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.

Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Friday, September 18, 2026|10:00 a.m. –11:30 a.m.
Microsoft Teams Conference Call
And
ADRC of Portage County

Members Present: *David Denomie, Doris Bakker, Dave Lowe, Valerie Freres, Robert Best, Denise Sweet, Tony Omernik*

Excused Members Not Present: *Sheila Check-Moe*

Non-Excused Members Not Present:

Others Present: *Nick Musson, Transportation & Aging Plan Specialist; John Schnabl, Executive Director; Emily Petersen, Advocacy and Public Policy Director; Ingrid Kundinger, Fraud & Abuse Program Manager; John Helling, Board Member/Advisory Council Liaison; Rosanna Mazzara, Operations Coordinator*

Call to Order: 10:04 a.m.

Dave Denomie, Chair

Review and Approval of September 18, 2026 Agenda

Motion by Bob Best, seconded by Doris Bakker, to approve September 18, 2026 agenda with the addition of a Volunteer Driver as an agenda item. Motion carried.

Review and Approval of May 15, 2026 Draft Meeting Minutes

Motion by Doris Bakker, seconded by Bob Best, to approve May 15, 2026 draft meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Review and Approval of July 17, Draft Meeting Minutes

Motion by Bob Best, seconded by Dave Lowe, to approve July 17, 2026 draft meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Public Comment:

None

Comments from Chair

Dave Denomie, Chair

- It's very nice to see everyone in person and a nice option to have once a year. I enjoy seeing the ADRC and all they do for older adults.

Executive Director Report

John Schnabl, Executive Director

- John discussed GWAAR's RFP process to hire new PEO. Megan Olsen, GWAAR's internal HR person, is coordinating that and a recommendation will be brought to the board for a vote on Oct. 16th.

- We are recruiting for board members, so if anyone knows of anyone that might be interested please direct them to me and I can discuss the role with them.

- The state is putting together some written guidance, and looking to get it approved, on how the aging network handles fundraising for the Older Americans Act. While we support the idea of fundraising in order to raise additional funds for their programs, there are federal and state requirements that have to be followed in order to do that. This new guidance will delve into those details and how GWAAR will be involved with that.

- The University of Virginia is paying individuals 18 or over, to take a survey around their caregiving experience. It's about a 25 to 30 minute survey and if anyone's interested, we can get you the link to sign up and it is in our newsletter as well.

Advocacy Update

Emily Petersen, Advocacy and Public Policy Director

- Some highlights/Updates included:

  - The Older Americans Act reauthorization and that it will be highly unlikely that the house will take a vote.

  - The bill for federal fiscal year 2027 funding ends on September 30th. Congress did pass a federal fiscal year 2027 continuing resolution (2026 flat funding) before they left town. That goes through December 11th. After December 11th, Congress will need to pass some sort of additional funding for 2027 at that point.

  - WAAN, which is the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network, is hosting a series of webinars every Tuesday in October over the lunch hour. Each webinar has a different topic focused on one of our top policy priority areas for the next year. That would be home delivered meals, ADRCs, falls prevention, and specialized transportation. These issue brief webinars are really designed to help you figure out how you want to talk about each of these issues with your legislator. I will share the registration links for each of those webinars with you and you're more than welcome to share them. They're not just for WAN members or advisory council members. They're completely open to the public.

  - WAAN is meeting with gubernatorial candidates and new legislators to share what issues are important to the aging network. I've asked all of the legislative seats to complete our candidate questionnaire. We've sent the questionnaire with over 100 legislators we've asked to answer questions about our aging priorities. I have a Dropbox link, which is basically a cloud-based storage system that I can share with anybody who wants it, and I will share it with all of you. I've uploaded answers that I'm getting to the questionnaires. All responses will be shared with you. It's just for you all, the governing board for GWAAR and GWAAR members, not the general public.

- For more advocacy and public policy information, please see Emily's detailed written report that was emailed out to everyone.

