

**Discussion Notes**  
**Ashtabula County Senior Services Levy Advisory Board**  
**March 15, 2017**

**Present**

Patrick Arcaro  
Paul Fuller  
Michelle Thomas  
Virginia Walker  
Pam Zack  
Camille Zalar

**Absent**

Jerome Brockway  
Neroy Carter  
Susan Hill  
Sandy John  
Randy Jones  
Mary Pepperney  
Jane Wallace

**Staff**

Ronald Smith  
Renee Dragon  
Tammy Hawes  
Lee Ann Walters-Young

**BOCC**

JP Ducro

**Call to Order**

Michelle Thomas called the meeting to order.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the January 18, 2017 meeting could not be approved, due to the fact that there were not enough board members present to form a quorum.

**Chair's Report**

Michelle welcomed Commissioner JP Ducro, then had the people present go around the room and introduce themselves. Michelle introduced the providers from the three (3) Chore Services Programs: Ashtabula County Council on Aging (Lisa Bruckman), Country Neighbor Program (Barbara Klingensmith via telephone) and Conneaut Human Resource Center (Debra Newcomb).

**Chore Providers Presentation**

*Conneaut Human Resource Center (CHRC)* Debra Newcomb said that there was a higher demand today for Chore services with the number of aging clients (average age being 70 years) increasing and staying at home. Their service covers the areas of Conneaut, North Kingsville and Kingsville. The services they currently provide are light house cleaning, washing walls, laundry, taking out trash, and minor repairs (i.e. changing light bulbs, putting batteries in smoke detectors). The biggest challenge was that the client had to provide the cleaning supplies and equipment/tools (i.e. lawn mower), CHRC had some equipment but it was limited. The CHRC does not provide snow plowing, plumbing, or electrical. JP Ducro asked about gutter cleaning and Debra said that they cannot clean gutters because climbing on a ladder is a big liability. The Chore employees are part time M-F and are paid minimum wage. They cannot use volunteers because of background checks and liabilities.

Virginia Walker asked Debra if there was a “wait list” for this service. Debra said that there was not a big wait list for Chore, because people were usually taken care of in just a few days of their request. Michelle Thomas asked if CHRC clients were duplicated by use of other services. Debra replied that yes there was some duplication, because clients using one service would find out about other services offered and were then referred.

Patrick Arcaro asked about the Homemaker service offered by CHRC and Debra indicated that was a high demand service that had gone from 30-70 clients. The Homemaker service serves clients every other week for 1 to 1-1/2 hours per week. Due to budget constraints they have had a hard time keeping homemaker employees because they can only pay them minimum wage.

Debra indicated that the highest demand service was for Home Delivered Meals. The CHRC just remodeled their kitchen adding a new stove, refrigerator, microwave and dishwasher with the hopes of providing Congregate Meals (seniors and summer kids’ food program) very soon. Also, CHRC just joined forces with Country Neighbor Program in providing the “Senior Food Box”, which consists of a 40 lb. box of dry goods delivered once per month, aimed at helping the people running out of food stamps. This program is sponsored by the USDA. The only problem foreseen is the delivery of the box to clients.

Paul Fuller asked Debra what she felt was the biggest change in demand. She indicated Transportation and Homemaker services. JP Ducro asked if people receiving these services could make donations to defray costs. Debra implied that some could and some could not.

Ashtabula County Council on Aging (ACCOA) Lisa Bruckman said they provide Chore services for Ashtabula, Andover, Harpersfield, Rock Creek, and Dorset. Lisa also indicated that she was doing a lot of free advertising to get the word out about the services the Senior Center offered. She implied that she had a wait list of approximately 27 people as of February 2017, due to the fact that her handyman only works 20-30 hours per week (<93 hours per month) to stay within budget. Their Chore services consist of minor household repairs, spring/fall cleaning, minor plumbing and electrical issues. They do not do lawn mowing. Camille Zalar asked if their handyman did ladder work or could install a ramp. Lisa replied that no ladder work or ramp installation was performed, those type of tasks were referred to Community Action.

Patrick Arcaro asked what the handyman’s wage was. Lisa said he was paid minimum wage, \$5.00 per month for a cell phone, and paid gas mileage to drive his own vehicle. She also indicated that the demand for a handyman was definitely increasing. They could use a full time handyman, but the budget does not allow for it.

Country Neighbor Program Barb Klingensmith joined the meeting via a telephone call from Patrick Arcaro. Barb explained that the CNP Chore service provided house cleaning, faucet repairs, screen door

repairs, hand rail installation, minor repairs, and lawn mowing. Paul Fuller asked how much un-met need did CNP's Chore program have. Barb replied, not much because they get funding for Chore service from another source also. Michelle Thomas asked what wages were paid the handyman, and Barb said minimum wage. Michelle Thomas also asked Barb what changes in demand she had seen. Barb indicated that due to the increasing elderly population, there was a higher demand for Home Delivered Meals. Camille Zalar asked if CNP accepted referrals. Barb replied that sometimes they would get client referrals from APS or Passport.

Patrick Arcaro asked Barb how her Congregate Meal sites were doing. Barb said that both sites (Andover and Orwell) had fluctuation in attendance due to the winter weather. Andover typically served 30-50 people per day, and Orwell served 30-35 people per day. He also asked her about her Transportation program. Barb indicated that originally they wanted to run transportation in four (4) loops, like a bus route, around town so seniors could jump on or jump off at the senior center, store, post office, barbershop, etc. But unfortunately, it became more individualized due to the fact that no one in Andover had mail boxes, all mail had to be picked up at the post office, therefore, more trips were being made back and forth to the post office, which interfered with the Loop plan. Doctor appointments were already handled on an individual basis. All in all, those individualized trips made it difficult to run the four (4) Loops.

