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, August 21, 2026| 10:00 a.m.
Microsoft Teams Video Conference Call
And
ADRC of Portage County

Members physically present: *Cookie Lough, Dave Hoberg, Wes Martin, John Helling, Steve Ahlgren, Rowena Nelson*

Members present virtually: *Sabrina Cyrus, Catherine Jones-Ferk*

Members excused:

Others Present: *John Schnabl, Executive Director; Patrick Metz, Fiscal* Manager; *Nick Musson, OAA Consultant; Emily Petersen, Advocacy & Public Policy Director; Megan Olsen, Human Resources & Benefits Liaison; Melissa Green, SVA Senior Manager; Kassy Heard, Aging & Disability Director, GLITC; Jenise Swartley, Tribal Technical Assistance Specialist, GLITC; Rosanna Mazzara, Operations Coordinator*

Call to Order

Cookie Lough, Board Chair

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. by Cookie Lough, Chair.

Review and Approval of August 21, 2026 Agenda *(ACTION)*

Motion by Wes Martin, seconded by John Helling, to approve August 21, 2026, agenda. Motion carried.

Review and Approval of June 12, 2026 Draft Meeting Minutes *(ACTION)*

Motion by Steve Ahlgren, seconded by Dave Hoberg to approve June 12, 2026, draft meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Public Comment

- None

Comments from Chair

Cookie Lough, Board Chair

- There was a board member resignation. Cookie contacted a few previous board members to see if they would be interested in returning, and unfortunately none had an interest. *Cookie Suggested that going forward it might be a wise practice to go into closed session or have voting be anonymous when voting in board members.*

Common Good Philanthropy Major Gift Update:

- Waupaca County was an additional county to be awarded funds from the Common Good Philanthropy gift, which brings our total award for this year to $317,390.00.

Executive Director Report

John Schnabl, Executive Director

AAA Contracting State Policy Update:

- The state units on aging across the country have had to deal with the new regulations that came out relatively recently. One of the topics that is being dealt with across the country as well as is in this state, is the is the area agency on aging's ability and permissions around doing contracts and commercial relationships outside of the usual OAA realm, the Title III Older Americans Act realm. The state, in an effort to be in line with those federal regulations around this, has, and several states have done this as well, created draft policy regulations around this. Board members were recently emailed a copy of that. The genesis of this was the feeling that AAAs

around the country may have been getting a little bit too caught up in some commercial relationship opportunities, and that was shying away from their ultimate responsibility within the Older Americans Act and within Title III. A lot of those commercial relationships are dealing with healthcare and healthcare entities and things of that nature. So hence the state felt the need to create policies around this growing trend. The state has written a policy at this point and has asked the AAA's of Wisconsin to give feedback. There are a lot of fine details that will take time for the new regulations to address. Important take aways are separation of staff and accounting around these different contracts or programs.

2025 Audit Presentation *(ACTION)*

Patrick Metz, Fiscal Manager
Melissa Green, Senior Manager, SVA Public Accountants
Kirsten Houghton, SVA Public Accountants

- Melissa Green and Kirsten Houghton gave a presentation on GWAAR's 2025 audit which included the written audit and management letter. This was GWAAR's first audit with SVA Public Accountants.

- SVA intends to issue an unmodified or clean opinion. That means that we believe the financial statements are fairly presented in all material respects with US generally accepted accounting principles. We issued clean audit opinions for both the financial statements and the compliance. It was great working with Patrick.

- We identified no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in internal control over major federal programs. We encountered no significant audit difficulties, no disagreements with management, no significant or unusual transactions. We concluded that the financial statement disclosures are neutral, consistent, and clear.

Motion by Wes Martin, seconded by Dave Hoberg to accept 2025 audit report as presented. Motion carried.

Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council (GLITC) Presentation

Kassy Heard, Aging & Disability Director, GLITC
Jenise Swartley, Tribal Technical Assistance Specialist, GLITC

- Kassy Heard and Jenise Swartley of GLITC gave a very informative PowerPoint presentation explaining what GLITC's role is with GWAAR and the Older Americans

Act as it relates to tribes in Wisconsin. They covered all the types of technical assistance they provide to the tribes in collaboration with GWAAR as well as success stories within the last three years.

