

**Alaska Commission on Aging  
Kotzebue Senior Center  
August 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009  
Kotzebue, Alaska  
Approved Meeting Minutes**

**Roll Call:** Commissioners Present: Sharon Howerton-Clark, Paula Pawlowski, Frank Appel, Patricia Branson, Barbara McNeil, Eleanor Dementi, Elizabeth Keegan, Iver Malutin and Nita Madsen. Members not present: Rebecca Hilgendorf and Banarsi Lal. Staff present: Denise Daniello, MaryAnn VandeCastle, Lesley Thompson and Sherice Ridges.

**Adoption of the April 30<sup>th</sup>, May 1<sup>st</sup> meeting minutes:** Approved

Paula Pawlowski offered a safety moment.

Denise Daniello thanked the Kotzebue Senior Center staff for having the Commission to the Kotzebue Senior Center. Denise said Kotzebue is one of her favorite communities in the state. The Senior Center is a beautiful facility that offers so much to the community. Denise said that she is looking forward to hearing everyone's input during the Elder Forum.

Sharon Howerton-Clark said that she was looking forward to the Elder Forum. Sharon introduced Terry Duffin, from the Administration on Aging Region X from Seattle, Washington.

Willie Goodwin with the Kotzebue Elders Council welcomed the Commission to Kotzebue and the NANA Region. Willie Goodwin chairs both the NANA Regional Elders Council and the Kotzebue Elders Council. Willie said that he has had a unique opportunity to hold meetings at the Kotzebue Senior Center regarding the Nana and Kotzebue elders.

Regarding health, there is always a need for services for seniors. Medicine is a primary concern. Transportation to the hospital and to the airport, and home care issues are important. They are working to try to take care of these issues. The new addition that is being built at the hospital for those elders that need assistance daily will help keep the elders that would normally be sent to places in Fairbanks and Anchorage and to places like Mary Conrad Center in Anchorage to access services that are not currently available in Kotzebue. When the elders are moved to these places they just give up. They want to be at home.

The long term care facility at the Kotzebue hospital has been under construction for a number of years.

The cost of heating fuel and energy has brought light to us needing help. There are some programs in place right now and in a few years we should be able to see how those programs are working. A lot of the elders want to move to Kotzebue, but there is a shortage of apartments. Kotzebue needs more apartments to accommodate elders. Willie said they have some security issues here that were brought to the attention of the board. Elders were afraid to go out. There is a smoking shed outside of the Kotzebue Senior Center and sometimes there are inebriated people sitting out there.

Willie stated that the elders have to sew or make crafts to supplement their income. Heating costs are having a big impact on elders who have fixed incomes. Heating fuel is \$9 a gallon. Some of the elders have young people that can assist their family's elders. There is a need for better outreach for senior benefits and other assistance programs.

Denise noted that the Commission brought Heating Assistance and Senior Benefits applications here that the Commission brought.

Willie said there is a need for food assistance. If there is a way that we can relax the rules on home care that could help. This would make the home care be more comfortable. The elders will need help with filling out the assistance applications.

Pat Branson asked, when you are talking about transportation, what kind of transportation.

Willie said that there is a van here in Kotzebue for transportation but nothing in the villages. The van is donated to the Kotzebue Senior Center.

Sharon - so there is no transportation in the villages?

Willie said that the villages use the schools to provide food assistance. In Kotzebue, the food was delivered cold, stale and inadequate. The food is better now that there is assistance from the Senior Center but it is still not great.

Willie - there is an abuse issue with alcohol. Hopefully we can come up with a solution.

Willie said it would be good if the State could relax home care employee regulations. This would make it easier and more comfortable for elders at home. We need better outreach on Medicare and Medicaid applications. Maniilaq has done the best they can but need more help.

Pat asked what transportation Kotzebue has.

Willie answered that there is a grant from the tribal providers that provides a van to the Senior Center. The villages have nothing though. It is hard to get to and from the airport in Kotzebue. The van at the Senior Center is the only wheelchair accessible van. There are twelve villages in the area. Point Hope has a senior van. The elders need to go to the store but struggle to find a ride.

Iver asked if there was food such as berries for the elders.

Willie answered that Maniilaq has a subsistence program that provides caribou, fish, etc.

Iver said the elders need an advocate in each village.

Pat said the funding is an advocacy issue for services to keep elders in their community.

Willie said they give up when they leave. Those elders here at the Senior Center also get lonely for their relatives. There are also alcohol abuse issues in every Alaska community.

Willie invited the Commission to the Elders Council meeting at 4:00 pm and said to be prepared with some questions.