North Central WI Senior Summit – Sept. 24th

Tony Omernik, Advisory Council Member

- At the last meeting, you heard about the Healthy Aging Coalition, and the North Central Wisconsin Senior Summit is an outgrowth of that coalition. This started with the fact that a recent United Way report indicated that about half of our seniors here in North Central Wisconsin are living below the household survival budget and are struggling. Essentially, we just got to the point whereas a coalition and agencies involved, we said we've got to do something. This is unacceptable. This is not what retirees perceived as what the American dream looks like. And as the richest country in the world, we ask the question, can't we do better? So this is a response to that. We're working with the Senior Empowerment Project in Wisconsin and co-sponsoring this event on September 24th from 1 to 4 p.m. It's open to everyone and thus far about 100 have registered. We are trying to bring people together to be informed/educated on the issues seniors are facing to gain grassroot support for advocacy regarding the needs of older Americans. *Next meeting agenda item: Tony will report back to the Advisory Council on how the summit went*

Senior Medicare Patrol Program Overview

Ingrid Kundinger, Fraud & Abuse Program Manager

- Ingrid Kundinger gave a very informative PowerPoint presentation on the Senior Medicare Patrol Program which included history, goals, volunteer participation, resources, examples of fraud, and reporting. The Advisory Council enjoyed the presentation, and it generated many questions and a great discussion.

GWAAR 2028-2030 Aging Plan Community Engagement

Nick Musson, Transportation & Aging Plan Specialist

- Nick discussed the Advisory Council interview document and timeline that will be made available to them again as in previous years, to help Advisory Council members interview county/tribal aging units for the upcoming GWAAR aging plan process for 2028-2030. These interviews give GWAAR very valuable information to use in their aging plan and how to serve the county/tribes better. The interview document was discussed and how changes could be made to update and improve it. Nick will also update the cheat sheet which Advisory Council members can use to draw out more specific information from aging unit directors, rather than general answers.

- Emily Petersen, Advocacy & Public Policy Director suggested that perhaps a question on reframing aging could be incorporated into the aging plan process as well.

- John Helling asked if fraud is something that can be a topic for aging plans. Nick said he would discuss with Ingrid Kundinger.

Volunteer Driver Insurance Update

Nick Musson, Transportation & Aging Plan Specialist

- In the past legislative cycle, we had some draft legislation and created a sign-on-letter to be prepared to support it. Unfortunately, it never came to fruition. We are now preparing for the next legislative cycle. We are trying to create a coalition of like-minded agencies and individuals that support this particular issue to be ready to go for the next legislative cycle. It's a very simple coalition. There are no regular meetings or obligations. It's more of a tool/network to be able to stay connected and communicate with everybody that's interested in supporting this issue so that we can be ready when the time comes. I created an e-mail and sent it out to all people and agencies that signed on to the original letter asking them to consider joining this coalition so that we can be ready to go for the next legislative cycle. So beginning next year, Emily and I will have a system in place when we go to meet with legislators and start trying to get legislation to protect our volunteers. We will have a system in place with coalition members ready to advocate and reach out to legislators. I will forward this email and information to all Advisory Council members and feel free to forward to others.

Future Meeting Topics

Nick Musson, Transportation & Aging Plan Specialist

- Bayfield County Repair Café

Nick discussed Bayfield County's Repair Café whereby a community coalition of like-minded individuals gather together to fix things. It's a great way to socialize and give back to the community. *At the next Advisory Council meeting Nick will have a representative from this coalition come speak to talk about what they do.*

- Please feel free to email Nick anytime to give him ideas on what you might like to explore as topics

Member Sharing

All

- None

GWAAR Advisory Council In-Kind Hour Reminder

Nick Musson, Transportation & Aging Plan Specialist

- The importance of in-kind hour tracking was explained, and AC members were encouraged to complete the form along with mileage/food reimbursement.

Adjournment Time: 12:15 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: ***November 13, 2026***

Future 2027 Meeting Dates:
February 12, 2027
May 14,2027
July 30, 2027
September 17 -In Person at ADRC Stevens Point
November 12. 2027

Recorder: *Rosanna Mazzara, Operations Coordinator*