Finance Committee Report

Patrick Metz, Fiscal Manager

Draft Agency Reserve Policy:

- Patrick discussed the draft agency reserve policy that he proposed. There was general consensus that it was well thought out and written, along with those funds being invested well to generate more income.

- Steve Ahlgren suggested that the philosophy of the greatest needs to be incorporated into it. He also mentioned that he would recommend a slight edit to 7.20.2 *Designated Reserve Funds* to add "such as, but not limited to."

- Seeing that we are getting close to the $4 million mark, Patrick suggested that any projects to use some the reserve funds start out small, such as at or below $200,000.00 to work out processes as we go and to not find GWAAR overcommitting and depleting its reserve funds.

- John Schnabl mentioned that another key piece to adding to a reserve policy is if you get to the point of where your reserves are at the amount that you want them to be, and you start to have an excess of that on a consistent basis, not just one month. My question is where does that money go? I think it goes back into the reserve. And how important is it to put the money back into the program from which it was generated. Grant requirements come into this as well at times. For example, our VA program really needs a new database system. The one they are using is very old and just not efficient anymore. Excess reserve funds would be a great way to help this program out, which is in fact generating these extra reserve funds

2027 Draft Agency Budget:

- There was discussion of the Elder Abuse Hotline gathering data to see how many veterans are calling in so that would provide guidance in the possibility of using some the VA excess reserve funds to hire a full/part-time person to help Joanna with the hotline, since volume is steadily increasing and becoming harder to manage. *This has potential to be a line item added to 2027 budget.*

- Health insurance line-item comparisons were discussed along how changing PEO provider in 2027 will affect budget.

- Cost of living increase was discussed.

- Bottomline, the budget looks good and it looks like GWAAR would have an approximate surplus of $185,000.00 if things stay as planned and if the VA program continues to grow, there will be more.

- Dave Hoberg suggested Patrick start keeping track of cash balance at the end of every month and graphing it, so that that after 6 months, or a year, that data can be presented to the board and be used in policy making

Review Financial Statements:

- Patrick went through the financial statements and GWAAR is in a good cash position.

- We are currently working on a strategy to place a chunk of the reserve into a money market account or some other higher interest to make and retain more income.

- There was discussion of loosening the requirements of the Common Good Philanthropy Major Gift grant. GWAAR staff will recommend their suggestions to the board, so the board can review and give input.

Motion by Dave Hoberg, seconded by Steve Ahlgren, to accept financial reports as presented and placed on file. Motion carried.

Executive Committee Report

Cookie Lough, Chair

RFP for PEO Services:

Megan Olsen, Human Resources & Benefits Liaison

- Megan gave an update on the RFP which included recommendations that two vendors be removed, due to being too large and pricing just not being competitive, and less generous benefits.

- Three are recommended to proceed into the next round. Megan discussed the pros and cons of each and that referenced are the next thing to check. It was agreed that we will proceed with all three and get re-quotes in October to make a final decision.

Motion by Steve Ahlgren seconded by John Helling to accept Megan's three remaining potential PEOs, timeline, and decision-making taking place in October. Motion carried.

Ad Hoc Bylaws Committee Regarding Secretary Position:

- Steve Ahlgren suggested that it would benefit the Executive Committee to be more than three people and to that end, suggested that the Treasurer/Secretary position be separated. Chair, Cookie Lough, appointed an Ad-hoc Bylaws Committee to write up suggested bylaw changes to include what the responsibilities of the Secretary should have. It was discussed, however, that it would be wise that certain secretary duties stay with Rosanna to provide ease, history and continuity. *His suggested changes would be an agenda item at the next board meeting to discuss.*

Bureau Report

Neal Minogue, Older Americans Act Program Supervisor (BADR)

- The Aging and Disability Independent Living Network Conference is coming up for September 21-23 at the Kalahari in Wisconsin Dells. Board members are encouraged to attend. There are thousands of individuals who are engaged in providing older American Act services and it's often very exciting to get all those people in one space and so they can collectively share their knowledge and also collectively celebrate with one another the good work that they do.

- The state is working on policy regarding AAA sub-recipient monitoring, which is a big part of the federal regulations that came out in March of 2024. Part of that is contracts and commercial relationships. The state is working with all three AAA's and asking their input as well.