#### **ACoA Chair Report - Sharon Howerton-Clark**

Since our last meeting, the Trust held a Housing Summit meeting in Juneau May 14th and 15<sup>th</sup>. The meeting focused on affordable sustainable housing for the special needs populations, including seniors. Sharon also attended the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium long term care meeting, and Governor's Council- Trust Residential Housing Services Summit with Denise. The summit had a display of smart home technologies such as tele-care service and other assistive technology supports. This would be useful in rural areas. After the CMS moratorium on Medicaid waiver applications, Homer had an emergency meeting on impact on elders and on the economy which is forcing small assisted living facilities to close. There is no action now on a new waiver application. Sharon said she wrote to the past and present governors. ACoA is on top of these community meetings.

Sharon also attended Committee meetings including By-Laws, Executive committee and Legislative Advocacy. Sharon and Denise were invited on the Kotzebue radio show about the ACoA meeting.

#### **ACoA Vice Chair Report - Paula Pawlowski**

Paula said that with her role as vice chair, she attended all of the meetings that Sharon has attended.

**Attachment A**  
**ACoA Executive Director Report, Denise Daniello**  
**Report attached**

Update: ACoA and Alzheimer's Disease Resource Agency of Alaska (ADRAA) submitted a grant application to the U.S. Administration on Aging for caregiver support to ADRD spouses that would provide counseling, respite, etc. The New York University model has been shown successful in helping Alzheimer's disease & related dementia (ADRD) sufferers to remain at home for an additional 1.5 years. This would help people with ADRD and save money. The Commission should hear this month. The grant would pay for extra staff for ADRAA and ACoA.

The Commission budget recommendations were presented to the Department of Health & Social Services and will be presented next week to the Trust. The proposed grant program for ADRD and TBI would provide services for those not eligible for waiver services. The Commission is in collaboration with the Alzheimer's Disease Resource Agency.

The tele-care smart home technology project is brand new in-home care via video, phone, sensors and monitoring by remote care provider. This is a new approach to home care that helps address workforce deficiencies. ACoA is also recommending funding for an emergency crisis response project for seniors who can't return to the assisted living facility that they were at before due to behavioral health issues. This would provide wrap-around services to stabilize them and training for assisted living facilities to become licensed to care for the mentally ill. These recommendations fall under the Departments eight priorities.

ACoA has made a new DVD for the Health Body/Healthy Brain Campaign and it is still in draft form.

There are a series of community forums, co-sponsored by Senior and Disability Services the Governor's Council, and ACoA to provide information on the Medicaid waiver moratorium.

Denise presented ACoA's budget.

Barbara asked about the travel funds.

Denise stated the travel funds are the usual amount this year. Last year the Commission had a special grant from the Trust. The budget for FY10 was approved by the Commission.

**Meeting break for Community and Elder Forum**

## **Meeting called to order at 1:00 PM**

### **Department of Health & Social Services DHSS Commissioner William Hogan**

The new governor has stated that it is important to have happy families, seniors and elders.

The Department went through a CMS review. There are a number of elders that have not had an annual Medicaid review. There is an investigation being conducted right now on the deaths of people who were on waiver or waiting for waiver services. The Department is examining the cause of death for the individuals. There is a mandatory reporting protocol now in place. The Department is working on lifting the moratorium. Bill stated that he saw ACoA's letter to the Governor on this issue. The Department is trying to convince CMS that changes have been made and requesting to lift the moratorium especially for high-risk situations.

The Department's budget development cycle has moved up by three weeks and will help ensure our requests are more aligned with the Trust. Allison Elgee will speak at the Trust Finance Committee meeting next week. The Department has not talked with the Office of Management and Budget or the Governor's Office yet. Recommendations could still be modified or altered.

There is a severe behavior disorder project serving individuals with severe behaviors in the Ketchikan Pioneer Home. We need alternative to get services for people to stay in the community. These services are not available anywhere in the state. We hope the WICHE report will give us some options.

Pat asked who determines what is an emergency for the waiver moratorium.

Bill answered that there are four criteria: one terminal diagnosis, caregiver had to leave home due to a medical emergency, or primary caregiver's death. Those involved in the APS or CPS system. If we are approved the department will begin to assess people who qualify as emergency.

Pat asked about it taking 72 hours to get to some rural communities to assess. Will this apply to rural areas?

Bill answered, yes five days for rural areas to assess and do a plan of care. Some services are not available in some areas. Some providers won't add staff until they know the waiver is certain.

Pat said that is not true, many providers are there to meet the needs regardless of eligibility. However the grants were cut so they can't use those funds to fill in.

Bill said that 584 are waiting for new assessments. 250 of them are receiving services under some other program.

Sharon asked, regarding assessment, do people have to wait for services.

Bill said that the moratorium applies to new applicants since 6/25/09.

Chuck Stoner, RN & Administrator for the Kotzebue Senior Center) asked what the State has against registered nurse on staff doing the initial assessment until the State assessor can get there.

Bill stated CMS contends that there is conflict of interest if a person providing care is also doing the assessment. Assessment must be done in an objective way.

