



Our mission is to deliver innovative support to lead aging agencies as we work together to promote, protect, and enhance the well-being of older people in Wisconsin.

Board Meeting Minutes

Friday, June 9, 2023 | 10:00 a.m.

*GWAAR Madison Office and
Microsoft Teams Video Conference Call*

Members present: *Beth Esser, David Hoberg, Bob Borremans, Cookie Lough, Rob Wilkinson, John Helling, Mary Wolf, Dave Ostness, Wes Martin,*

Members excused: *All present*

Others Present: *John Schnabl, Executive Director; Patrick Metz, Fiscal Manager; Janet Zander, Advocacy & Public Policy Coordinator; Jean Lynch, OAA Consultant- Nutrition Specialist & OAA Consultant Manager; Sky Van Rossum – Special Projects Manager; Kate Schilling, Legal Services Manager; Nick Musson, OAA Consultant -Transportation Specialist; Neal Minogue, Older Americans Act Program Supervisor, (BADR); Rosanna Mazzara, Operations Coordinator*

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:07 a.m.

Review and Approval of June 9, 2023 Agenda

Motion by Rob Wilkinson, seconded by Bob Borremans, to approve June 9, 2023 Draft Meeting Minutes. Motion unanimously carried.

Review and Approval of April 14, 2023 Draft Meeting Minutes

Motion by Dave Hoberg, seconded by John Helling, to approve April 14, 2023 draft meeting minutes with addition of below verbiage, under comments from chair:



- *John Schnabl's 6-month review to take place at the Madison office, an hour before board meeting.*

Public Comment **None**

Comments from Chair

- It's nice to see the board at the Madison office after being away for a few years due to Covid.
- The executive committee had a nice chat with John regarding his first six months as executive director.
- Aging Advocacy Day was a big success. We had over 200 people attend. Thank you to Janet Zander and the GWAAR staff for all their hard work.

Directors Report

John Schnabl:

- QTI has submitted the results of their compensation survey for 12-13 GWAAR job positions. Patrick and I will review the report and set up a meeting to discuss the results and next steps.
- Kristen Westphal, our Communications Coordinator, has resigned and I have been interviewing for her replacement this past week. I hope to have her replacement on board within the next couple of weeks.
- Our in-person ACE meeting (A Commitment to Excellence) will be taking place on July 12th at the Greenwood Hills Country Club in Wausau. It's a meeting where we get the aging directors together to discuss important network topics. This is the first one we've had since before COVID. The morning will consist of Patrick leading fiscal discussions and the afternoon will consist of afternoon breakout sessions.

- Next week GWAAR will be part of a retreat that will be taking place between ADPAW, the Bureau, and GWAAR. We're going over and discussing things to improve the relationship between our organizations and agencies.
- I was appointed to the Long-Term Care Advisory Council which is a state-run group that advises the state on long term care issues in programmatic and advocacy roles.

Finance Committee Report

Dave Hoberg:

- There are two positions open in the Fiscal Department and the Finance Committee is being included in the discussion of what those positions and their duties will ultimately look like.

Patrick Metz, Fiscal Manager:

- Balance and Income Statements were shared and briefly discussed.

Motion by Beth Esser, seconded by Dave Hoberg, to accept and place on file financial statements as presented. Motion unanimously carried.

- We have a very healthy reserve due primarily to the VA Self-Directed Program funds that come in. It is 2-3 times the GWAAR admin program. An additional two Care Consultants were added recently, due to increased volume. It helps us from the cash flow standpoint to support contracts, but it's not a revenue generator.
- Travel reimbursement vote will be postponed until the next board meeting.

Motion by Beth Esser, seconded by Dave Hoberg, to postpone travel reimbursement vote until the next board meeting. Motion unanimously carried.

- We are down two people in Fiscal and it has been challenging, especially with the 2022 Audit currently taking place and in need of our attention, however, it is going well.
- We are currently interviewing for the VA Fiscal Assistant position and hope to have that filled soon.
- We are hoping to bring you the Fiscal Policy and Procedure Manual in July for your review and comments.
- An RFP will be going out to three HR and Payroll vendors in the next few days. We will be giving them a July 31st deadline. We will share them with the board after reviewing.

