



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.

Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Friday, November 14, 2025 | 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Microsoft Teams Conference Call

Attendees

Members Present: Dave Denomie, Kathy Gauger, Dave Lowe, Robert Best, Tony Omernik

Members Not Present: Valerie Freres, Doris Bakker, Denise Sweet, Sheila Check-Moe

Others Present: Rob Wilkinson, Board Vice Chair; Nick Musson, Transportation & Aging Plan Specialist; Janet Zander, Advocacy and Public Policy Coordinator; Lisa Druin, VA Programs Manager; Donna Rosner, Elder Abuse Programs Specialist; Jean Lynch, Program Specialist Manager; John Schnabl, Executive Director; Rosanna Mazzara, Operations Coordinator

Call to Order: 10:04 a.m.

Dave Denomie, Chair

Review and Approval of November 14, 2025 Agenda

- Jean Lynch, Program Specialist Manager, to be moved up in the agenda.

Motion by Kathy Gauger, seconded by Dave Lowe, to approve November 14, 2025 agenda with change requested that Jean Lynch moved up in the agenda. Motion unanimously carried.



Review and Approval of October 3, 2025 Draft Meeting Minutes

Motion by Bob Best, seconded by Dave Lowe , to approve October 3, 2025 draft meeting minutes. Motion unanimously carried.

Public Comment:

None

Comments from Chair

Dave Denomie, Chair

- Thank you to all those who came to the last in-person meeting in Stevens Point. It was great to see and interact with everyone in person and it's a great idea to have one every year. Thank you as well to the ADRC for being such wonderful hosts. Happy holidays to all as this is our last meeting for 2025. One thing I want to think about as I go forward for myself and share a thought with you, is to just take a moment and a deep breath and appreciate the progress that is made and the good things that are done every day and that we can keep doing that no matter what happens, and we will keep doing it no matter what happens. I appreciate everybody's work and determination and you're allowing me to be a part of this effort.

Executive Director's Report

John Schnabl, Executive Director

- On December 12th there will be a board meeting at the ADRC of Portage County. There will also be an election of officers and approval of our 2026 agency budget. Two board members' terms will also be up, so if you know of anyone that might be interested, please refer them to me.
- Currently GWAAR has what's called a professional employer organization or PEO. They act as our employer and do our payroll, benefits coordination and human resources guidance for us. We currently have a PEO but we're now starting the RFP process to solicit proposals from other potential PEO organizations, which could eventually or ultimately be a big transition for GWAAR depending on how it pans out.

- As mentioned before, we've had to redirect a large chunk of Federal Older Americans Act dollars to what I will call a new program, and that new program is to find a legal services provider who is willing to provide legal benefit assistance to those to adults 60 plus in the state of Wisconsin and within our service area, the 70 counties and 11 tribes. GWAAR went through an RFP process and Legal Action of Wisconsin partnered with Judicare, was awarded the grant with services to begin January 2026.
- There will be discussion in this meeting around a plan amendment that we have to do or are looking to do, around the ability for nutrition programs to use 25% of their congregate funds for carry out meals, and those would be only in certain situations that those allowances would occur. You'll be hearing more about that as the meeting goes on.

Advocacy Update

Janet Zander, Advocacy and Public Policy Coordinator

Topics covered:

- We are still trying to get the Falls Prevention Healthy Aging Grants across the finish line.
- We are very concerned that without a whole lot of thought, Wisconsin is looking to pass a next of kin piece of legislation we've been opposed to.
- Speaker Voss appointed 8 members to an Elder Services Task Force to look at what are some of the great programs and services out there that are helping people to stay living independently in their own homes as well as what are the challenges to aging in place? What are people finding as barriers? Everything from property taxes and utility costs to lack of transportation, lack of connection to their communities, lack of ability to maintain their home with low income.
- They held their first hearing a few weeks ago here in Madison, and it's specifically focused on financial exploitation.
- We continue to lose drivers across the state who are volunteers because they can't afford to pay for a commercial driving insurance policy costing hundreds to thousands of dollars more a year. And we are grateful to people who volunteer their time and the use of their vehicles, but if they accept any kind of reimbursement,

including reimbursement of expenses like mileage, they're often then considered by insurance companies as commercial drivers. Nick reached out to the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance where there was word that there may be a list of 142 insurance companies that will not bump insurance rates up for volunteer drivers. Draft legislation has been created, and we have 33 different agencies that have signed on. We're really happy with the support that we received and we're still getting sign ons.