Chuck Stoner said the RN who is part of Maniilaq, not the Senior Center.

Bill said that that can be talked about, or another option is to contract with a nurse.

Chuck asked how the State is training care coordinators more efficiently in rural areas. Chuck said he knows that in rural areas they can't go to Anchorage every six months for training. Are they using webinars or another source?

Bill said that they want to do anything they can do via telemedicine, webinars and self training on website curriculum, etc. Bill said that he was not sure how close the Department was to implementing these ideas.

Pat said that she was upset about services, and the grant process for the adult day and family caregiver providers want to meet with him to voice concerns and offer solutions.

Bill said that he did get a letter from the Palmer Senior Center. Bill said that he would sit down with Pat and the providers and talk about the grant process.

Terry Duffin (AoA Region X) thanked Bill for his participation and offered his help on anything.

Denise stated that at the elder forum today we heard transportation was a big problem. And Native dividends put people over income limit for eligibility for the Medicaid waiver. ACoA will look into why the State doesn't disregard this income like the federal government does.

People find it difficult to go to Anchorage for long term care services. There are not enough beds at the Kotzebue hospital.

Bill said that he looked at the list of questions and asked if there would be a report.

Denise said that there will be and that she would send it to him.

(Note: A report of the Forum findings was submitted to Commissioner Hogan.)

Barbara Collison (Care Coordinator at the Kotzebue Senior Center) stated that coordination of transportation by plane to the hospital can create a big delay.

Approximately, 30 Kotzebue elders and providers staff participated in the forum. Willie Fields translated for us.

### **Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, Senior Housing**

#### **Jim McCall**

New senior housing in Fairbanks is being built. It is called Ravens Landing and it is a \$23 million dollar project.

The Energy programs are just under \$15 million in rebates. And an average rebate of \$6000. The waitlist continues to drop. There are over 3,800 people on that waitlist.

There is some housing that will be built in Anchorage shortly. On August 15<sup>th</sup> there will be a ground breaking ceremony. Jim said the facility being built will be on Eklutna Estates. This senior housing building will have 46 one bedroom and 13 two bedroom units. On Meadow Lake, the other smaller facility will be built.

Jim gave an update on the energy program. There have been 15,000 rebates processed, with 999 rebates completed at an average rebate of \$6,000.00. As of July 23, 2009 the waitlist was at 4,000. Most of these figures are from Anchorage. The weatherization program is very popular.

Sharon asked about the rural energy programs.

Jim answered that there is no information on the rural programs. These programs are farmed out to contractors and there is no data yet.

Frank Appel asked if there was a rebate back log.

Jim answered that there is a 4 to 6 month wait for those in Anchorage. We are currently working on the Loussac Manor project in Anchorage. A Request for Proposals will be out by July 2010. There is a tax credit program that will only be available through 2010. After 2010, the funds for the program will be earmarked for the Loussac Manor project.

Denise told Jim that there was a lack of senior housing in Kotzebue for the people who want to move here from the villages.

Jim said that developers have to apply, and score high enough to qualify. Developers can start with pre-development. People here should spread the word.

Denise said that Kotzebue may need some help with writing the applications for funding.

**Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority**  
**Jeff Jessee, CEO, & Nancy Burke, Program Officer**

The Trust is in the middle of the budget process. Though the market is recovering, funds are \$80 million down. The Trust is likely to go to a 4-year rolling average of assets. This would cut tops in the good years and cut the bottoms in the bad years. There will be a greater protection overall. The Trust is one of the most resilient in being able to ensure continued payout. We are not sure if 2011 will need to be adjusted. We are trying to be frugal.

We anticipate maintenance on the budget for focus areas. We are working more closely with the Department regarding their budget.

The Trust saw the Commission's recommendations and has some questions regarding the proposed ADRD and Traumatic Brain Injury grants program. The rate review bill continues as a high priority. Jeff said that he has a meeting with Representative Hawker every 2 weeks. Jeff said that there are some unfinished elements of the dental bill, and especially the cap.

Denise asked about the dental bill cap. Is there a money cap or the allowance that the Department is to manage payment requests? Denise asked if we could get input on how we should frame that policy.

Jeff said that the Trust's preference on the dental cap is for no hard cap, but to require the Department to manage on the amount the legislature gives them. Jeff said that with any cap, the Department is in position to have to return every few years to get the cap raised. The Trust wants to make sure that the Trust, ACoA and the Department end up on the same page. Jeff suggested that maybe ACoA could prioritize the options to keep in the game without making it a take it or leave it situation.

Denise asked what questions Jeff had about the ADRD and TBI grant project.

Jeff asked how the results will be measured and if the results will be concrete. The

results will have to be concrete if this ends up being a pilot for a waiver. Jeff said that it will be difficult to get anything new through.

