



AREA AGENCY ON AGING ADVISORY COUNCIL

778 W. State St., El Centro, CA 92243
800.510.2020 | 442.265.7030 | www.aaa24.org

Meeting Minutes: Thursday, July 21, 2022

Proceedings:

The Imperial County Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Advisory Council met for a regular meeting on Thursday, July 21, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. via ZOOM:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89725703645?pwd=QU1YSTNKT3lMbTg1aGZ1d3ZwROZzZz09>

Phone Number: +1 669 900-6833 | Meeting ID: 897 2570 3645 | Passcode: 286939

Voting Attendees:

Cynthia Alba
AJ Gaddis
John Hernandez
Benjamin J. Horton
Supervisor Ray Castillo
Paul R. Monarrez
Virginia Ward
Mike Lara
Patricia A. Thompson
Helen Lopez
Daniel Romero
Oreda Chin
Javier Moreno
Sedalia Sanders
Ismael Lopez
Manuel Sanchez

Representing Sector:

District 1
District 3
District 4
District 5
County of Imperial
Disabled Interest
League of Cities
Senior Advocate
Service Provider
CSL – Senate
CSL – Assembly
Senior Organization
Law Enforcement
At-Large
At-Large Alternate
At-Large Alternate

Non-Voting Attendees/Providers:

Madeline Dessert
Joanna D. Zepeda
Karla Flores
Monica Veliz De Leon
Valeria Aguilar Echegaray
Andrew Briseño
Polo Salazar
Guadalupe Rodriguez
Lacy Stokes, MA
Guadalupe Ruiz
Karen Teran
Roberto Gutierrez
ICAAA Department Fiscal Manager
ICAAA Administrative Analyst I
ICAAA Long Term Care Ombudsman Coordinator
ICAAA Information & Assistance Coordinator
ICAAA Summer Fellow
County of Imperial, Counsel
Catholic Charities, Program Manager
Catholic Charities, Director of Outreach Imperial Valley
Southern Caregiver Resource Center, Director of Programs
Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District, Director of Case Management
Access To Independence, Program Manager
Public

Absent:

Cheryl Viegas Walker
Veronica Wright
Pablo Corona
Terry Swing
Supervisor Mike Kelley
District 2
Senior Advocate
HICAP
At-Large
At-Large Alternate



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Agenda Item / Action Taken:

I. FLAG SALUTE, ROLL CALL (MEMBERS), AND INTRODUCTIONS (GUESTS):

Chair Virginia Ward called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. Flag salute and roll call were completed and quorum was established. Staff introduced guests.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approval of minutes occurred after IV. Action/Discussion Items. AJ Gaddis motioned to approve the June 16, 2022, Advisory Council meeting minutes as presented. Helen Lopez seconded the motion. Chair called for vote. The motion passed unanimously with no nays or abstentions.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Chair Virginia Ward opened up the floor for public comments; none received.

IV. ACTION / DISCUSSION ITEMS:

a) Ratify Resolution of the Imperial County Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council authorizing the continuance of remote meetings in accordance with the provisions of State Assembly Bill 361

Helen Lopez motioned to ratify resolution. Manuel Sanchez seconded the motion. Chair called for vote. The motion passed unanimously with no nays or abstentions. No further discussion.

b) Review and approve proposed Area Plan 2020-2024 – Third Year Update for Fiscal Year 2022-2023

Helen Lopez moved to discuss.

AJ Gaddis asked staff what has changed.

John Hernandez asked if the Area Plan was still within the deadline. Madeline Dessert responded that the Area Plan must be completed as soon as possible and must be approved by the Board of Supervisors (BOS) once it was approved by the Advisory Council.

Helen Lopez motioned to approve the Area Plan presented with any changes discussed during this meeting. John Hernandez seconded the motion.

Sedalia Sanders asked if the Area Plan can be amended at a later time even if it is approved as is today. Madeline Dessert responded yes, it could be amended later.