- With the federal shutdown there has been lots of fallout from programs that ran out of money. We now have a continuing resolution signed that does a couple of things. One is it funds most of the federal programs and services through the end of January. So it's not a long-term bill, but at least people have access to food and other programs.
- There needs to be continued advocacy around the Older Americans Act programs and reauthorization. GWAAR's Brynn Ceman was in Washington, DC earlier this month communicating with legislators about the need to reauthorize the Older Americans Act, which is still unauthorized since last September.

Aging Plan Amendment – 25% C1 for Carry Out Meals

Jean Lynch, Program Specialist Manager

Nick Musson: Before Jean speaks, I just want to explain why this amendment needs to be approved by the Advisory Council. We recently identified the need for a formal policy that allows up to 25% of the Title 3C1 congregate nutrition funds to be used for carryout meals. Because of how this changes how C1 funds may be allocated and administered across all aging units, it represents a material change to our aging plan, so under our plan requirements, any significant policy change that affects program operations, service delivery or the structure of the programs, it must be added to GWAAR's 2025-2027 aging plan through a formal plan amendment. Since Advisory Council review is required as part of this process, we are asking the Advisory Council to endorse and approve this amendment so that it can be moved forward to the GWAAR board at their next meeting on December 12th for final approval

Jean Lynch: When we think about this, there's two buckets of money that we get for senior nutrition. C1 is for congregate dining, which is our senior dining sites where you see older folks sitting together and enjoying a nice meal together. Then we have what's referred to as called C2. That's for home delivered meals, otherwise known as Meals on



Wheels, mobile meals or home delivered meals. Those are the ones where you have the volunteers or paid drivers going out and delivering those meals.

When the Older Americans Act regulations came out about over a year ago, there was a section that allowed for flexibility up to 25%, that is to have the ability to transfer from congregate which is our senior dining, to home delivered meals which is our C2 funding for those carry out meals. For us, that being Wisconsin, the Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources, would need to write that into their plan

So we as a AAAs got together, we talked about this, and decided that it would be a great thing for our programs to be able to use this 25% of their congregate funding to provide those carry out meals. During this time, the state did include some parameters in their own plan as well as some criteria on how the programs, or in what instances programs can transfer up to 25%. There are five different allowable situations where the nutrition programs in GWAAR service area could use up to 25% of their congregate funding to provide carry out meals.

Eligibility criteria are based on the following circumstances:

- 1) Dining Center Emergencies Provision of meals to eligible congregate participants when a dining location experiences a sudden emergency that does not rise to the level of a MDD, such as a natural disaster or fire, that temporarily prevents the dining center from operating. Allows the program to continue to provide meals to congregate dining participants with funds that were already budgeted for congregate meals until the dining center can reopen or be relocated without having to switch to a different funding source (C2) to provide these meals.
- 2) Temporary Closure or Staffing Shortage Provision of meals to eligible congregate participants when a dining location is not able to operate due to a temporary staffing shortage or rare circumstances in which the location cannot be used for congregate dining, such as congregate dining locations that act as polling places. Includes emergency meals distributed to congregate participants for use at home when needed.
- 3) Illness Provision of meals to eligible congregate participants who reside with another eligible individual (individuals 60+, spouses younger than age 60, persons with a disability) when they are sick or otherwise unable to attend the congregate dining site due to a chronic illness. Allows a participant who normally attends to continue to participate, rather than switching to home-delivered meals or going



without services so that they can be home to care for the eligible participant with whom they reside.

