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, July 17, 2026|10:00 a.m. –11:30 a.m.
Microsoft Teams Conference Call

Members Present: *Dave Denomie, Dave Lowe, Doris Bakker, Bob Best, Tony Omernik, Sheila Check-Moe*

Excused Members Not Present: *Doris Bakker*

Non-Excused Members Not Present: *Valerie Freres, Denise Sweet,*

Others Present: *Nick Musson, Transportation & Aging Plan Specialist; John Schnabl, Executive Director; Emily Petersen, Advocacy and Public Policy Director; Evan Ewing, Health Promotion Program Specialist; Jenise Swartley, GLITC Tribal Technical Assistance Specialist; Rosanna Mazzara, Operations Coordinator*

Call to Order: 10:04 a.m.

Dave Denomie, Chair

Review and Approval of July 17, 2026 Agenda

- *No action taken due to lack of quorum. Approval will have to take place at the next meeting.*

Review and Approval of May 15, 2026 Draft Meeting Minutes

- *No action taken due to lack of quorum. Approval will have to take place at the next meeting.*

Public Comment:

None

Comments from Chair

Dave Denomie, Chair

- Dave thanked the Advisory Council for their participation, devoting time, talents, ideas and initiatives to their communities and to GWAAR's mission to help county/tribal aging units and the older population in Wisconsin. He encouraged everyone to get involved and ask questions.

- GWAAR's work, and the work of county/tribal aging units are facing challenging times during this administration, so everyone needs to pull together to try and help our communities. Thanks to everyone for their commitment to trying to bring successful programs that meet the needs of the older population in Wisconsin.

Executive Director Report

John Schnabl, Executive Director

- We have gotten a handful of responses to the RFP that went out for a new professional employer organization that we are hoping to transition to in 2027. Interviews are taking place and Megan has developed a timeline to present to the Board, which will ultimately need to give their approval of any suggested changes in vendors.
- Laura Monroe has been promoted to the position of Elder Benefit Specialist Support Attorney Manager.
- Chery Beth Hill has been hired as the new Guardian Support Center Managing Attorney.
- Evan Ewing has been hired as the new Health Promotion Program Specialist.
- Leah Newel has been hired as the new Fiscal Program Assistant.

- GWAAR had its yearly in person ACE Meeting(A Commitment to Excellence) on July 8th for all the county/tribal aging unit directors. There was a presentation on the federal reporting system, GWAAR updates, state updates, and the afternoon was used to network on all the various OAA programs, such as things that are or are not working and success stories.

- The state has recently put out a new draft policy around area agencies on aging and what we need to do in order to do private contracting or have private contracts outside of our Older Americans Act activities. There is a little bit of a fear at the federal level that we as area agencies are having too many resources to put towards and are too caught up in private contracting. We need to make sure that we keep that focus around Older Americans Act Services. The policy is still in draft stage and input is being gathered.

- We have two openings on our board of directors, so if you know anyone that might be interested, please send them my way and I'll be happy to talk about what the position entails and what the commitment means.

Advocacy Update

Emily Petersen, Advocacy and Public Policy Director

- Highlights/Updates included:

  - The Older Americans Act reauthorization bill.
  - Nutrition Program flexibilities.
  - Medicaid cuts.
  - Advocacy on the state budget going forward.
  - GWAAR meeting the candidates running for governor.

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

GWAAR's New Health Promotion Program Specialist

Evan Ewing, Health Promotion Program Specialist

- Evan introduced himself and gave a brief overview of his background. He grew up in southwest Wisconsin and graduated from UW-Platteville in 2017 with a Bachelor of Science in Health and Human Performance with an emphasis in health promotion and has always had a passion for serving others with their health and wellness goals

and wanted to expand that into employee wellness. His career took him to southern California for a few years, and while there, completed his master's in public health and then got his CHESS certification. After a few years he found himself coming home to Wisconsin and began working for Richland County Health and Human Services in their public health unit as a public health specialist. He was primarily responsible for the implementation of the Community Health Improvement Plan which in part assesses the needs of the community and then creates programming to address those needs. Evan started with GWAAR in July and is happy to be on board with GWAAR and GWAAR is thrilled to have him.