Helen Lopez provided the following suggestions and has sent the changes in writing to Sarah Enz:

On Pg. 8, change "an" to "a" decrease

On Pg. 9, update North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to United States Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA)

On Pg. 10, the reference to Desert Rats seems to be incorrectly used and should be removed. Sedalia Sanders provided some historical information on the term and agreed with Helen Lopez that the sentence should be removed.



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On Pg. 10, Madeline Dessert mentioned that the sentence regarding seasonal visitors or snowbirds may not be accurate and should be removed. The Area Plan stated that these seasonal visitors may not need our services since they are able to maintain two homes. Paul R. Monarrez commented that these visitors do use local resources while in the area such as medical services, etc. Helen Lopez recommended that this be discussed further before making any changes. Supervisor Castillo agreed with the recommendation and provided some information on those individuals that stay in our area. He commented that citizens from Canada are not allowed to be out of their country more than 6 months. Patricia Thompson clarified that if Canada residents are out more than 183 days they would lose any benefits they receive in Canada. Helen Lopez asked if these seniors used local resources. Monica De Leon responded that they do call the Information & Assistance Line and are provided with referrals.

AJ Gaddis commented that she felt uncomfortable making any changes until she had more time to review. She asked if the process changed. Madeline Dessert responded that the Area Plan is completely revamped every four years with minor changes made annually. Staff made the changes that were redlined for this year and provided to Advisory Council for review prior to this meeting.

John Hernandez agreed with Helen Lopez to not make any further changes regarding the snowbirds until further discussion was had. He asked if the Sunbeam RV Park was private or county own. He also asked if the number of seniors returning to these RV parks was expected to grow and how the development of the lithium industry will impact this growth.

Patricia Thompson informed them that she expects more Canadians to return since the Canadian dollar is hovering at about 26% to 28% down from 35% compared to the American Dollar. Many snowbirds that had stayed away may be willing to return now that the dollar has weakened.

Helen Lopez asked for consensus on tabling this for further discussion at a later time and not make any changes on the snowbirds reference at this time. Advisory Council members agreed with the recommendation.

Supervisor Castillo commented that the lease structures for RV Parks are either month to month or for a full year. The full year lease is much more economical than the month to month. Many snowbirds choose to go with the year round lease and plan to return every year. This concluded this discussion.

On Pg. 12, Helen Lopez asked for Rosie's photo to be deleted. Madeline Dessert verified that it was already removed and replaced with a picture of the building.

On Pg. 14, Helen Lopez stated that there are some numbers missing on the funding allocation. Madeline Dessert informed them that the correct number is \$3,600,000. The number on this allocation will be updated to reflect this.



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On page 14, There is a reference to largest number of hidden poor. Helen Lopez asked largest as compared to what. Madeline Dessert responded that this is for the state but she will confirm. Helen Lopez asked for this information to be included for clarity.

On Pg. 22, Helen Lopez stated that the Senior Appreciation day has not been held in 2 years. She suggested that if there are no plans to continue it should be removed or revised. Virginia Ward suggested the reference be kept but making it more generic since it may return in the future. Helen Lopez suggested that it be referenced in past term. Madeline Dessert suggested the word historically be added. Sedalia Sanders agreed and provided some additional input on verbiage: She asked to change “has become” and “to became” in the last sentence.

Sedalia Sanders went back to the discussion on the “hidden poor” and informed the Advisory Council that this term is a Medi-Cal term. She also pointed out the sentence in the Area Plan that clarifies that the Imperial County has the largest number of hidden poor in California. Patricia Thompson commented that she works with Medi-Cal and Imperial County is identified as the poorest county in California. This included people that were working but had to live in a home with multiple generations to be able to survive. Helen Lopez stated that she understood what the hidden poor was referring to but that she did not see the largest to comparison and that is why she requested that to be added. Manuel Sanchez agreed with Helen Lopez and asked for the state to be added to that sentence.