**Nancy Burke, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority**

Nancy said thank you for the opportunity to talk. Regarding the conversation with Jim McCall on public housing if we don't maintain applicants in the funding process we could lose some funding. It is critical that applicants have assistance with the complicated application process. We have been looking at working with AHFC, in the predevelopment stages. It would be good for ACOA to write a letter to AHFC to request this assistance with the applications. One staff person at the housing office doesn't meet the need for application assistance.

ACoA can play a strong role regarding the waiver crisis.

On a legislative level, we will continue to look at the rate review process. We will meet with the legislature every 2 weeks on this

There is some unfinished business with the dental bill.

Paula Pawlowski is interested in the project Bring the Kids Home.

Jeff said we have been working on this for 3 years. The legislature is in an initiative fatigue and has hit a plateau. We need to continue support a continuum of care and partner better with education and connect better and earlier.

We need to look at dangerous behaviors and chronic runaways. Those still sent to out of state are violent or are chronic runaways. We are working to nail down what their needs are and how we can work with them in state.

Barbara McNeil asked if the kids all came home or turned 18.

Jeff said a significant number of the children are past the age limit. We are hoping by this point that with some transitional housing that they can get help. We are sending about 50 kids a year down south. We don't always have the type of services needed.

From a legislative standpoint, they want to serve kids in state.

Jeff said that the kids often end up in hub communities then end up in Anchorage or Fairbanks. We are trying to continually work backward through the process and eventually look at those having to leave their home. When this bill was started with the legislature, we got excited about the \$40 million a year going to out of state.

Mary Schaefer (Kotzebue senior) – The Tribal Government and social services community see a lot of kids shipped out. Mary said that the community is concerned

about them leaving home. In the past the extended family cared for the kids. Regulations make this difficult now. The legislature needs to look and see if there can be leniency on this. They snatch kids and ship them out before the tribe has a chance to get involved. Money could be going to a family to feed them instead of paying for transportation to Anchorage. Mary said that they know how to take care of their children. The state needs to implement parenting classes for young people. Many are from broken homes and don't know how to parent. This results in kids being shipped out to out of state custody.

Someone from the audience spoke, the bureaucracy is running the system. A child might not have that big of a problem but the system makes them a target as a problem child. Reprimanding a child such as spanking is now looked upon as abuse. The wrong regulations are being put in place.

If we are seriously looking at changing these things then we need to change this at a regional level. The children need to be raised so they learn their past and their culture.

All regions have different views on how to handle children. One shoe does not fit all statewide.

Jeff stated that only 25% of the kids sent out of state have been in state custody. The families of the other 75% sent them out.

Forty percent of kids are Native and it is disproportionate. The State waits until the kids are taken out of their homes before offering help. These are families struggling economically and with substance abuse. Tribes need to get involved with the families sooner.

The State makes it the child's issue but it is really the family's issue. The kids are struggling to find their place in the community and their family in order to be successful.

There is a proposed Kotzebue group home for kids that is on hold. The Trust wants to support regions in supporting families.

Iver Malutin said 40 guys were accused of going AWOL while serving in the military. They didn't go AWOL they went fishing and hunting in the spring! The Army extended their time instead of prosecuting them. There are other ways to address problems.

### **Terry Duffin, Administration on Aging-Region X**

Terry Duffin said this is the first time being in Kotzebue since he has been traveling to Alaska for the last 35 years. Terry said that he is the program operations manager for Region X that oversees Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Alaska including grants to 246

Indian tribes. There are 42 Administration on Aging grants in Alaska including Kotzebue Senior Center meals program. Terry said that it was a pleasure to meet the people at the Senior Center and learn about their culture and values.

Terry said that it is always a highlight of his year to join the Commission. Terry said that there is now an Assistant Secretary for the Aging at the Administration on Aging. Her name is Kathy Greenlee. She comes from Kansas State Office on Aging.

Terry said that initiatives that started under former Assistant Secretary for Aging Josefina Carbonell will be continued as they keep services in people's own homes and communities. The Administration on Aging will focus strongly on in-home care. This will keep people out of the Medicaid system and in the community.

Terry said that applications for the Title IV community living program (formerly the nursing home diversion program) are due soon. Alaska is applying. Many seniors go back into the hospital within 60 to 90 days. This program would help ensure that the community supports are available to prevent re-hospitalization and this it saves Medicare money but it also provides for dignity and independence of the individual.

The ADRC (Aging & Disability Resource Center) program in Alaska had a grant for 3 years under the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation and the statewide Independent Living Center. Alaska is applying for this grant through Senior & Disability Services. This would be a point to provide one- stop centers to get services into the community and keep people out of the long-term care system. We will see this as more of a long-term focus. There are options of funding from the Veterans Administration to help veterans to keep them in the community.

Terry said to look at the Administration on Aging strategic goals and objectives through 2012. There may be some new ones later.

