



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, October 11, 2024 | 10:00 a.m.

ADRC of Portage County and
Microsoft Teams Video Conference Call

Members present: *Dave Ostness, Beth Esser, David Hoberg, Robert Borremans, Cookie Lough, Rob Wilkinson, John Helling*

Members excused: *Rowena Nelson, Wes Martin*

Others Present: *John Schnabl, Executive Director; Patrick Metz, Fiscal Manager; Nick Musson, OAA Consultant, Transportation Specialist; Pam VanKampen, OAA Consultant-Nutrition Specialist & Senior Center Representative; Richard Lavigne, Legal Services Manager; Sky Van Rossum, Special Projects Manager; Janet Zaner, Advocacy & Public Policy Coordinator; Kassy Heard, TTAC Program Director; Ryan Bunker, TTAC Specialist; Neal Minogue, Older Americans Act Program Supervisor State Office on Aging (BADR); Rosanna Mazzara, Operations Coordinator*

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:06 a.m. by Dave Ostness, Chair.

Review and Approval of October 11, 2024 Agenda

Motion by Rob Wilkinson, seconded by John Helling, to approve October 11, 2024, agenda. Motion unanimously carried.

Review and Approval of August 9, 2024 Draft Meeting Minutes

Motion by Cookie Lough, seconded by Dave Hoberg to approve August 9, 2024, draft meeting minutes. Motion unanimously carried.



Public Comment **None**

Comments from Chair

Dave Ostness, Chair

- Dave was at some meetings in Washington recently, discussing how more funding is desperately needed for Older Americans meals and nutrition.

Executive Directors Report

John Schnabl, Executive Director

- GWAAR unfortunately did not get chosen for the ADRC toll-free line grant we applied for.
- Alyssa Culpa, who is a staff person under Richard Levigne's Legal Department, will be leaving us October 18th. She provided education to Elder Benefit Specialists and other professionals around Medicare and Medicare related programs.
- We are still implementing our external SharePoint site, which is the site that was created to provide a library of technical assistance and training resources and forms that aging units can use. We are marketing it everywhere, our newsletter, state meetings, wherever we're at, we are pushing it. It's going very, very well so far. Now it's just a matter of continuing to populate that site.
- On Wednesday Oct. 9th we had an ACE meeting (A Commitment to Excellence) for our aging unit directors and supervisors. We discussed various topics such as examples from three counties who are doing different, but yet successful advocacy initiatives. The state also gave updates as well during this meeting. Carrie Kroetz, who is responsible for the implementation of the external SharePoint site, gave a virtual tour of the site.



Finance Committee Report

Dave Hoberg, Treasurer:

- Patrick has put together a good synopsis of the budget, a very good way of presenting it. In the past, we used to look at the administrative budget and that was it. This is the full picture of the organization, \$42 million showing both funds coming in and going out. Also breaking it down by Older Americans Acts fund and non. Great board level synopsis of the budget.
- Final details of 2023 audit are wrapping up.
- We are also looking at possible staff bonuses and 2025 wage increases for staff

Patrick Metz, Fiscal Manager:

- Patrick went over income and balance sheet statements in more detail for board.
- Varied revenues are higher due to ADLIN conference that took place this year.
- Interest revenues are averaging about \$6,000 a month.
- Computer cost and contract with IT vendor will be separate line items next year.
- The program fees line items is the VA program, which is growing and they have hired additional staff.
- Meals, mileage and lodging are separate lines items now. Transportation is now under air far travel costs.
- There was discussion around John Helling's suggestion to find creative ways to potentially end the GWAAR's leases.
- Patrick went over how the 2024 budget is going and that GWAAR is in good financial standing and the budget is in good shape.
- Patrick went over the draft projected 2025 GWAAR budget. It does not include 2025 staff salary increases.

- The 2025 budget will be voted on at the December board meeting which will include potential staff salary increase options for the board to see, discuss and vote on.
- Board is hoping Sara from CLA will be present at the next board to wrap up the 2023 audit.