- The state commends the work that GWAAR does with the follow up of each of their county and tribal aging units and how they have built out a software system that allows counties to have their aging plans be housed electronically and allows them to update how they're doing with their goal development as the years go with their three-year plans. I was incredibly impressed by the structure and the design and the form of that. I said to GWAAR, this is right down the lane of what a AAA is supposed to be doing in supporting aging units across the state. The 70 counties and

11 tribes are very fortunate to have this kind of structure built into GWAAR's support system. It allows a very effective and consistent way to measure how aging units are doing with meeting those aging plan goals year after year. Hats off to GWAAR staff for building that out.

- The state is developing some policy chapters in our own SharePoint system, which GWAAR uses as well. It is a great advantage to GWAAR, and the state to have this, and have the Aging Network familiar with the Microsoft database system, called SharePoint. The state uses it extensively as we build out our operations manual online. As many of the GWAAR staff know, we have a very out-of-date paper aging manual, however, a good portion of it is online, including our caregiver chapter, nutrition chapter, and soon our supportive services chapter. This year we'll also have a chapter on evidence-based health promotion. Fiscal is working on a chapter as well, which will also be an extensive chapter. This online manual will also be a living, breathing document, just like GWAAR has. It gives the capability to go in and update that material as needed.

- Lastly, thanks for your work, GWAAR Board, and all that you're doing to support our aging units across the state. It's a big job. You're A $30 million a year business in the business of helping people who are older adults and people with disability live better lives. And as an older adult, thank you. We need more people like you to step up and step into roles to support people throughout the state.

Advisory Council Update

Nick Musson, Transportation & Aging Plan Program Specialist

- The last Advisory Council meeting took place on July 17th, 2026. Evan Ewing, GWAAR's new Health Promotion Program Specialist, was introduced. Jenise Swartley, from GLITC, also gave a wonderful presentation on all the technical assistance they provide the tribes.

- An aging plan update was given, which included GWAAR's current annual review process with aging units, and that specialists are meeting with aging units to review progress on their 2025-2027 Aging Plan goals, and to document the 2026 updates. In addition, there was discussion on the Aging Plan development timeline and how local aging unit planning guides the development of GWAAR's area plan and community engagement. Information collected by aging units will help guide the development of GWAAR's future goals. We are preparing the Advisory Council for next year's 2028 to 2030 Aging Plan process.

- The next Advisory Council meeting will take place in person on September 18th in Stevens Point.

Advocacy & Public Policy Update

Emily Petersen, Advocacy & Public Policy Coordinator

Topics Discussed:

- Brief updates on the federal fiscal year 2027 budget.

- There was a continuing resolution passed by the Senate before they went on their break, and they are scheduled to be back the middle of September. This continuing resolution is going to fund the government at 2026 levels, which at this point is a positive.

- The best opportunity for us is a continuing resolution rather than a government shutdown. There are actually some positive things in this continuing resolution beyond the flat funding for 2026, which is a provision that would delay an extremely controversial grant making rule.

- We're hoping that when the House gets back in session on August 31st, they will pass not only this continuing resolution, but also the Older Americans Act reauthorization.

- I wanted to share that we'll be hosting issue brief trainings throughout the month of October. These are going to be short trainings/webinars, (which can be attended by anyone) that go over each of our top four WAAN priorities, which is ADRC funding, home delivered meal funding, falls prevention programs, and specialized transportation. We'll be doing one of these a week in the month of October so we can help the community learn a little bit more about each of these priority areas and how you can use our existing issue briefs to advocate with your legislators. So when those registrations for those trainings come out, I'll be sure to share them.

- For more details, please see Emily Petersen's written report to the board.

Suggested Topics for Next Meeting

- PEO for 2027 vote will take place at the October board meeting.
- Steve's submission of proposed GWAAR Board Secretary responsibilities will be discussed.
- Perhaps at a future date Wes will try to invite someone from the Alzheimer's Dementia Program from the Lac du Flambeaus tribe.
- John will invite staff from different programs to present.

Adjournment: 2:10 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: ***October 16, 2026 – ADRC of Portage County***

Meeting Dates for 2026
December 11, 2026

Rosanna Mazzara, Operations Coordinator; Recorder