AJ Gaddis asked who the original author of the Area Plan. Madeline Dessert responded that the original Area Plan must have been drafted and submitted by the first AAA Director. The Area Plan has been updated annually and completely revamped every four years.

AJ Gaddis commented that she has been here all her life and never heard some of the terminology being used. She further commented that she would like to explore a better way to articulate the Imperial Valley resources and how it serves the County of Imperial’s senior population.

Sedalia Sanders commented that the Advisory Council members were the ones to write the plan and every year they work to make any necessary changes. The Area Plan was written by the AC with assistance from staff. The professionalism speaks to the professional attributes that the AC members bring to this agency. Virginia Ward added that as time changes, then verbiage changes should be made.

Oreda Chin commented that she appreciated the changes made by Helen Lopez and the recommendations being made. She asked that the AC moves on. Members can read the Area Plan on their own time and reach out to others if they had any questions. Helen Lopez and Virginia Ward agreed with this comment.



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On Pg. 27, Helen Lopez asked for “recently” to be removed from "recently completed" for a project that happened in 2017. That concluded her change requests.

Helen Lopez then asked staff the following questions:

She didn’t find information regarding the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds received from the Aging & Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) or the impact of Emerging ADRC status on the AAA included in the Area Plan. Madeline Dessert responded that the reason it was not included was because the Area Plan was for the programs funded by the California Department of Aging (CDA) Area Plan Program only. Helen Lopez recommends that this information be included in the “Other Resources” section of the Area Plan. Helen Lopez commented that this does not have to happen right away but should be addressed in future versions of the Area Plan.

Helen Lopez stated that she asked staff to provide the due date for the Area Plan and was informed that the Area Plan must be submitted to the Board of Supervisors no later than Monday, July 25, 2022.

Helen Lopez reiterated that her motion to approve the Area Plan with the minor changes discussed during this meeting stands. John Hernandez also confirmed that his second stands on this motion.

Virginia Ward called for vote, noting that the Area Plan will be revisited at another time to address any changes tabled during this discussion. The motion passed unanimously with no nays or abstentions. No further discussion.

c) AAA Advisory Council Election of Officers for Fiscal Year 2022-2023

Helen Lopez motioned to appoint the following members to serve as the Advisory Council Offices for a two-year term beginning September 2022:

- Chair – Oreda Chin
- Vice Chair – AJ Gaddis
- Secretary – Paul R. Monarrez
- Past-Chair – Virginia Ward

Sedalia Sanders seconded the motion. Chair Ward called for vote. The motion passed unanimously with no nays or abstentions. No further discussion.

d) Advisory Council to set deadline to accept application for Advisory Council Vacancy

Helen Lopez motioned to set a deadline to accept applications for the Senior Advocate member vacancy to Thursday, September 1, 2022. Sedalia Sanders seconded the motion. Chair Ward called for vote. The motion passed unanimously with no nays or abstentions. No further discussion.

e) Council to set meeting dates for Fiscal Year 2022-2023



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Virginia Ward went over the options being provided which was to hold meetings on the 3rd or 4th Thursday of the month with Advisory Council (AC) also able to look at other options.

Helen Lopez motioned to accept the recommendation to meet on the third (3rd) Thursday of the month with only November meeting on the fourth. Virginia Ward clarified that if AC selected the 3rd Thursday of the month there was no conflict with Thanksgiving Day.

Monica De Leon stated that Cynthia Alba asked if the meetings could be moved to the fourth (4th) Thursday of the month since she had an ongoing conflict. Monica De Leon further mentioned that other members had expressed issues with the 3rd Thursday.

Paul R. Monarrez expressed that he would second the motion either way. It was just recently that the meetings had been moved to the third Thursday but he doesn't remember why.

Helen Lopez amended her motion to accept for AC to meet the fourth Thursday of the month at 9 am except for November 2022 which will held on the third Thursday. Paul R. Monarrez seconded the motion. Chair Ward called for vote. The motion passed unanimously with no nays or abstentions. No further discussion.

f) Committee Reorganization

Per the By-Laws, Advisory Council Chair is to submit a revised or new Committee Roster each September. Committee roster included in Action / Discussion Item IVf.