Advisory Council Update

[Nick Musson, OAA Consultant- Transportation Specialist & Advisory Council Liaison:](#)

- The last GWAAR Advisory Council meeting took place on Friday, February 24th. Bryn Ceman gave a presentation on caregiving.
- We dove into the draft bylaws, which took up a good amount of time, and we got about halfway through the bylaws.
- We approved two new council members.
- Janet Zander was kind enough to give us an advocacy update.
- Since our last meeting, I've updated the bylaws. I'm preparing for the next Advisory Council meeting so that we can finish those draft by laws and hopefully get through all of them.
- John and I scheduled two new council member orientations. We have one coming up on June 12th and another one coming up on June 15th, so that will give us an opportunity to sit down with each one of the new council members and give them an overview of GWAAR and what their responsibilities are with the Advisory Council.

- The next Advisory Council meeting will be virtual, and is July 14th at 10:00 AM. We will be introducing the new two council members and then we're going to be doing an aging plan overview. We felt it was a good opportunity to dive into the purpose of the council and discuss what is involved with an aging plan? It's a good opportunity to do that, because of the two new council members, while also being a good opportunity to refresh the other council members as well.
- We will also jump right back into the bylaws, and hopefully get through the rest of them so that we can finally have a solid set of bylaws specific to the Advisory Council.

Manager's Reports

Jean Lynch, OAA Consultant Manager:

- OAA Consultants are working on county/tribal aging plans and reviewing goals for 2023. We hope to have those completed at the end of September.
- Currently the OAA consultants are working on the goal reviews for 2023.
- In Nick's area of transportation, section 5310, enhanced mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities program applications should be released later this month. The 5310 program utilizes federal and state funds for capital and operating projects that improve the mobility of seniors. This is an annual competitive grant.
- Nick just completed a survey of volunteer driver programs. We sent it to all our different email groups and got a very, very large response. The data is going to be used to create a document that highlights the importance of volunteer drivers and the need to eliminate the barriers to volunteering, such as personal auto insurance companies that end up issuing a non-renewal on their coverage. This document will be used to convince the state legislators to modify the state law to prohibit an insurer from increasing the rate or denying, nonrenewing or cancelling an insured volunteer driver solely for being a volunteer driver.
- In caregiving, Bryn has been working very hard on a video and it's almost completed. We will show it at the next board meeting.

- Bryn is also active in seven different caregiving work groups.
- As I spoke last time, Bryn is building up the resources on the Wisconsin Caregiver.org website, so check that out when you get a minute. She really wants to encourage the board to go to that website and take a look. She's continuing to work with outreach via our Facebook page.
- On the nutrition team, Lori and Pam and I are busy. We collaborated with the Wisconsin Association of Nutrition Directors (WAND) and participated in a conference which was held in Wausau on May 3rd and 4th, and we had 95% of the counties and tribes in attendance. That was a huge success.
- The nutrition team attended Aging Advocacy Day on May 9th in Madison.
- Dining surveys are available now for all the counties and tribes. Last year we did not, they were not required by the state. This year they are back at it, getting a lot of interesting custom questions that the nutrition programs can ask. We are really looking forward to getting public input with these participant surveys, and discovering what our older adult community members want for nutrition. Some want restaurant models, some pop ups. The surveys will be important for counties and tribes in creating their new 3-year plans.
- On April 21st, a tribal traditional food tasting event was held at the Ho Chunk Community Center. The elders tasted bison burgers, wild rice, butternut squash among other things, and Lori Fernandez and our nutrition team was the one who actually put that all together. There was great participation level by the tribal members.
- I had the opportunity to attend Aging Advocacy Day with John and Janet at the end of April in Washington, DC. I just wanted to say it was an honor to be able to meet with the representatives and talk about nutrition and home delivered meal funding.
- We'll be sending out the request for proposal for our 2024 Sustainable Kitchens Project. Currently, Brown County has the contract. It looks like they will be building a center and a kitchen from the ground up, a first for GWAAR and Justin Johnson of Sustainable Kitchens.
- I was just working with Dodge County recently. They have a contract that is currently at the quick trip level to provide meals for Dodge County. They're

starting with one route. They are going to be offering the meals on Mondays and Wednesdays. It's great to see these partnerships taking place and serving their communities.