### **New Business**

Conneaut Human Resource Center Debra Newcomb asked the board members present for \$10,000 to put towards the purchase of a new eight (8) passenger van. They would not have to pay taxes on the van due to the fact that CHRC is a non-profit agency. Debra indicated that if the Senior Levy Board granted her the money she would come up with the rest. The new van would be used to haul people to and from CHRC for different programs, congregate meals, delivery of approximately 70 soup kitchen meals, delivery of food boxes, and different summer programs around the city. Debra said she had already approached ODOT for grant funding, but was turned down. Debra indicated she would approach ODOT again if needed. In the end, Debra said she would appreciate anything the Senior Levy Board could do for her. Michelle Thomas said that because we did not have a quorum we would have to revisit the van money request. Paul Fuller and Patrick Arcaro discussed that money was given in the past to Geneva Senior Center (approximately \$3,500) to buy a van and to Country Neighbor Program (approximately \$12,000) to buy a van. Paul Fuller mentioned that he thought that ODOT had a matching grant fund in the past where they would match \$7,000 to \$8,000. Patrick Arcaro was not sure if CHRC had a time frame that they needed the money by. Michelle Thomas again stated that they would have to revisit this request when they had a quorum.

**New Board Members** Patrick Arcaro referred to JP Ducro regarding New Board Members. Camille Zalar was introduced as a new board member. JP Ducro said that Joyce Crease and Debra Boyle were mailed letters notifying them that they were approved for the board. Patrick Arcaro indicated that this would increase the board membership from 13 to 15 once they were appointed.

### **Funding**

Ron Smith presented the Revenue & Expense Report Budget for CY 2017 with Actual two (2) month Revenues and Expenses ending 2/28/2017. Ron stated that we collected Current Year Revenues of \$671.44 so far for the first two months, and that in March the first payment of Property taxes were expected to bring in \$1,012,979.00. Ron then went over the expenses incurred as of 2/28/17 by each provider with a total paid so far of \$246,322.96. He mentioned that at this point the providers had used approximately 17% of their contract. Patrick Arcaro wanted Ron to report some statistics on Adult Protective Services (APS), which Ron indicated that as of February there were 29 new cases, 20 referrals, and 38 home visits. JP Ducro asked Ron about the \$400,000.00 Reserve money listed. Ron indicated that that money was a reserve in case the Levy failed. About 7-8 years ago, the board decided to lower the reserve to \$400,000.00. Ron said that this was Board designated, not by law, and we could change it at any time. Patrick advised that this was for three months, and at the time the Board set the amount at \$400,000.00, just in case the levy didn't pass it could be phased out.

Michelle went over the "Contract Report" and the "Wait List Report" explaining what they covered concerning each provider's services.

Patrick Arcaro mentioned to Ron Smith that he had received several complaints regarding Comfort Keepers not meeting the client's needs. Ron mentioned that he had spoken with Comfort Keepers and that they were having trouble in the beginning getting staffing, but it was confirmed that they had things handled and things would be up and running. Ron was going to continue to follow up on this.

### **Committees**

Michelle Thomas stated that they would like to form a special budget committee to look at the additional \$300,000.00 of income coming from the Senior Levy. They would like the committee to be made up of board members; interested members included Dr. Jerry Brockway (Speer Heading), Camille Zalar, Paul Fuller, JP Ducro and Michelle Thomas thus far. The purpose of the committee would be to distinguish allocation of the additional money to providers according to the needs of the community. This would include talking with providers to see if the needs were for meals, chores, transportation, prescription assistance, etc. JP Ducro stated that he would like to see a needs assessment and efficiency assessment done for all clients. He felt that spending taxpayers' dollars needed to be more efficient, citing examples such as Transportation and Home Delivered Meals. JP suggested that the provider not try to be an individual taxi service, thus have clients that are going at the same time share rides; and to avoid waste

with delivered meals, the provider should closely assess the needs of clients rather than have meals stack up in the refrigerator to be thrown out at the end of the week. He felt that there were several different ways to be more efficient, stating that he hated to see waste. Michelle Thomas stated that the board has talked about assessments in the past, and that the providers do have a point system set up to assess all their clients which helps in determining the need for the service provided. JP referenced that the Ashtabula Senior Center had a specific person designated to make wellness calls on their clients receiving services on a daily/weekly basis to check on the status of the client's needs. JP indicated that he saw real value in the wellness phone call.

Michelle Thomas went on to say that she saw great value in the new Senior Food Box program that was set up by the USDA and was anxious to see if that cut down on the home delivered meals. Michelle Thomas stated that the Congregate Food sites attendance had dwindled and home delivered meals had increased.

### **Old Business**

Lee Ann Walters-Young presented an update on the Senior Conference to be held on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at Lakeside High School. Lee Ann stated that the budget stood now at \$11,000.00, but she was trying to trim it down. Food costs were at \$4,100, therefore, she asked for \$5,000.00 towards conference expenses. The theme for this year's conference was titled "Spanning the Senior Experience." The site was visited by Paul Fuller, Virginia Walker and Renee Dragon to assess the feasibility of having breakout sessions. This was going to help determine the timeline for the day. Lee Ann indicated that they needed to rent tables and chairs from Aztek Rentals, due to the fact that LHS could not provide enough comfortable tables and chairs. Lee Ann concluded that things were moving along and she would continue to provide updates with each meeting.

### **Public Comment**

No public available for comment.

### **Adjourn**

Michelle Thomas ended the meeting. No motion was needed because there was not enough members present to form a quorum.

**Next Board Meeting**

**May 17, 2017**

**Ohio Means Jobs**