The committee roster was provided for review and discussion only. The roster will be presented by the new Chair, Oreda Chin, in September. Advisory Council members were encouraged to reach out to Oreda Chin if they wanted to make any changes to their committee membership. John Hernandez asked the new chair to add him to the Transportation Committee. This concluded the discussion.

g) Council to vote to go dark in August

Helen Lopez motioned for the Advisory Council to go dark for the month of August and reconvene in person on September 15, 2022. Manuel Sanchez seconded the motion. Chair Ward called for vote. The motion passed unanimously with no nays or abstentions. No further discussion.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Chair Virginia Ward asked Committee Chairs to report for their committee.

Executive Committee: Chair Ward had nothing new to report.

Planning & Finance Committee: Paul R. Monarrez had nothing new to report.

Legislative Committee: Helen Lopez reported that most bills are moving forward. If anyone is interested to learn more and find the status of the bill, they can click on the link next to each bills name on the report that was sent in April. She reported that bill AB 2077, which Daniel Romero and Helen Lopez coauthored and increases the personal needs allowance



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from \$30 to \$50 for people residing in long-term care facilities, has continued to move forward. It is currently in the Senate Appropriations Committee. This concluded the Legislative Committee report.

Nutrition Committee: Oreda Chin reported that a meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, September 8, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. This concluded the Nutrition Committee report.

Transportation Committee: AJ Gaddis reported that the Committee had received answers to some questions that came up during the last Transportation Committee meeting. She asked staff to forward the responses to the entire Advisory Council. She welcomed John Hernandez to the Transportation Committee. This concluded the Transportation Committee report.

Social & Health Committee: Manuel Sanchez reported that the next Social & Health Committee meeting has been scheduled for September 1, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. This concluded the Social & Health Committee report.

Ad-hoc By-law Committee Report: Helen Lopez reported that since the last meeting update, the Committee has completed updates to Section I and are currently working on Section II which includes membership terms, vacancies, and process to get folks on board. The committee has more to do but expects to present a completed draft to the full Advisory Council at the beginning of 2023. She invited others to join the discussion.

This concluded the committee reports.

VI. INFORMATION:

Chair Virginia Ward went over the informational items included in the agenda packet which consisted of the attendance roster, the updated Council Members Roster, and the Healthy Aging Virtual Education 2022-2023 Series Flyer.

AJ Gaddis asked whether it was a requirement to include the excused and unexcused designation on the Attendance Roster that is shared monthly with the Advisory Council. She suggested that Absent or Present be used instead. Madeline Dessert responded that she did reach out to the County Counsel and Andrew Briseno was present and could address her question. Andrew Briseno stated that after reviewing the by-laws he did not find anything requiring for distinguishing between unexcused and excused absences rather than present or absent. Perhaps this is a custom from this organization. Andrew Briseno asked for additional time to review the most updated set of by-laws to see if there is a notation that requires that the absences be distinguished. He asked staff to send him the most updated by-laws to ensure that what he reviewed so far is actually the most recent. AJ Gaddis welcomed Andrew Briseno as a new Counsel and then asked for this to be included in future agenda items for further discussion.

Madeline Dessert reminded Mr. Briseno that there was a question regarding the approval of the agenda and if this is required. She stated that she will include this as a future agenda item to be discussed once Mr. Briseno had a chance to review the by-laws. This concluded the informational item discussion.



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VII. AREA AGENCY ON AGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Madeline Dessert provided the Director's Report. She went over the Senior Nutrition Program (SNP) numbers: a total of 16,763 meals were provided in June 2022. We've seen a steady increase month to month thanks to the influx of additional funds. The breakdown in clients is as follows: 295 CI clients, 172 CII Clients, and 172 clients being serviced by Mom's Meals. This month we are transitioning CI clients that were receiving home delivered meals due to concerns with the COVID-19 Pandemic back into the congregate sites.

