



Our mission is to deliver innovative support to aging agencies and contracted partners as we work together to promote, protect, and enhance the well-being of older adults, adults with disabilities, and their caregivers.

Board Meeting Minutes

Friday, June 12, 2026/ 10:00 a.m.

Microsoft Teams Video Conference Call

And

ADRC of Portage County

Members physically present: Dave Hoberg, Wes Martin, John Helling, Steve Ahlgren, Catherine Jones-Ferk, Sandy Bergeron,

Members present virtually: Sabrina Cyrus, Cookie Lough, Rowena Nelson

Members excused:

Others Present: John Schnabl, Executive Director; Patrick Metz, Fiscal Manager; Nick Musson, OAA Consultant; Emily Petersen, Advocacy & Public Policy Director; Polly Shoemaker, GSC Managing Attorney; Joanna Reinstein, Elder Abuse Hotline Coordinator; Megan Olsen, Human Resources & Benefits Liaison; Sheila Check-Moe Advisory Council; Rosanna Mazzara, Operations Coordinator

Call to Order

Cookie Lough, Board Chair

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Cookie Lough, Chair.

Review and Approval of June 12, 2026 Agenda (ACTION)

Motion by Catherine Jones-Ferk, seconded by John Helling, to approve June 12, 2026, agenda. Motion carried.

Review and Approval of April 10, 2026 Draft Meeting Minutes *(ACTION)*

Motion by Wes Martin, seconded by Steve Ahlgren, to approve April 10, 2026, draft meeting minutes with the addition of the names of GLITC employees, Tribal Technical Assistants, Carri Chapman and Jenise Swartley on page 3 and that draft minutes are posted on GWAAR's website going forward. Motion carried.

Public Comment

- Polly Shoemaker, Guardianship Supporting Attorney, said farewell to the board and introduced Cherry Beth Hill, her replacement.

Comments from Chair

Cookie Lough, Board Chair

Home Delivered Meal Major Gift Update:

- Cookie gave a brief update on the gift from Includa, which has changed their name to **Common Good Philanthropy**. In April, there was one application from Dodge County. They currently have a waiting list of reduced home delivery routes. Dodge County also utilized all their home delivery meals allocations between January and June of last year. Thus, they met the requirements and were awarded \$41,178. We have used approximately \$342,838 of our \$1,500,000.
- John mentioned that there was one application in MAY and there was discussion about the terms to apply for funds, the application process and outreach GWAAR is doing to make sure the counties/tribes aware of the funds available.

Executive Director Report

John Schnabl, Executive Director

- Evan Ewing has taken over Angie's position as Health Promotion Program Specialist.
- Cherry Beth Hill will be taking over Polly's position, Guardianship Support Center Managing Attorney.



- Laura Monroe will be taking over Amanda Grady's position, Elder Law Center Manager.
- Emily Petersen took over Janet Zander's position, and is our new Advocacy & Public Policy Director.
- Megan Olsen is our new Human Resources & Benefits Liaison.
- We are expecting to fill our last open position, Elder Benefit Specialist Support Attorney, by July.
- A few months ago, Carri Chapman and Jenise Swartley joined GLITC as Tribal Training and Technical Assistance Specialists.
- Denise Kossen, Lead Accountant, has developed a new board expense report form that also incorporates in-kind hours reporting for the board to complete electronically or by hand if you wish. It also provides an area to request a board stipend, should you want it; remember, it is not automatically generated. Please contact Rosanna should you ever need the new electronic board expense report sent to you again. Please provide your feedback to Patrick on ways you feel it might be improved.
- GWAAR's ACE Meeting (A Commitment to Excellence) is taking place July 8th in Stevens Point for all County/Tribal Aging Unit Directors. Emails were sent out for registration, as well as mentions in the GWAAR Newsletter and external SharePoint site. Please contact Rosanna should you like to attend.

Elder Abuse Hotline

- Joanna Reinstein, Elder Abuse Hotline Coordinator, gave a very informative PowerPoint presentation giving an overview of the telephone hotline along with what a typical call is like and how it is handled, along with a few stories. It generated lots of discussion and gave the board great insight into this very valuable program. One person handling the hotline is definitely not quite enough, and it would be great to have some extra funding to add additional staff. [Since veterans are most likely being served, perhaps excess VA funds could be used to help fund the hotline.](#)

Finance Committee Report

Dave Hoberg, Treasurer

Patrick Metz, Fiscal Manager

Dave Hoberg:

- It was a relatively benign Finance Committee meeting. The audit is being finalized. Financials are looking good again, thanks to the VA. Topics of discussion were the nutrition gift and the budgets coming up.

