



COG Meeting Minutes
July 22, 2022

Members present: Commissioner Richard Mahar, Chair, Councilor Richard Rylander, Commissioner Arne Mortensen

Members present by phone/Zoom: Commissioner Dan Cothren, Commissioner Dave Sauter

Members absent:

Alternates present:

Staff present: Mike Reardon, Monty Hansen, Karen Wolfe, Christina Marneris, Alison Luzader

Advisory Council member present: Arnie Dyer, Chair

Visitors present: none

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m. by Commissioner Mahar.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited

1. Agenda Review: no changes

2. Review of Minutes: Commissioner Cothren moved to approve the June 3, 2022 minutes. Commissioner Sauter seconded the motion. Motion carried. Councilor Rylander abstained.

3. Anniversary recognition: Mike announced three five-year anniversaries: Emily Inahara, Kim Michaels, and Alison Luzader. Alison thanked the COG for being able to attend. July 17th was her anniversary. She started with AAADSW as a Medicaid TXIX case manager with a great supervisor and has had several roles since then. She has been in the Quality Assurance role since August of 2021, and Whitney has been a great supervisor. Alison thanked the COG for the anniversary recognition.

4. Public Comment (3-minute limit): none

5. Executive Director's report: Mike thanked everyone for attending today.

- Human Resources Manager – we have hired Shari Moore as our new HR manager. She holds an MBA from Yale University and has worked in high-tech, and for Fortune 500 companies. She moved to the Camas area about three years ago. She previously was a caregiver for her parents. She will be starting on July 25th and will train for a week with Tom before he leaves. Mike complimented Tom for the great job recruiting Shari.
- COVID-19 and AAADSW Operations – When we returned to the office in April, CDC community level was Low. At that time, staff was required to work three days in the office and allowed to work two days from home. Since May the COVID cases have been increasing, with 10 staff testing positive in a 30 day period, requiring a report to L&I of an outbreak. We notify close staff contacts of the person testing positive. After taking into consideration that CDC community levels went to medium and factoring in the vulnerable population that we work with, it was decided on July 1st to again close our offices to the

public. We also made the decision to go back to remote working, and requiring masks in the common areas of the buildings. We will review the situation when Mike returns from vacation in August.

- USAgging Conference – Mike, Community Services Manager Christina Marnieris, and Community Services Supervisor Breanne Swanson travelled to Austin, TX earlier this month for the annual conference of the National association of AAAs (USAgging, formerly known as N4a). Christina presented on the Community paramedicine program that we run in Cowlitz County. Mike connected with many other AAA executive directors and staff. Mike noted the following takeaways from the conference: continued drive toward the intersection of physical health and social determinants of health, which presents more opportunities to work with health care providers and insurers. CMS is also driving this focus and initiatives by expanding services that Medicare will pay for. They are working on establishing billing codes.
- Contracts Report – Battle Ground Health Care finally signed a contract for dental services, which will be amended soon for some additional services. Mike related that it has been difficult to keep a provider in Clark County. We served 26 clients who have no other coverage in the first month. Councilor Rylander asked if we have any interaction with the Clark College dental training program. Mike noted we have a similar model to the college with Community Health Partners in Cowlitz County. Christina noted there were initial discussions with Clark College, and we began looking for a new contractor at the beginning of the pandemic. Battle Ground health Care runs a free dental clinic and they work with Clark College. Christina will share with the program coordinator to update Clark College's offerings.

6. Advisory Council: Arnie reported on the June 15th Advisory Council meeting. He also reported on plans for the August 17th Advisory Council meeting which will be held in Longview and invited Commissioner Mortensen to attend. Karen noted we normally do two away meetings a year and rotate through our counties. At the June meeting we had a presentation from AAADSW's Senior Nutrition program coordinator about our programs, including the Senior Farmers Market voucher program. September 15th is the first Cowlitz/Wahkiakum Senior Heroes awards, with nominations due by August 15th. The Clark County Senior Heroes Awards event was held on July 13th and was a very well-attended and successful event.