Introduction to GLITC

Jenise Swartley, GLITC Tribal Technical Assistance Specialist

- GWAAR contracts with the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council to provide support, technical assistance and training, and some oversight as well around Older Americans Act services. Seeing that they are a tribal organization, GWAAR felt that it was best to contact out with a tribal organization to work with the tribes around these programs. GWAAR has contracted out their services for years, which has been a great relationship and a great decision. This is however,the first time they've been fully staffed for some time and we are so pleased to see them hire two new people and have them hit the ground running. Jenise Swartley is one of those people, and we are happy to have her attend this meeting.

- Janise Swartley, who has been with GLITC since January, introduced herself and gave an overview of her position.

  - GLITC provides assistance to all 11 tribal elder programs across the state including Title 3 and Title 6.

  - GLITC works closely with all the program specialists within GWAAR.

  - GLTIC coordinates with the Tribal Aging Unit Association, which is one of my favorite parts of my job. All of the tribal Aging Directors get together every other month and it's just so wonderful for all of them to get together, to support each other, talk about their challenges and successes.

  - GLITC acts as a liaison between state and tribal programs, working closely with GWAAR as well as DHS to advocate for the tribal elder programs as needed.

- GLITC is coordinating our 4th annual tribal cooks training in October. We've also hosted the tribal fiscal training, which was the 4th one that we've hosted along with GWAAR and Carrie Kroetz, GWAAR Data Management. We are also developing training for Title 6 that can be sent out each year

- GLITC is creating a toolkit for Native American Heritage Month and Indigenous Peoples Day, for all the tribal aging units and counties to use.

- GLITC also works hand in hand with GWAAR's Senior Medicare Patrol program and to provide outreach to tribes to prevent Medicare fraud.

- David Denomie volunteered and offered to help collaborate with the tribes. Jenise indicated it would be great to have him attend a Tribal Aging Unit Association meeting in the future.

GWAAR Advisory In-Kind Hours

Nick Musson, Transportation & Aging Plan Specialist

- Nick went over the new Advisory Council in-kind hours tracking form and the importance of in-kind hours relative to federal/state reporting for GWAAR. He indicated this form was just a starting point and welcomes feedback to fine tune the form, so it is simple and easy to submit for Advisory Council members.

GWAAR 2025-2027 Aging Plan Goal Update

Nick Musson, Transportation & Aging Plan Specialist

- Nick discussed and gave updates on aging plans at the county/tribal, GWAAR/AAA, and state level.

- GWAAR is conducting annual county/tribal aging plan reviews/check ins, to provide help and technical assistance and updating their plan documents.

- The new 2028-2030 aging plan process will be starting soon. Meetings are being set up at the state level.

- GWAAR's plan will begin 4-5 months after the county/tribes begin theirs. GWAAR will use information obtained from counties/tribes to help create their AAA plan. We are welcoming back consultant Tina Albert, to help with goal development once again. The most important part of the plans are getting that quality community input.

Future Meeting Topics

Nick Musson, Transportation & Aging Plan Specialist

- Tony requested an update on the volunteer driver issue and Nick indicated he would have more information to share as well on this topic.

- Nick will see if Ingrid Kundinger, the director of the Senior Medicare Patrol Program, can attend an Advisory Council meeting and give a presentation.

Member Sharing

All

Tony Omernik:

- The Midwest Senior Empowerment Project is hosting the North Central Wisconsin Senior Summit on September 24th from 1-4 p.m. at the Lakeview Conference Center in Wausau. The first part of the summit is an informational/educational piece by the United Way providing updates on some of the significant issues that are making the lives of seniors in our area challenging. The next portion of the summit is having attendees break up into smaller groups and identify the issues that are important to them, and afterwards bringing them all back together again, and as a group, to identify the top issues of concern. The concluding part of the summit is then connecting them with ways that they can get involved in making a difference on the issues that we've identified as a group and as individuals and showing them how they can connect right away with our local advocacy efforts. *Nick mentioned that he would see if a small article regarding this could go in the GWAAR Newsletter.*

Adjournment Time: 11:26 a.m.

Next Meeting Date: ***September 18, 2026, In person at Stevens Point***

Future 2026 Meeting Dates:
November 13, 2026

Recorder: *Rosanna Mazzara, Operations Coordinator*