Patrick Metz:

- There was not a lot of discussion regarding the financial statements, and as far as income statement and balance sheet, everything seemed to be looking good. We've got a very healthy reserve at the moment, about \$3.5 million.
- Regional fiscal trainings started in April and went through the last week of May. We did trainings in Hayward, Tomah, Antigo and Beaver Dam. We had good attendance at all of them. Lots of great communication and questions and exchange of information. We also did a tribal specific one as well. I believe we have two more coming up. Wausau in July and Red Cliff in September.
- Planning for the 2027 budget has begun. We have some interesting challenges ahead of us as far as health insurance increases. There will be discussions with John and the managers about it.
- Reserve Funds: It's my recommendation that once the reserve funds reach 4 million, we start discussing a policy and strategic plan around what the board would like to do with excess reserve funds, if not sooner. *It could start being an agenda item for the Finance Committee and Executive Committee meetings.* I would like to have a policy in place before I retire in the next few years.

Motion by Wes Martin, seconded by John Helling, to accept financial reports as presented and placed on file. Motion carried.



Executive Committee Report

Cookie Lough, Chair

RFP for PEO Services:

- Since GWAAR has been encountering service issues and cost increases, it was decided that an RFP would go out to see if there was better pricing and service available. Megan Olsen, GWAAR's Human Resources & Benefits Liaison, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the status of the RFP and all the organizations that sent in a proposal. Venture, our current PEO, has not yet submitted a proposal. Teams meetings will be created for each organization to give a presentation to the Executive Committee on what they have to offer. Quotes given will only be valid for 90 days, so given GWAAR would like the change in PEO to occur effective January 1, 2027, a re-quote will be needed in October. References were also requested for each PEO. The Executive Committee will report back to the board what was discussed during the presentation meetings and offer up some suggestions. It is expected that a final decision will take place in October by the board.

Motion by Dave Hoberg, seconded by Steve Ahlgren to accept Megan's timeline for the interviewing and decision-making process of choosing a new PEO.

Health Insurance Rates for 2026-2027:

- Health insurance rates increased on average by about 20% and then dental went up by about 9%. Open enrollment is hopefully going to occur in the next week or so for employees to be able to make their elections for July 1st. It's probably a wise thing that we are shopping around for better rates and service.

Copyright Issue:

- GWAAR received a letter from a law firm called Higbee and Associates, stating that we used an image without copyright authorization a PowerPoint that was developed by staff. Apparently, this law firm does scans of the internet to uncover image use. There were discussions with Higbee that GWAAR is a nonprofit organization, and no money was being made off the image and apologized for the error. Despite our explanation, the firm continued to pursue a fine. After consulting with the GWAAR attorney, the Executive Committee agreed it would be more cost effective for GWAAR to pay the fine than pursue further litigation fighting it. The fee was

negotiated down to \$750. GWAAR is taking inventory of public facing images it has used to ensure there are no copyright issues. Policies and procedures have been implemented to avoid having this happen again.

Bureau Report

Neal Minogue, Older Americans Act Program Supervisor (BADR)

- It's a little bit of a lull at the State Office on Aging right now. We're deeply involved in working on policy and practice documents as we're responding to the Administration of Community Living, our federal oversight agency.
- GWAAR has done a tremendous job with their mid-year reporting. GWAAR staff did a great job getting this information together. It is a lot of work to get reporting in from 70 counties and 11 tribes. It is a time of year when we're gathering up information to do what's called a 180B report. The idea is to get this report mid-year so we don't have a mess at the end of the year and GWAAR has really stepped up their game in working with tribes and county aging units to get this information together.
- We have a new staff person at ACL. We are very excited because ACL and the Administration on Aging and DHS at the federal level have decided they're going to hire back five positions to cover the entire country. Well, we're pleased that Stephanie Cole will be assigned to us and comes with a lot of experience. She worked in Pennsylvania in their state unit on aging. Pennsylvania has 61 AAA's, so she definitely has a lot experience.
- Our office team is working on developing policy related to the responsibilities for what is called in the new federal law, stewardship and oversight. In particular, it's our responsibility to be aware of what's happening with our AAAs, and at the same time, understanding their contracts and commercial relationships. That is a term that's used in federal regs as of 2024. We are developing policy related to designation. Wisconsin does not have a policy related to how we designate AAA's and we are also working on that and working closely with our AAA's to get their thoughts on how we do that kind of designation and if needed, de-designation.
- We developed a new state regulation last year to address a new regulation that required that we could not use funds that were means tested, meaning we could not have an income cap, for a particular program. Some of you may be aware of the Alzheimer's Family Caregiver Program, which is a state program, but there's also a

similar program called the National Family Caregiver Support Program. Counties were allowed to use their Alzheimer's Family Caregiver Support Program dollars as match. For the National Family Caregiver Support Program, the problem was federal regulations that came out in 2024 said, if you means test people, if you have an income cap on that, you can't use that as match anymore. State of Wisconsin legislature wiped away that income cap this past year, thus we had to write new policy and practice. This is a very good thing because for the first time, I think we're actually going to be able to use up all of our state AFCSP funds in 2026 because we can now use it as match for the National Family Caregiver Support Program. By the way, the AFCSP program in Wisconsin came before the national program, and we firmly believe the national program was modeled on Wisconsin's and other states' Alzheimer's family caregiver support programs.