- 4) Behavioral or Mental Health Concerns Eligible congregate participants for whom congregate dining is not appropriate due to a history of behavioral issues or mental health concerns identified by the nutrition program via an individual screening or assessment.
- 5) Need for Additional Meals Provision of additional meals to eligible congregate participants in priority groups who might need an extra meal based on an individual screening or assessment, such as those who are experiencing food insecurity, housing instability, or insufficient access to clean water, gas/electricity, or equipment to prepare a meal.

Just to be clear, GWAAR as a AAA can actually have stricter criteria than just mentioned, but we can be more lenient. GWAAR decided to leave it as is so that county nutrition programs can have flexibility to better meet their needs.

Motion by Dave Lowe, seconded by Bob Best, to have the Advisory Council recommend approval of the proposed amendment to the GWAAR 2025–2027 Aging Plan to include the policy allowing up to 25% of C1 funds to be used for Carry-Out meals, and forward this recommendation to the GWAAR Board of Directors for action at their December 12 meeting. Motion carried.

GWAAR Veterans Self Directed Services Program Overview

Lisa Drouin, VA Programs Manager

- Lisa Drouin, VA Program Manager, gave a PowerPoint presentation giving an overview of the program.
- GWAAR's VA program began in 2009 when GWAAR received a two-year \$300,000 grant to start a veteran self-directed program with Milwaukee Va Medical Center and four counties. It allows veterans the ability to choose their own caregiver such as a family member, friend, or hire out a person and the caregivers are paid for their service to the veteran.
- The program has grown tremendously to include more VA Centers, including Minnesota and North Chicago VA Centers. We are currently at 211 Veterans and still growing. The program provides mostly personal care, dressing, transferring, feeding,



bathing, as well as supportive home care, such as laundry, grocery shopping, cleaning. There's also some transportation which includes transportation to and from medical appointments.

Elder Abuse Program Introduction

Donna Rosner, Elder Abuse Program Specialist

- Donna Rosner, newly hired Elder Abuse Program Specialist, introduced herself and gave some background information on a long career in Elder Abuse Advocacy and the aging network.
- She comes from northern Vilas County, up in the UP border. Prior to her position at GWAAR, she was an Adult Protective Service social worker in Vilas County for 33 years. She also spent a period of time at DHS as an APS Residential Care Specialist.
- Within her position at GWAAR, she provides back up to the Elder Abuse Hotline and provided interdisciplinary elder abuse support to the GWAAR's 70 counties and 11 tribes as well as made sure counties are spending their allocations appropriately and being compliant with what's expected of their elder abuse program and receiving those funds.

GWAAR 2025 2027 Aging Plan Goal Update

Nick Musson, Transportation & Aging Plan Specialist

- Nick gave a presentation going over the latest version of the GWAAR Aging Plan and its goals. It is a living document, and yearly updates are displayed in color coded fonts. This is the Advisory Council's opportunity to review the existing goals and see where they are at. Each goal is going to have a paragraph that describes the goals, background information, objectives, strategies and then yearly assessments. This document illustrates goal progress over time. Please do not hesitate to contact Nick if you have any questions regarding this document.

Future Meeting Topics

Nick Musson, Transportation & Aging Plan Specialist

- Nick asked if anyone had any requests for future meeting topics, and if not, should anything come to mind, to please contact him via phone or email.



Member Sharing

All

- The floor was opened up for sharing, however no comments at this time.

GWAAR AC Member Send Off - -Kathy Gauger

All

- This is Kathy's last meeting as a member of the Advisory Council and Nick thanked Kathy for her many years of participation and service to GWAAR and wished her the best. A certificate of appreciation will be mailed to Kathy.

Adjournment Time: 11:40 a.m.

Next Meeting Date: *February 20, 2026*

Future 2026 Meeting Dates:

February 20, 2026

May 15, 2026

July 17, 2026

September 18, 2026

November 13, 2026

Recorder: Rosanna Mazzara, Operations Coordinator