- 1 – Access existing health and long-term care options.
- 2- Enable seniors to remain in own homes as long as possible via home and community based services.
- 3- Stay active and healthy through OAA and Medicare prevention.
- 4- Prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This is often from family members or from someone they know and also from telemarketers. There are 5 instances for every one reported.

Denise mentioned that the University of Alaska did a training on prevention of elder

abuse in Kotzebue and that many present today attended the training.

Mary from the audience said that she attended the training. We continue to have the same problems. Seniors don't want to report on their family. They try to take care of problems themselves but it often doesn't happen. We need to focus on prevention. Behavioral health services runs a traditional program near Selawik, based on subsistence. Most of the counselors are elders. They teach people to get back to reality. We would appreciate it if the State would recognize it as a successful program. We want to work in partnership and recognize the programs that are working well. We need to get back to the holistic family. Kids under Office of Children Services can go back to their family.

**Public Comment:** Cindy Nation with Tanana Chiefs. The waiver and PCA program used to work. Now both are shut down. We can't get services for elders. We don't know how long this will last. Can we go back to the old ways where tribes were doing the assessments and getting reimbursed at 100 % for the services?

Marianne Mills with Southeast Senior Services said she missed the days when ACoA was giving out the grants. Let Pat Branson talk about the most recent process. It hasn't gotten more friendly to the grantees. Alaska's long-term care system needs more diversified funding than we have. This would make the seniors better off. Marianne said that she can see now what can happen with overdependence on Medicaid.

## **Attachment B**

### **Judith Bendersky, Health Program Manager with Senior and Disability Services – report attached**

The Medicare office gets grants from CMS and AOA to counsel Medicare beneficiaries one on one and to give seminars. They also give out information on their website, at health fairs, senior fairs, etc. This information is free and is unbiased advise to Medicare recipients.

Denise asked about the use of Medicaid or Medicare as a source of payment for behavioral health services for seniors, such as IMPACT or SBIRT, etc.

Judith answered, "sometimes, maybe, it depends." The claim must be filed and a determination made. Medicare is medical insurance and covers medically licensed people to do medical things. Medicare would cover time and cost of a psychiatrist, counseling a depressed person if the psychiatrist was enrolled as a Medicare provider that accepts Medicare's reimbursement rates. There are fewer behavioral health providers in Medicare. Other insurance pays doctors better. There is no incentive to get involved with Medicare. Most of the other activities in a behavioral health setting are probably not Medicare reimbursable. Judith said she was not sure about Medicaid.

Congress looked at disparity in reimbursement rates between physical health and behavioral health and over time, they will be reimbursable at the same level within 5 years or so.

Someone from the audience asked where the 20% of Medicare recipients who are under 65 lived, in urban or rural areas.

Judith said she has no map, but many recent veterans are getting on Medicare.

Meeting adjourned until 9:00 AM Wed. 8-5

### **Meeting called to order on August 5, 2009 at 9:00 AM.**

#### **Roll Call:**

Members present: Frank Appel, Pat Branson, Sharon Howerton-Clark, Paula Pawlowski, Betty Keegan, Barbara McNeil and Iver Malutin. Members not present: Rebecca Hilgendorf, Nita Madsen, Banarsi Lal. Staff present: Denise Daniello, MaryAnn VandeCastle, Lesley Thompson and Sherice Ridges

#### **Executive Committee Report: Denise Daniello**

Committee met in July to review the agenda for the rural outreach meeting. The committee approved the agenda. The budget recommendations to the Trust that were developed by the legislative advocacy committee, we also discussed the use of proxy voting. Denise contacted the Boards & Commissions about the use of proxy voting and learned that while the State does not have a formal prohibition, it does not recommend this practice since proxy voting compromises the deliberate process of the State's boards.

#### **Planning Committee Report: Denise Daniello and Frank Appel**

The committee met on July 9th and talked about the ACoA state plan implementation meeting and reviewed the efforts. The Committee requested reports from ACoA's partner agencies. The reports will help assess the progress toward State plan goals and strategies.

The staff informed us that partner agencies will be sending us reports. This will help us to assess our goals.

The next item discussed was planning for the next State Plan, FY 2012 – 2016.

Part of the process is gathering information. We will have a combined planning

committee to start the planning.

We asked the staff to prepare a draft time line like that to list all of the activities for the State Plan Advisory Committee. The Planning Committee also approved the FY10 goals as well as reviewing our current implementation plan and planning for a new one.

### **Site visit reports:**

**The group visiting Kiana included: Denise Daniello, Paula Pawlowski, Barbara McNiel, Pat Branson, MaryAnn VandeCastle, Lesley Thompson, Iver Malutin, Eleanor Dementi and Barbara Collison.**

Denise reported that the group visited the health clinic and elders in their homes. We observed a tele-health demonstration. The village of Kiana has a lovely setting, the trees, the Kobuk River. ATVs transported the group. The group met with the tribal director. He told us the clinic focused on hands-on healing, herbs and acupuncture. They visited four elders. Lesley and Barbara met with three elders. They also met with elders in their homes and saw a tele-health demonstration. Both groups gave food gifts to the elders and clinic. The gifts included peanut butter, fruit, coffee and cheese.

