



# ALLEGAN COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING

3255 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Suite 200  
Allegan, MI 49010  
269.673.3333 - Office  
877.673.5333 - Toll Free  
269.673.0569 - Fax

<http://www.allegancounty.org>

## COMMISSIONER

Dean Kapenga  
616-218-2599  
Hamilton

## COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING – MINUTES **REVISED**

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Zimmerman Room, Human Services Building

3255 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue – Allegan, MI

Public Zoom Link:

## ELECTED OFFICERS

Chairperson  
Larry Ladenburger  
(Senior Representative)  
269-673-6200  
Allegan

Vice Chairperson  
Alice Kelsey  
(At-Large)  
269-366-0431  
Martin

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82375478232?pwd=NnNsUEhwZnhWVlFPNjAvNkrZnjZz09>

## SENIOR MEMBERS

Stuart Peet  
269-672-9520  
Shelbyville

Lou Phelps  
269-870-3710  
Plainwell

Mary Campbell  
269-655-8000  
Pullman

**CALL TO ORDER:** Meeting called to order by Chairperson Larry Ladenburger at 10:03 am

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

**CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM**

**ROLL CALL: PRESENT:** Alice Kelsey, Rich Butler, Lou Phelps, Mary Campbell, Sally Heavener, Dean Kapenga, Pat Petersen, Stuart Peet, Larry Ladenburger

**ABSENT:** None

**OTHER:** Sherry Owens, Maria Hawk

## MEMBERS AT LARGE

Richard Butler  
616 902-0046  
Plainwell

Patricia Petersen  
616-644-8059  
Allegan

Sally Heavener  
616-355-3494  
Holland

**COMMUNICATIONS:** none

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: (Attachment A - March)** Moved by Stuart Peet. Seconded by Rich Butler. All in favor. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None

**STAFF**  
Sherry Owens  
269-686-5144  
Director

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Moved by Rich Butler. Seconded by Dean Kapenga. All in favor. Motion carried.

Katie Cole  
269-673-3333 x2495  
Senior Services  
Counselor

**PRESENTATIONS:** “5 Why exercise” for the Senior Newsletter by Sherry Owens. Sherry explained that during the rebranding, part of the marketing package included a newsletter. It is a beautiful document that could potentially be used in many different ways and today’s discussion will assist in clarifying goals.

Ashley Dever  
269-673-3333 x2498  
Senior Services  
Counselor

**LARRY:** Started collecting newsletters, brought one for the library, tech center, and school. Commented they don’t all do paper anymore; a lot of these newsletters are on the internet. That’s something we need to consider when it comes time to distribute.

Maria Hawk  
269-673-3333 x2497  
Administrative  
Assistant

**RICH:** In creation of this database is the marketing department going to create the

## Mission Statement

“Dedicated to serving Allegan County seniors by developing and coordinating services that support their independence, maintain their dignity, and preserve their quality of life”

database with all the names and all the places we want to send it to. Is our marketing department going to handle that?

Sally: We may need to add “How,” how will we be distributing?

Sherry stated that marketing is now managed in house. Greenstreet presented the media plan that the COA approved in February. Laura will maintain the accounts that Sherry cannot manage. Laura is not managing our campaign any longer.

RICH: Will we use Allegan County’s database for information?

Sherry clarified that ServTracker was the Client information database for client records and HIPPA would not permit using any information in there without specific consent. The newsletter will be mailed or emailed to seniors who provided their information through Boomer Bash or Senior Day. There is a database with that information for mailers.

MARY: The whole population of seniors is important to reach, not just clients. Casco Township uses voter registration records to communicate with their older adults by placing postcards in with taxes to reach them. Electronic is the way to go, if email addresses can be collected.

SHERRY: Boomer Bash registration is online and these are active seniors that perhaps don’t use millage services yet, and this is a good target audience. We have a data base from Boomer Bash 2019 registration that contains email addresses.

Sherry began with the “Who, What, When, Where and How before “WHY”:

**WHO:** Potential audience?

- Adult children of seniors
- Potential clients
- Professionals (Healthcare)
- Younger seniors not ready for services yet
- Current clients (they already know about the services)

LARRY: The census tells Allegan County that there are 20,000 seniors. We serve about 2,000 and we’re missing 90%. I see that as our target, to reach 20,000.

SHERRY: The idea is that when the kids come to see their parents, they see our mailer on the coffee table.

- No firm consensus of “Who” the audience is.

**WHAT:** Beyond what you pull from Facebook posts and our quarterly numbers, what other information would be the message in this communication? What would be more, better or different with this project?

- Sherry suggested making the newsletter an annual report card that gets mailed out with the metrics of senior services for the end of the year.

**WHEN:** How often should this be published?

- No more than quarterly
- Annual report card (maybe with tax bill)

STUART: Supports a quarterly newsletter

PAT: How many people access the Facebook page?

MARY: Facebook is a good outlet but it's not reaching as many seniors as we'd like.

DEAN: How can we partner with the other groups to advertise what we have? There are some people who don't even know about services. We still get lost in the collaboration of MACC and 211 who have a larger somehow collaborate with other groups to advertise what we have. They have email lists that we don't have.