Sky Van Rossum, Special Projects Manager:

- We confirmed re-obligation of \$76,000 in additional funds for the Title V Program.
- The Elder Abuse Coordinator Program, a \$434,000 grant that we received from the Department of Justice, has given us the opportunity to hire one Elder Abuse Coordinator for Walworth County and I have interviewed a person for LaCrosse, Dunn and Polk County. The grant goes through 2025.
- The Elder Abuse hotline program budget was approved again for \$135,000, and will be continuing through the DOJ. Right now, that whole program consists of one person in a cell phone. She answers calls to a hotline when people want to know where to turn. By the end of this year, the estimation is that we'll be serving over 1400 individuals through that hotline. We have an extension that we received from the Department of Justice that will get us through August 31st.
- The Kenosha Aging and Family Services (KAFASI) had given me a heads up that they were looking for some assistance in terms of aligning their home delivered meal pricing. They hadn't in many cases the with those that they were providing meals to managed care organizations and the like. They had not updated their prices since 2014, 2016. There were some pretty significant issues there so we utilized the cost tool as a basis, which came from the Bureau. We used that as a basis, looked at their additional costs and any kind of catering issues that they might have, and came up with the cost for them and provided them some tools in terms of forecasting and negotiation. And they're taking that pricing forward and they believe they already have two MCO's who have accepted that pricing and are re-configuring their contracts. So that's very positive.
- Homelessness is one of the big issues our Community Health Workers are seeing in rural areas and this is very surprising, in particular Monroe County and Trempealeau County. In the past 60 days since we last talked, in Monroe County alone, our CHW has had 23 referrals for individuals who are homeless. I'm trying to find housing for them. I'm not sure if that's a reflection of the changes that we've seen in terms of of funding, but it's becoming an increasingly prevalent

issue. The challenge with homelessness is getting in touch with them to help; they typically have no cell phone. We are learning about the Assurance Phone Program that provides a free cell phone to individuals who are homeless; giving our CHW's an opportunity to get in touch with folks again and provide them services.

Kate Schilling, Legal Services Manager:

- The Elder Law Center just received notification on June 1st that we have a 5-year extension on our Senior Medicare Patrol brand. It's about a \$500,000 every year for the next five years, which is a pretty significant increase. It's about \$200,000 more per year than we've had in the past. With those extra funds we will try to hire a bilingual outreach assistant who would be bilingual in English and Spanish.
- SMP sent out a fraud alert yesterday regarding a lot of COVID over the counter test scams and fraud. They're sending them in mass quantities to people and billing Medicare.
- Just this week we hired a sixth attorney for the Elder Law Center. Her name is Abigail Darwin, and she will be starting in a couple weeks. This will allow us to disperse our caseloads to a more manageable level.
- Anika Rossum, daughter of Sky Van Rossum, will be our intern this summer. She is a third-year law student at Marquette. Welcome Anika!
- Christine Huberty, one of the attorneys from our office, flew to Washington, DC, and testified at the Permanent Subcommittee of Investigations headed by Senator Blumenthal from Connecticut and also Ron Johnson from Wisconsin, after submitting a public comment on a CMS website. The issue in front of them is Medicare Advantage denying coverage by use of artificial intelligence which is not evaluating health issues accurately at all. Christine did a great job.
- We are asking for more funding for our Guardianship Support Center, as the workload is more than one attorney can handle. This would greatly aid in the increased volume of calls coming in and unavoidable delays in responses due to such high volume.

Advocacy and Public Policy

Janet Zander:

- So you have a very lengthy written report from me and in light of time, unless somebody has questions about what's there, I'd rather focus on what's happened since I wrote that report that I submitted to Rosanna on Monday because it's been a very busy week. In particular, the state budget issue. You heard the good news from Sky that we have secured continuing funding for the elder abuse hotline pending full legislature approval and the governor's signing of the bill. That's always been a question about what happens when you have split government, and the legislature produces one bill that looks different than the governor's bill. And there's always been some concern that the governor would either veto it in whole or veto it in part. This week, lots of different things happened that might change that scenario. Yesterday we met on that budget item. What we didn't meet on and expected to meet on based on the advocacy alerts I sent you, was the Department of Transportation budget questions that arose around the impact of shared revenue on a number of the budget bills, including transportation. So last night they pulled transportation out of the agenda to be taken up later. They spent most of yesterday morning and into the afternoon delaying joint finance till about 4:30 last night, working on the shared revenue package and have come to an agreement on the shared revenue package, not only between the governor and the legislature, but between the House or between the Assembly and the Senate, which had significant disagreements about what would go into that package. I would encourage you to look at some of the media reports about shared revenue, because the bill that they passed or that bill that they're supporting goes way beyond shared revenue and talks a lot about education funding and you know, lots of other things that I think are very pertinent to the work that you're all doing with GWAAR and at the local level. But the fact that they have an agreement means that not only will transportation come back onto the docket, but they had literally said we're not talking about anymore of the budget until we come to a shared revenue agreement. So we were just put on complete hold, and as you know the goal is to pass a budget by June 30th which is the end of the state fiscal year and that seemed impossible. Now, today everything's possible again. We have not seen Joint Finance schedule any Executive Sessions for next week and we're watching very, very closely because we have the Department of

Transportation, the Department of Health of Health Services, but there are several other big budgets that we're following.

- We're anticipating at least two executive sessions next week. I'm hoping they go with transportation on Tuesday since it was delayed from this week and perhaps health services on Thursday, but time will tell. Typically, those announcements have come out on Thursday, but in light of everything that happened yesterday, they did not announce their next sessions.
- The other big thing that happened was the Legislative Fiscal Bureau, which prepares budget papers pertaining to items in the governor's budget, posted lots of documents yesterday related to the Department of Public Instruction, the Department of Health Services. We are now wading through the weekend reading stacks of paper that contain budget motions pertinent to our issues, things like caregiver support and long-term care workforce. Looking at how do they compare to our original requests? How do we want to message around those? What's not there is home delivered meal funding. I was really discouraged this morning because it wasn't there. And then I remembered it's not in the governor's budget, so there wouldn't have been a Legislative Fiscal Bureau paper on it, but it doesn't mean that it can't still end up in the final funding. As you know, the Legislature and Congress have all been really fond of omnibus bills, and so they end up writing a bill that has all sorts of different things in it, some from the Legislative Fiscal Bureau, budget motions and other things that they want to see added in and if it passes, to see exactly what's contained in there. It means home delivered meal funding still could end up in one of those omnibus bills and we will work hard to make sure that happens because it as you all know, it's a pretty significant funding need with the ARPA dollars being spent out and going back to funding levels that have not kept pace with inflation and have not kept pace with population growth. And now we're facing at the federal level, some significant challenges to fight for increased funding now that we have the debt ceiling.
- I will continue to put out advocacy alerts as well as updates, so later today we'll have an update on what happened last night and what to prepare for. As soon as we know when the next Joint Finance Committee meetings are being held, we will set those alerts out and get people to make calls around the items coming up in front of them.

- The other thing that we're doing next week in addition to some additional legislative meetings and joint finance meetings is meeting with the Legislative Fiscal Bureau to talk about some other non-budgetary policy issues that we might be looking at in this legislative session and the next legislative session that really take a big look at what we can do around the workforce crisis in direct care.

Bureau on Aging and Disability Resources

Neal Minogue:

- Janet Zander, John Schnabl, myself, BADR and WAAN folks have formed a work group to look at the root problems of lack of funding to support aging programs and lack of volunteers. I will continue to provide updates as meetings continue.
- Due to the high level of aging network staff turnover, we are collaborating and putting together a draft training structure that we hope will keep people up to date and meet a variety of training needs to support local, county aging staff.
- Lynn Gall, our Caregiver Program Coordinator has been appointed to the Administration of Community Living, Caregiving Advisory Council.
- There was nervous chatter regarding the flying back of unspent funds, however, our ACL contact said no, those funds are obligated to states and AAA's and its hands off.
- I recently had the privilege of attending the Title 6 conference in Washington DC. Very enlightening information and a wonderful conference. Some 300 tribal members attended. Please keep tribal members in mind as we talk about the services and support for our older Americans.

Adjournment:



Next Meeting Date: **August 11, 2023.**

Meeting Dates for 2023:

April 14, 2023

June 9, 2023

August 11, 2023

October 13, 2023

December 8, 2023

Rosanna Mazzara, Operations Coordinator; Recorder