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

Executive Committee Update

Dave Ostness, Chairman

Beth Esser, Vice-Chair

- The Executive Committee discussed bring forth the board application of Catherine Jones-Ferk. After reviewing her resume and work history they believe she'd be a great addition to the board and recommend approval.

Motion by Robert Borremans, seconded by Rob Wilkinson to approve Catherine Jones-Ferk to the board. Motion unanimously carried.

- The Executive Committee recommended WAAN send its full grant proposal to the Inclusa Foundation regarding the WAAN grant proposal.

A little background given by Janet Zander, Advocacy & Public Policy Coordinator:

Humana purchased Inclusa, a managed care organization, in Portage County. Purchasing the Inclusa managed care organization created a large number of assets that have been retained by what's now called the Inclusa Foundation. They are now two separate entities, and they have decided to use those funds by offering grants to non-profits across the state of Wisconsin who serve older adults and people with disabilities. After some thought and discussion, WAAN thought that one of their newest smaller group members, Wisconsin Senior Advocates, could definitely use some grant funds to help them grow, since its members help out on a purely volunteer level and are struggling a bit to keep things moving forward and growing. They are a group of about 45 older adults across the state of Wisconsin. We are asking for the board's approval send in a full grant proposal to the Inclusa Foundation due October 31st, to help this group

out. Funding decisions will be made by December 6th. Getting the grant for this group would bring some strength to that organization and develop leadership. The first year of the grant includes administrative help, IT support, office supplies, equipment and training; specifically, evidence based self-directed volunteer training to the group, which would enable them to put on paper what is their purpose and mission. It's a 3-year grant totaling over \$100,000.

Motion by Dave Hoberg, seconded by Beth Esser to go ahead and submit full grant proposal to Inclusa Foundation. Motion unanimously carried.

- Wes Martin's concern about board terms was discussed. His feeling was that board members should be able to serve more than two 3-year terms by modifying the by-laws. After much discussion, the Executive Committee brought forth their thought to the board that term limits should not be changed. After much discussion by the board, it was concluded that new blood and new ideas is a good thing for a board, and terms limits should be left as is in the by-laws.

Motion by Robert Borremans, seconded by Rob Wilkinson to retain term limits as currently outlined in the by-laws. Motion unanimously carried.

Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council

Kassy Heard, TTAC Program Director

Ryan Bunker, TTAC Specialist

- Kassy Heard gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Tribal Technical Assistance Center, who they are as an organization, what they do, and their mission and the many things they have accomplished in education and training with the tribes in the last year.
- Ryan Bunker, a newly hired TTAC Specialist, introduced himself and had a conversation with the board regarding all that he has learned in the 90 days he's been on board and what does to help the tribes be successful and help their elders live quality lives and get the services they need.



Advisory Council Report

Nick Musson, OAA Consultant- Transportation

Beth Esser, Advisory Council

- Nick gave a quick summary on what took place at the last Advisory Council Meeting on September 20th. Nick shared a PowerPoint presentation with the Advisory Council, going over GWAAR's 2025-2027 draft aging plan draft goals. The Advisory Council was asked for their feedback and asked if they'd like to see anything tweaked. It's important that everyone is on the same page with the goals.
- Nick gave the board a high-level overview of the plan document itself, the different sections of it, and also went over the state directed draft aging plan goals with the board, and asked for their feedback so he can fine tune the plan.
- A public hearing for the plan is to take place November 6th. The Advisory Council is set up to approve the 2025-2027 draft aging plan at their November 15th meeting and the GWAAR Board is set to approve the draft plan at their next meeting on December 13th. From there, it gets forwarded on to the state.