SHERRY: Second Wave has been purchased through the county, its like a Huffington Post, where you can get your news online. People can have it delivered to email. We can include our own news stories there and that is at no cost to us.

**WHERE:** What is the delivery method?

- Electronically (email blasts)
- Paper copies mailed

ALICE: Is intrigued with putting an annual report card in with tax bills, but not sure. how feasible that is? How many treasurers are willing to help us with that?

**HOW:**

- Someone will have to arrange, edit, proofread and send to a printer by the deadline
- Sherry reminded the COA that from the very beginning of this project (2020) she was very transparent there was no capacity on her team for a newsletter.

SALLY: If we want a newsletter to look like the example, we will need to hire a marketing firm.

RICH: Does Allegan County have a marketing firm?

SHERRY: Second Wave is utilized to cover marketing

MARY: Marketing means you have to tell people over and over; they're not paying attention the first time they see it.

**The 5 WHY exercise:**

**WHY:** Why do we need a newsletter?

COA broke into small groups to discuss "Why" we should utilize a Newsletter.

**Group #1 (Pat, Alice, Lou)**

- To Reach non-internet savvy seniors (why)
- To keep them aware and less isolated (why)
- It keeps them active and feeling important (why)
- There will be less need for our services, it keeps them healthy and aware and shows them they are cared about

**Group #2 (Stuart, Sally, Rich)**

Is not convinced we DO need a newsletter, instead create annual report, post cards and email blasts (but they did do the exercise)

- It is used as a communication tool (why)
- To increase data base of older adults (why)
- They are who we serve (why)
- To be effective and efficient with the millage and reach all eligible

**Group #3 (Dean, Larry, Mary)**

- Because we are missing 15,000 older adults in Allegan County who don't know about the Millage (why)
- Because we are not getting the message out (why)
- Don't know – need to find the best and most cost-effective way (why)
- Haven't explored everything (example – regular communication at the Township level) (why)
- Because there are no connections in the townships and there are no information packets there

COA members need toolkit to speak on Senior Services at township meetings so townships are receiving information on our services.

Revisit January and February minutes to see the current marketing plan.

SHERRY: Do we want to use this document in the traditional way, to show up in someone's email, to be in a public library, to be a publication that you all put out?

RICH: Thinks we should try it

Sherry asked what the plan was to execute the project.

RICH: Disagrees that it's not Senior Services job to do the newsletter. If we need to add staff or hire outside support to accomplish it Senior Service should provide the support to coordinate it.

SALLY: Or outsource it

SHERRY: Reminded them that the SS team provides layers of information through Facebook posts, administrative reports to the commissioners, and brochures that include metrics on services, etc. The team is happy to provide copies of metrics and Facebook content to support the newsletter, it's just the actual creation and distribution that is not feasible.

SALLY: Supports reaching out to Greenstreet to find out the costs of producing the document.

**Motion:** "Request Laura from Greenstreet Marketing to provide the total costs associated to develop a traditional newsletter, from concept to mailing." Moved by Alice Kelsey. Supported by Pat Petersen.

**Discussion:**

STUART: Would be delivered yearly or quarterly?

ALICE: Let's identify a cost would be to make one, and then let the budget decide the frequency. If it's fiscally possible.

MARY: Suggests thinking through who we're trying to reach further. If we're trying to identify people who need services but don't know we have services then we need to go to the local level. She is unsure if every township is that way, but Casco township is very invested in their seniors.

SHERRY: Unfortunately, not all townships have that focus.

SALLY: There's a lot of real estate on the front page that is being wasted and to consider rethinking the layout.

PAT: Can we ask Laura about a one-page newsletter?

In February, the COA approved the media/marketing plan for 2023. Sally suggested reviewing the marketing plan. She would like to review communication goals of the COA.

**Restated motion:** "Request Laura from Greenstreet Marketing to provide the total costs associated to develop a traditional newsletter, from concept to mailing." Moved by Alice Kelsey. Supported by Pat Petersen.

**Vote:** 9 Yays. 0 Nays. Motion carried.

### **Sherry Presented the Administrative Reports:**

Sally asked if there is there a way to keep track how many people are being referred to meals on wheel, because they request frozen meals? I think it would be helpful to have that number moving forward.

Sherry will ask the team to begin tracking this.

### **-COA Calendar (Attachment D)**

- Boomer Bash is June 1, 2023.
  - COA will have flyers to distribute before event

### **-Action Items Log (Attachment E)**

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

1. None at this time.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

1. Newsletter exercise (**Attachment F**)

### **NOTICE OF APPOINTMENTS:**

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**

AAAWM Board of Directors – Stuart Peet gave a quick update on meeting.

AAAWM Advisory Council –

- COA members received information and an application for the board  
LARRY: We still have an opening on the Advisory Council, that is open to any of us. Please consider it. There is a spot for us.

**ROUND TABLE (COA MEMBER TIME):** None.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Moved to adjourn by Alice Kelsey. Supported by Dean Kapenga. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 12:11 pm