Paula reported that each village has its own personality. Kiana has a great school. The houses were adequate to spectacular. The people reported problems with heating fuel. Their homes need insulation.

The telemedicine was awesome. Paula said there needs to be more telemedicine across the state. There was a warm welcoming from the people and the people were fun.

Barbara reiterated that they received a warm welcome from the people. Some of the elders had loneliness, even if they had family nearby.

Fuel oil is a big issue. Some people completed weatherization on some homes financed by Alaska Housing, however they did not do some work properly and did not return to follow up on furnaces, floors etc. There are some fears regarding the coming winter. Telemedicine is wonderful. Barbara said she had a wonderful time here in Kotzebue.

Iver said that there was a warm reception as in all of the areas the Commission has visited. Kiana has a good system and it is working well. They are willing to share with all. Alaska does need tribal doctors all over the state. What the tribal doctors know and what they use is so much better than modern medicine.

There were spruce trees, rivers that come together, fish, moose, and caribou at their doorstep. Kiana was a pretty place with happy people. However, younger people have to leave the villages for economic reasons. This leaves the parents and grandparents at home. There is a high cost of living in rural Alaska. We are unsure of a solution but we know that there is the same problem in the other villages.

Pat Branson reported that the most important event was the Elder Forum, a one-on-one meeting with the elders. We will take this information back so we can do a state plan that represents regions. The Plan will not treat the state as a single entity. The information that we have gained will be invaluable in serving communities and elders throughout the state.

**Site visit in Kotzebue: Sharon Howerton-Clark, Frank Appel, Betty Keegan, Sherice Ridges and Nancy Burke.**

Sharon reported that the group met with the Mayor and the staff. We received an outstanding reception from the whole area.

Frank reported that the group discussed our efforts with the Mayor. The group addressed the issues of rural Alaska. We explained ACoA's role and activities such as advocacy. The group also met with the Elders' Council. We sat in to listen to their meeting and gave them our questions from our forum. We asked them to gather additional input on the questions from the Commission. We heard a discussion about the alcohol problems. Some young people spoke. They have a counseling program that is constructive and effective.

Sharon said that she was impressed with the way they're dealing with it. It was refreshing to see how the young relate to the elders.

Betty reported that the group spoke with Kristin Walker the Mayor's Assistant. Kristin was a poised and knowledgeable young lady. Betty was impressed by the youth of the community. The elder council meeting was a wonderful representation of the community. In western culture, the young people don't have the respect for the elders that the Kotzebue young people do. Betty thanked the people at the senior center for letting the commission visit.

Sharon said that the thank you is from all of us.

Pat said having the direct contact with elders really made an impression on the Commissioners with the trip to Kiana.

Frank said he met with the elder council and listened to their meeting. We gave them our planning questions and asked them to get some answers from the community. They talked about the alcohol problems in the community. There were some youth speaking. They have a council where if there is an alcohol violation they can get help instead of going to court.

**Legislative Advocacy Committee, Pat Branson**

There was a teleconference meeting in July. The focus for the Committee's strategizing on how to best advocate for ACoA's legislative priorities. All of the Commissioners are

welcome to join in on this Committee. The draft FY10 goals are in the meeting binder. The Committee has talked about the use of Twitter to facilitate advocacy during the legislative session. The Committee also talked about FY11 legislative priorities including ADRD grants, ADRC's, tele-care smart technology and emergency services for mentally ill seniors. The policy recommendations include an annual review of the Medicare waiver rates. The Medicaid waiver rates have not had an increase in many years. Also increased the Medicaid and Adult dental cap advocating for adequate funding for supported housing. Charge Medicare SP to bill for IMPACT and SBIRT.

Community transportation needs to be a priority, and use of vehicles that are available in the community, vans, cabs etc. Seniors need to be able to get where they need to go as they stay in their communities. The Committee will also track Federal legislation as well.

Denise said that ACoA's budget recommendations were presented to the Department of Health & Social Services recently. Denise spoke with Rebecca Hilgendorf regarding how ACoA's budget fit in with SDS priorities.

Frank - Workforce development issues are big in rural areas. This should be considered one of our goals.

Pat - If there is not adequate workforce in the community we can't get services to the people. We should add this to the goals.

Sharon said at the Elders Committee yesterday, transportation was one of the main issues discussed.

### **Bylaws Committee Report: Paula Pawlowski**

Our committee members are Denise, Paula, Iver, Betty and Frank.

There was discussion of a 2-year term of office for the Commission chair and vice-chair. This is similar to other agencies and legislators. This would give the Chair time to develop goals and prepare quarterly written reports.