Advocacy and Public Policy

Janet Zander, Advocacy & Public Policy Coordinator

Topics covered:

- General election registration and absentee deadlines.
- The state budget process has officially kicked off now that agencies have submitted their budgets in mid-September. We've been able to look through the Department of Health Services budget. The thing we would mention there, is a cost re-estimate for what it takes to continue operating Aging and Disability Resource Centers from one year to another, so there is a building in of a cost increase to continue. I've given you a link to the department's budgets, but also identified the page number and where you can find it. Our Board on Aging is looking for 9 new positions to account for the growth in the population and the growth in the assisted living facility industry since they're responsible for providing ombudsman services. The transportation budget receives a lot of the

funding from the federal government, and that's an unknown quantity at this time, so they'll submit updates at a later date. Our request for additional funding for things like mass transit and specialized transportation are not included in those budgets. It doesn't mean we didn't share it with them, but we acknowledge that in the instructions they were given, which is a 0% increase including cost to continue and only and a 5% cut. There isn't room to put a lot of increases or a lot of new items, that'll be up to us to put before the governor for his budget, then ultimately to the legislature. I'll mention that while I didn't put a link to the Department of Justice, we are also going to be doing some advocacy with programs that fall under the Department of Justice umbrella. In particular, our Elder Abuse Hotline and other elder justice initiatives. We'll also be advancing some proposals around funding we need in the budget for those items, to continue the GWAAR hotline as well as some of the other important work that's happening in that area.

- Aging Advocacy is May 13, 2025, make sure to put it on your calendar.
- Ageism Awareness Day was Oct. 9th. We've been very engaged here at GWAAR and in the network around reframing aging; reframing the way we talk about these issues, trying to make it grab people's attention more, and be more effective in our messaging. We're just trying to be more mindful of how we talk about issues in a way that won't allow policy makers to keep saying this is a you issue, not an us issue, meaning a systems issue as all of us are actually aging.
- On the federal side, we continue to communicate, particularly with federal legislators right now. While they may be back in the district this minute, they're still actively in a congressional session. We need to get the 2025 budget passed. We're in a continuing resolution right now that will take us to almost the end of the year. A continuing resolution means a cut for us in reality. That means we stay flat funded, which is a cut for our programs. Keeping in mind we had an \$8 million cut at the national level for the older Americans Act. For example, regarding nutrition programs last year, flat funding is definitely not going to get us out of the waiting lists that we're facing now. We'd like to push these folks to negotiate between the House bill and the Senate bill. There are parts of each of those bills that we like. We really need them to get this done sooner rather than later and as they have done so many years now. They just keep kicking that down the road and coupled into that is the Older Americans Act reauthorization. The 5-year reauthorization expired September 30th of this year. This is the opportunity Congress has to not only speak to the importance of these programs but incorporate needed changes and flexibilities to the program and at least

suggest levels of funding for programs. We learned a lot during the pandemic. We don't want that to be lost. We are happy to see the Senate come out with a bill that does incorporate many of the things that we advocated for based on the lessons we all learned. The House bill hasn't come out at all yet, so in order for us to get finished, we need them to come together and reauthorize this act. Hopefully this will include not only increased funding suggestions, but the changes around how programs operate and the flexibilities that are available.

- Please see written report for all details.

Bureau on Aging and Disability Resources

Neil Minogue, Older Americans Act Program Supervisor, State Office on Aging (BADR)

- Thank you to the OAA Consultants and Kassy that have helped the counties and tribes in developing their aging plans. We appreciate their efforts.
- Thank you to Nick Musson on his tireless and excellence work on developing GWAAR's 2025-2027 Aging Plan.
- There are new federal regulations guiding the Older Americans Act. There is the Older Americans Act law and then there is a whole set of regulations promulgated by ACL that guides it. Due to these changes, there are likely going to be some addendums needed to aging plans for both the AAA's and the state as well. This will lead to discussion in developing some shared policies and procedures for oversight of contracts.
- We are looking forward to seeing Madison, Milwaukee and GWAAR's 2025-2027 Aging Plans in December.

Adjournment: 1:42 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: December 13, 2024

Meeting Dates for 2025

February 14, 2025

April 11, 2025

June 13, 2025

August 8, 2025

October 10, 2025

December 12, 2025



Rosanna Mazzara, Operations Coordinator; Recorder