Monica De Leon and Karla Flores have been very busy with community outreach events. A complete list of their activities is included in the report for your review. We are happy to report that the Elder Abuse Awareness Conference was a great success. Within two weeks of publishing the registration, we were at capacity. We are excited about being able to hold our meetings in-person.

As of September 2022 the Advisory Council meetings will be held in-person and a Zoom meeting option will not be available.

The AP 2223-24 Contract from California Department of Aging (CDA) in the amount of \$1,694,540 was approved by County Board of Supervisors on June 14, 2022. Contract was sent to CDA on July 14, 2022, for approval.

Aging & Disability Resource Connection Update. Madeline Dessert reported that the budget has been submitted to CDA in conjunction with Access to Independence, Fiscal Agent. She provided the breakdown of funds. She also discussed the to-do list for this project: Recruit Information and Assistance Coordinator, recruit Advisory Council, and build Community Partner list by hosting events throughout the year.

Finally, Ms. Dessert provided an update on the Public Administrator/AAA Reorganization. She was happy to report that the department will stay as is and will not be moving or merging with another department. This is great news as management feels this would be in the best interest of the seniors that we serve. This concluded the director's report and she opened up for questions.

John Hernandez asked if there will a recruitment for AAA Manager. Ms. Dessert responded that the PA/AAA Director position will be appointed by the Board of Supervisors and we hope to get news on that soon.

Madeline Dessert announced that the Board of Supervisors is hosting a Colorado River Summit to be held on July 28, 2022, from 7 am to 12:30 pm. Monica De Leon sent out the flyer and link to register. She invited the Advisory Council to attend since the issue of drought will be addressed. Madeline Dessert will be in attendance to stay be informed on this issue and be able to provide seniors accurate information.

AJ Gaddis commented that this event has caused some controversy between the County of Imperial and Imperial Irrigation District (IID). She has already registered to attend and encouraged others to attend as well. She encouraged John Hernandez to attend since he had requested information on the drought.



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Virginia Ward reported that she would not be able to attend but would like to receive information on what is discussed at this summit. Madeline Dessert suggested that a discussion item be placed on the September meeting agenda to provide an update on the drought and the Colorado River Summit. Advisory Council members agreed.

AJ Gaddis asked Virginia Ward if this was her last meeting as the Advisory Council Chair. Virginia Ward responded that it was. AJ Gaddis and other Advisory Council members thanked Ms. Ward for her service. This concluded the discussion.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY MEMBERS:

Announcement were made prior to the Director's Report.

Supervisor Ray Castillo asked to be placed on the September agenda to provide a 10 minute presentation on the following projects; the renewable energy, lithium, the drought, Colorado River, and Housing. He feels that this is important information that the Advisory Council members should have. An announcement will be made in August regarding the Colorado River and the impact to the County. This concluded his announcement.

John Hernandez asked Advisory Council to keep the following items in mind for future discussion:

1. The Governor's Executive Orders regarding restrictions on watering and the impact this will have on seniors. AC will need to look for ways to assist seniors to implement efficient water use practices.
2. Legislation was passed in regards to food waste and food recycling. Jurisdictions must follow the new regulations that require the separation of trash into the three dumpsters: recycle, waste, and compost. Since Catholic Charities will need to comply with these new regulations it is important we keep the community informed.

No other announcements were made and nothing further was discussed.

IX. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

Helen Lopez suggested the Advisory Council considers holding a Strategic Planning Session to discuss our mission, vision, and values along with staff. She suggested this be held in the fall with possibly a third party facilitator that helps get everyone on the same page. Virginia Ward and Manuel Sanchez both expressed support for this idea. No further requests were made.

X. ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Ward adjourned the meeting at 10:23 a.m.

Madeline Dessert
ICAAA Department Fiscal Manager

Monica Veliz De Leon
Recording Clerk