

Regional Aging Advisory Council (RAAC)

Land of Sky Regional Council

April 13, 2017

Attendance: Charles Dickens, Carey Shields, LeeAnne Tucker, Gaylyn Justice, Kathe Harris, Penny James, Celeste Selwyn, Gene Knoefel, Justin Hembree, Bob Tomasulo, Derek Parris, Susan Schiemer, Angie Allison, Dee Heinmuller, Jill Peek and Kathy Johnson.

I. WELCOME

- a. Participants introduced themselves and shared life events that brought them to volunteer with the RAAC.

II. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR of Land of Sky Regional Council – Justin Hembree spoke on the impact at the national and local levels of President Trump’s proposed budget.

- a. Mid-March the White House released the “Budget Blueprint.” This is not a full proposed budget. It was very general and set the agenda for the administration. The next step will be the release of a line item budget in May.
- b. Policy analysis of the “Blueprint” found it consistent with the President’s campaign promises. The total budget did not decrease; \$51 billion was taken from domestic discretionary funding and allocated to defense & homeland security.
 - i. The proposed budget eliminates two economic development organizations; 1.) Economic Development Administration (EDA) which provides infrastructure funds needed for business development. An example locally a new business, bringing a number of high tech jobs, needed a sewer line extension. This funding was provided through EDA. 2.) Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) which in the past has built health centers and health clinics.
 - ii. Community Services Block Grants (CDBGs) are also targeted for elimination which does not effect aging funding.
- c. The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) wants to protect against funding reductions that effects program and service delivery. If the Federal and State governments want to reduce funds to senior services, it would be beneficial to talk with program administrators for ideas on how to cut costs without impacting program delivery. The AAA’s role in dealing with budget issues is to “educate” not advocate. However individuals can directly lobby for programs.
 - i. Advocate by promoting stories to local media outlets (newspaper editorials and TV stories) which emphasize that programs provide services which constituents find important.

Also provide good news stories that promote independence for seniors.

- ii. It will be important to have these stories ready when the line item budget is released in May. Most likely Congress will develop an entirely new budget. Once the budget process starts Land of Sky (LOS) wants to provide reasons to maintain funding.
- iii. When contacting Senators and Representatives focus on key people who are members of Appropriations Committee. These members will have influence over funding.
- iv. Remind legislators that seniors are a big voting bloc. Provide figures on how much money can be saved by sending on senior programs. Staying socially active can have a positive impact on physical and mental health.

III. AREA AGENCY ON AGING DIRECTOR REPORT LeeAnne Tucker noted that as a result of the RAAC retreat that there is a new meeting agenda format and opportunities to serve the AAA.

- a. Flyers of several AAA programs were provided to RAAC members for distribution throughout their communities.
- b. Updates to the Regional Aging Advisory Council Bylaws were reviewed. Except for **Section 2: Selection Procedures** paragraph one, all updates were approved.
 - i. The concern was how the RAAC would reach a quorum if the number of members from each county was increased from 4 to 6 (total membership from eighteen to twenty-six). Suggestions included:
 - 1. Quorum of members present at a meeting
 - 2. Quorum based on counties present
 - 3. Could have 4 representatives and 2 alternates from each county, quorum based on representatives.
- c. Approved the suggestion that the RAAC October 12th meeting be held at the Veterans Administration rather than Henderson County. Future meetings will return to the regular schedule.

IV. REPORTS

- a. Buncombe County – Buncombe County World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Walk – Carrier Park June 15th 5:30 to 7:30. County Sheriff will open walk. There will also be drug takeback and shred truck. Website and Facebook will launch this week. Also Powerful Tools for Caregivers program is being hosted at Land of Sky Regional Council May 31 to June 1.
- b. Madison County – Emphasized how important the Senior Center and Meals on Wheels are for residents. Seniors get more than a meal; they are able to socialize with others which helps maintain

their health. The staff at Community Services does a tremendous job and would be a good source of stories to share with legislators.

- c. Transylvania – Volunteer Fair at Brevard Library on April 19th. Senior Center has congregate meals and activities scheduled in every room. The county will be reinitiating the TRIAD program. *(Note: Triad is not an acronym. The term refers to the three founding organizations of Triad: AARP, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), and the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA)).*
- d. Senior Tar Heel Legislature – The two day conference on March 14-15th provided a day of lectures highlighting some of the State's resources for seniors. The second day was a trip to meet with the Senators and Representatives serving the LOS counties at the General Assembly.
- e. Senior Volunteer Services Advisory Council – Has Asheville Tourist baseball tickets on sale for \$7 (normally \$8). Proceeds will go to support foster grandparents and companion volunteer programs. Also in the near future will be a fun day of putt-putt golf.

V. SPECIAL COUNTY SPOTLIGHT - Madison County

- a. The county provides services to elders in 7 to 9 different programs with 33 employees. Employees work at the senior center, in transportation, as home aides etc. The county is unique in that some families have lived there for 4 to 5 generations. Madison County Community Services has built relationships with the seniors and these seniors will call county commissioners and county manager with issues.
- b. Meals are provided at 8 sites throughout the county, including two Senior Centers. 150 congregate and 50 home delivery meals are provided four days per week. The home visit is more than just the meals but the interaction. A story was told about one of the Senior Center participants that had lost both her husband and son. Her comment to the staff was that the Center had "saved her life" because all she was doing at home was moving from chair to another.
- c. Transportation for seniors is available. However there are only 6 drivers for 11 vans due to budget constraints. Vans are not only used for meal site routes and Senior Center they are also have field trips. Demand has increased 20% in trips. Staff noted that the county's main population is baby boomers and voice concern about their impact on future demand.
 - i. Van drivers do not need a special license. Requires clean driving record and defensive driving class.
- d. Free food is provided weekly by Beacon of Hope a Madison county 501(c) (3) organization. Food arrives on Thursdays and is distributed on Fridays. Also the YMCA is coming to the county monthly to provide fresh food and produce.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

- a. None

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. New partnership with VA and AARP – free video series for caregivers – target on Activities of Daily Living (ADLs), Falls, and Feeding (see website - <http://www.aarp.org/ppi/info-2017/home-alone-alliance.html>)
- b. Next meeting on July 13th in Brevard, Transylvania County.

VIII. ADJOURN

- a. Adjourned at 12 noon