The Executive Committee has discussed adding a 4<sup>th</sup> person to the executive committee at the discretion of the chair to make the quorum easier.

The Nominating Committee will contact each nominee to see what their desire is to serve. We could use a secret ballot.

Frank has some reservations regarding changes. Two year terms for office are a bad idea. We want to encourage people to be officers. It enriches the Commission members' experience and they gain a tremendous amount of knowledge. This would

reduce the opportunity to serve. It is a good idea to review the officer selection every year. It would be difficult to replace someone who's not performed appropriately. Being a chair takes a tremendous commitment of time. Some people might view a two- year term as an unacceptable obligation of time.

Banarsi was in his last year when he was chair and would not have been qualified to serve. We should leave this section of by-laws as is.

Frank said committee chairs written reports would be a duplication. We include the chairs' verbal reports in the meeting minutes to show what happened. People do not like to write or to write reports. Again this could limit the pool of people willing to serve as a chair.

Iver stated that the Committee being on so many boards and commissions it is important to have someone that is committed to two years. People who would serve have been on other boards.

Betty has been on the Nominating committee for 3 years. The first year she followed the procedure where they brought the names to the meeting but then a different name was brought up at the meeting from the floor and that person was nominated.

Barbara said by serving two years, it gives the chair time to get things completed.

Pat said that a two-year term is pretty standard. A yearly change is disconcerting. It takes time to get someone up to speed. We only meet quarterly. We need consistency regarding administration, building relations with legislature etc. People are aware of what they're getting into before going forward. It is difficult to get up to speed in just one year. Reports provide a public summary of what is going on and what will be discussed at the meeting. It would be just a short summary, just two paragraphs. It would not need to be detailed like the minutes. The last nominating committee process was very confusing.

We just want the names of persons who are interested in serving as Chair and Vice-Chair brought forward.

Sharon said that the Commission will vote on each one of the by-law changes being proposed.

Article IV, section 2 –regarding chair service on commission, etc.  
Unanimous approval

Article IV, section 4 – regarding chair Officers being re-elected for two successive terms.

Passed with 1 nay – Frank

Betty asked Sharon about the automatic two year term. Sharon said that next year will be the first year for a two-year term. Chair's responsibility is to appoint all Committee chairs.

Written Committee chair reports: Betty suggested delegating the chair report to ACoA's staff if the chair doesn't like to write.

Paula said that if a Committee chair is absent from a meeting, we have had no report at all from the committee.

Article V section 4 - nominating committee procedures  
Unanimous approval with one nay (Iver)

Article VI section 4 add a 4<sup>th</sup> person on the executive committee at Chairs discretion.  
Unanimous approval

Article VI section 2 (b) (4) Budget and policy recommendations  
Unanimous approval

Article VI section 4 nominating committee procedures  
Unanimous approval with one nay (Iver)

Article VI section 2 (e) – add review of by-laws annually.  
Unanimous approval

Article VI section 2 (f) (2) add review of the state plan implementation efforts to the Planning Committee responsibilities annually.  
Unanimous approval

Article VII – ACoA Executive Director serving in ex officio capacity as a non-voting member on all standing committees and provide staff support as requested by the chair person or committee chairs.  
Unanimous approval

Frank: Does ex officio imply voting?

Pat said “no”, not according to the rules or ordinance.

Paula suggested adding “non-voting”.

Sharon said that from her research, on-line ex-officio meant non-voting.

Pat said we have the privilege of defining ex officio right here.

Commissioners voted on the amended by-laws as a whole.

Paula said she was pleased that, we had discussion with some Commissioners voting no and some yes!

**Workforce Development Report: Denise Daniello and Frank Appel**

Denise Daniello, Frank Appel and Barbara McNeil participated in Workforce Committee. There are some good things happening, there will be a more formal report next meeting. Denise's work has been mainly on the budget and priorities.

**Attachment C**

**Governor's Council on Disabilities, Banarsi Lal – Report attached**

**Attachment D**

**Pioneer Home Advisory Board, Banarsi Lal – Report attached**

**Attachment E**

**Senior & Disability Services Director, Rebecca Hilgendorf - report attached.  
Rebecca called in to give her report.**

CMS preliminary findings after early May focused site review 6/26/09; there is a letter attached and posted on the SDS website. CMS found SDS out of compliance with 6 federal assurances. There is a corrective action plan required by 9/1/09 by the Department to Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS). There are very complex issues. We must look carefully at SDS business processes, refine them or develop new ones. We hired a project manager to work with Rebecca and the Department employees and SDS staff to put together a corrective action plan and respond to the new ongoing questions of CMS as the comprehensive review continues. There is a moratorium on new enrollments to waiver and PCA services which is of the greatest concern. The State must assure the health and welfare of people receiving these services. The backlog of assessments, mortality review, and the number of fair hearings were CMS's primary concerns. They have been able to gather better data regarding quality assurance activities. There were 3,000 fair hearings not all with SDS. SDS implemented a mortality review system and expanded the pool of assessors.

