but it does not have authority over skilled nursing facilities. For example, he noted that the standards by which they operated under Covid is regulated by the State of California. Conversation ensued about possible strategies and their effectiveness in delving into nursing home facilities, licensing requirements, etc. Ms. Sharma noted that K/T AAA does work closely with the Ombudsman Program at the State level in connection to SNFs. Supervisor Micari suggested formulating an advocacy letter that highlighted some of the concerns. It was also noted that the pandemic exposed concerns and brought some problems to the forefront.

Ms. Sharma commented that it makes sense to start with the Ombudsman to get the communication to the right people. Supervisor Valero said if there is no information received as a result of the letter, then to continue up the chain of command in order to see how issues can be addressed moving forward.

On a separate topic Supervisor Vander Poel said that staff needs to check with legal Counsel on the ability

to hold hybrid-model meetings for its different Board and Committees to make sure there is a resolution passed authorizing a hybrid model – and he questioned whether today’s (10-18-21) meeting would even “count”, considering that AB361 took effect on October 1, 2021, saying a resolution from the Board might be necessary.

1. **Adjourn –** On a motion by Vander Poel; seconded by Supervisor Micari, the meeting was adjourned at 10:57 a.m., by a 4/0 voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Ortiz, K/T AAA Director

Ms. Jamie Sharma, Aging Services Manager (designee)