- In this past year, we also developed policy addressing permitting the part of the use of C1 funds for meals served at a congregate sites to be used as carry-out or shelf-stable meals. So we're deep into policy writing right now. A lot of this requires many of our staff to be fully engaged in this, in addition to sharing this policy with our AAAs and partnerships. We will be putting this material out for public comment as well.
- Finally, I wanted to say GWAAR has been really stepping up their efforts to support both county and tribal aging units by doing regional trainings. They have also been engaging with their program staff to better understand the program reporting that is required by the by the OOA laws. Lots of program staff are more engaged at GWAAR now and our staff than they ever have been in the past. Lots of feedback is coming from many voices in the network of appreciation for the guidance and support that GWAAR is providing. However, there will always be a subset of agencies, not-for-profits, and tribal agencies that need additional support and I think there has been a shift at both the state and at GWAAR that we need to stop always expecting counties and some tribes to be able to do this by themselves, and that we are going to have to lean into supporting tribes and communities more because they are unlikely to always to have the capacity to do what we ask of them. And it seems to me that for years that we kind of pushed back against this, and we're always saying, why aren't you getting this done? We've shifted away from that idea, saying we simply just need to provide more support. We thank GWAAR for leaning into that kind of support. As an example, doing a two-day training on fiscal reporting and on reporting in general. That really helps. I hear that from tribes and counties. So good on GWAAR for leaning into that kind of technical assistance that's needed to provide really good OAA programs.

Advisory Council Update

Nick Musson, Transportation & Aging Plan Program Specialist

- GWAAR Advisory Council's last meeting was on May 15th. We had a very productive, good meeting and Dave Denomie was re-elected as chairman.
- Emily Petersen was introduced as GWAAR's new Advocacy and Public Policy Director and she provided an overview of current advocacy and policy priorities. The Advisory Council formally recognized Janet Zander for her years of service and contributions to the Wisconsin Aging Network.
- Bob Best shared highlights from the Washington, D.C. Advocacy Trip, noting productive discussions with congressional staff regarding aging issues.
- Robust discussion was had on volunteer driver insurance challenges, including rising insurance costs, impacts on volunteer recruitment and retention, and recent advocacy efforts with legislators, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, and the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance. The Council was informed of our efforts to expand and formalize the Volunteer Driver Insurance Coalition and pursue legislative solutions moving forward.
- The next Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for July 17th which is also a virtual meeting. And then following that, we have our September 18th meeting in Stevens Point.

Advocacy & Public Policy Update

Emily Petersen, Advocacy & Public Policy Coordinator

- Emily Olsen, GWAAR's new Advocacy and Public Policy Director, introduced herself, her career background, and went over the most recent updates on state advocacy and public policy. Please see her detailed and informative written report for more information.

Board Secretary Position and Committee Meeting Scheduling (ACTION)

- Steve Ahlgren initiated discussion regarding getting the board agenda out well ahead of the board meeting to adhere to the bylaws. He felt the agenda should go out a few weeks before the meeting. A suggestion was made to have board meetings take place the third Friday of the month instead of the second as it is now.

Motion by John Helling, seconded by Wes Martin, to move the board meetings to the third Friday of the month. Motion carried.

- There was further discussion and concern about having a board meeting the third Friday of December because it may be too close to Christmas and should be moved back to the second Friday.

Motion by Steve Ahlgren, seconded by Wes Martin, to move December Board meeting moved back to December 11th. Motion carried.

- There was discussion about how changing the board meeting back to December 11th would necessitate moving the Finance and Executive meetings to November 30th.

Motion by Wes Martin, seconded by John Helling, to change the December Finance and Executive meetings to November 30th. Motion carried.

- There was discussion, led by Steve Ahlgren, about having the board secretary position separated from the Treasurer position and how that would impact Rosanna's job description, since she is responsible for the board minutes. There was much discussion and ultimately Wes made a motion to postpone any action and add it as an agenda item at the next board meeting.

Motion by Wes Martin, seconded by Steve Ahlgren, to postpone the Secretary position agenda item to the next board meeting. Motion carried.

Proposed Board Topics for Consideration at the Next Meeting

- Discuss GWAAR Secretary position.



- The Board would like clarification on Neal Minogue's comments regarding the state's relationship with AAAs and how that's going to change.

Executive Director Evaluation

Motion by Wes Martin, seconded by John Helling to convene into closed session pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 19.85(1)(c) to conduct performance evaluation.

Adjournment:

Next Meeting Date: August 21, 2026 – ADRC of Portage County

Meeting Dates for 2026

October 16, 2026

December 11, 2026

Rosanna Mazzara, Operations Coordinator; Recorder