Communications is another activity. They met with different entities. Media is following the story. Today is the third provider and consumer meeting in Anchorage. There were meetings in Juneau and Fairbanks. There are meetings coming up in Kenai, Bethel and Nome. Thanks to ACoA and the Governor's Council for co-sponsoring these provider and recipient forums.

Pat asked the name of the project manager. Rebecca answered Kimberly Topp-Smart. Her background is a nurse and an attorney with health care compliance experience.

Pat asked if non- nurses are doing assessments.

Rebecca answered yes.

Pat asked who they were.

Rebecca said they eliminated the nurse requirement and have made the minimum qualifications those for a health program manager, a master's degree and one year of professional level experience in health or behavioral sciences or a bachelor's degree and an additional 2 years of experience or an associate's degree in nursing and 4 years experience in the field. The employees will receive intensive initial training and then close supervision. Non-nurses can do the assessments but nurses must make the level of care determination.

Pat asked if the assessments would still be on hold.

Rebecca answered that there would not be any new ones, just the backlog of assessments.

Pat asked if SDS had received any other financial assistance from the State.

Rebecca answered no.

Pat commented that Kodiak's adult day and family caregiver grant processes this year were troublesome for providers. It was the worst in 20 years. Pat said that she is composing a letter to the commissioner requesting to make changes.

Rebecca said that she is happy to meet with providers and get some solutions in place.

Sharon said that she will be watching this closely.

Rebecca said that she appreciated ACoA's advocacy and support during this difficult time.

Rebecca thanked William Field for providing interpreter services.

**Attachment F**  
**Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Report**  
**Bob Dryer, LTCO - report attached**

## **AARP**

### **Pat Luby, Advocacy Director**

Pat said that he just returned from the Medicaid waiver session.

Pat said that Angela is doing a wonderful job in a tough situation. The State really got out ahead of this to make sure that whatever they do from here is done right.

AARP is working on the Stimulus legislation focusing on the \$28.6 million for energy assistance. This would help meet the energy needs of public buildings - senior centers community centers. It would help with their utility bills. It could be a close vote. Pat said to encourage our legislature to vote yes. The money would go to other states if Alaska doesn't accept it.

Denise said Representative Joule will be an important vote and Senator Donny Olson. Please contact these two legislators.

Congress is debating health care reform. Pat said he met with the Alaska delegation in DC. The most important work will be done at home in the states this month.

The health care reform legislation is significant as it includes the first acknowledgement by Congress of long-term care as an important issue. AARP is working on three things. One is to close the donut hole in Medicare Part D. 26% of Alaskan seniors have hit it. Two is to make sure whatever comes out is affordable for folks. Many people at age 50 to 64 have no health insurance at all, almost one in five. Three is we don't want Medicare beneficiaries to spend a lot more or take cuts in this program. This must be a good deal for them, not just others. There is a lot of bad information out there, saying it is going to kill all the old people. AARP will run ads from next week to mid September to discuss the myths of health care reform. Talk radio is scaring a lot of people. They were in DC last week - people think that the most important work is in your own state.

Senator Begich is meeting in Anchorage for a chamber meeting on Monday and Senator Murkowski at Common Wealth on Tuesday. On August 12<sup>th</sup> Senator Murkowski will do a town hall meeting in Fairbanks, and others in other cities, that are all focused on health care reform. All are trying to gather as much public input on health care reform as they can.

### **AgeNet Report: Marianne Mills, Chair**

For long-term care, we are not just talking about nursing homes; we are talking about care in homes. She is glad to hear about this healthcare reform. It would be nice for

people to be able to remain in their homes for as long as possible, so they don't have to go to the bigger communities to get health care. We want the State to identify what services are missing in villages and work to provide them so elders don't have to move elsewhere.

AgeNet's priorities are to continuing to work with DHSS to move Senate Bill 32 through the house. Second is to work with Department of Health and Social Services to develop a rate methodology that actually pays for cost of care. Three is to reinstate chore and respite services at the level needed, and including people with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia (ADRD) in the Older Alaskans Waiver Program. These services were cut in 2004.

Sharon said there is a special session August 10<sup>th</sup>.

Betty said she has been a commissioner for 6 years and this is the best reception we've had at any meeting. Betty thanked the crowd for hosting the Commission at the senior center.

Walter Samson mentioned one of the things is the State of Alaska retiree insurance doesn't pay for any of the adult day services in the state.

Pat mentioned the cumbersome grant process this year to Bill Hogan and to Rebecca. Pat and AgeNet are writing a letter to Commissioner Hogan to address the grant issue.

Meeting adjourned 12:17 PM