7. Review of Financials. Monty Hansen reviewed the May and June 2022 expenditures of \$1,664,295.98 and \$2,450,553.65 respectively. May was very low. There was a one-time expense for the Humana IT security review, which Humana paid for. We had to close May early and some invoices came in too late to be paid in May. Commissioner Mortensen asked Monty to add line item numbering to the report in the future. June expenditures were higher, due to another Humana IT Sec payment. We also had two rent payments in June. We had a lot of outreach costs in June as well as caregiver training. We're playing catch-up because the State was late in paying for the training. Commissioner Sauter asked about a legal consultation invoice and if the Agency has an attorney on retainer. Monty explained that we don't have one on retainer but we have an attorney of record and we pay them as services are provided. Mike added that our attorney has been reviewing our general terms and conditions for our contracts, with Whitney Oswald working with them on that project. Commissioner Mortensen asked about the Health Homes payment. Monty explained that it is the Care Coordination payment from AAADSW as the Health Home Lead, to pay Care Coordination providers. It's a pass-through of the money from the State. Monty offered to

summarize some of the information, if it's deemed useful for the COG. Monty will add a summary page on the expenditures, if the dashboard is not sufficient.

Commissioner Sauter moved to approve the May, 2022 and June, 2022 expenditures of \$1,664,295.98 and \$2,450,553.65 respectively. Commissioner Mortensen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Monty reviewed the April and May 2022 financial statements. April surplus was \$154,278.19. May was \$198,632.06 surplus. YTD surplus is \$815,589.33. We had slightly less Fund Balance expenses in May. Commissioner Mortensen asked how we compare to other AAAs with respect to surplus. Mike reported that some AAAs don't run as much surplus, because some of them have more overhead because they are under the county governments (e.g. King, Pierce). There are a few other AAAs that don't run as efficiently as AAADSW. Monty added that another factor is that we have the lowest admin costs of any AAA in the state. Some AAAs overstaff themselves in Medicaid TXIX to lower case ratios than what the state requires, so they are paying more people than they really need. Mike added that Monty and Samantha Waldbauer have done a fantastic job managing the Medicaid TXIX program and deciding when to hire by managing the caseloads. He added that Monty and Christina also run the Community Services program very efficiently. Mike notes that the Southeast WA AAA also invests fund balance into nutrition and transportation as does AAADSW. Some AAAs contract out the Medicaid case management whereas we do all our work in-house. We're the best at doing it and it saves us money. Councilor Rylander added that it also allows us to keep better tabs on the performance of the services provided. Mike noted that credit goes to previous Executive Director Dave Kelly for establishing the model. Monty welcomed any of the COG members to call him with questions at any time.

Monty reviewed the May 2022 Fiscal dashboard. We are running at budget for revenues. Fund balance continues to rise, but is currently still below the COG-approved limit. Monty noted that it has been difficult getting caseloads reports out of ALTSA, and there was no May report. Community Services caseloads fluctuate more due to ADRC call volumes. Care Coordination is trending downward due to internal policy as to how many caseloads we want to manage but we may be accepting more cases as we add more staff. Expenditures by type – Monty can drill down a bit more on that next time for Commissioner Mortensen. The percentages are based on the monthly expenses. Taxes reported on the dashboard are employment taxes. Commissioner Mortensen asked on average how much we pay for employee benefits. Monty reported that we pay 100% of the employee's coverage and a portion of their family coverage. It averages out to about \$1400 per month per employee. Monty noted we also got a reduction in our benefits cost from Kaiser this year.

8. Disposal of Inventory. Monty presented SOPPADA #2022-3 Release of Inventory for Disposal. He explained that periodically we replace computer equipment (which ALTSA requires every 4 years) that still have sellable value. We also have non-working or damaged items like furniture. By Uniform Guidance Rules we are required to report this to the COG. It is difficult to donate to charities due to the rules. We use an auction service called GOVDeals, that charges a small fee to use the service. Buyers have to come pick up their purchases. Total book value of the items is \$226,766.02. Our staff cost will be about \$500. Commissioner Sauter commented that he is supportive. He asked how we make sure there is no sensitive information on the computers. Monty explained that the IT staff wipes all the hard drives completely.

Commissioner Mortensen moved to approve SOPPADA #2022-3 Release of Inventory for Disposal. Commissioner Cothren seconded the motion. Motion carried.

9. Fund Balance Usage. Mike recapped that at the June 3, 2022 COG meeting we reported our growing surplus and exceeding our fund balance limit policy, and made some proposals of how to spend some more fund balance. Monty projects we will hit our fund balance limit with the June financial numbers. On July 1st we received a unit rate increase for Medicaid TXIX services, which will add to our surplus. He and Commissioner Mahar met after the June meeting and came up with a format to formally present the options to the COG. The Fund Balance Initiative group worked on the following three proposals.

Christina reviewed SOPPADA #2022-4 To Increase Allocation to Contracted Providers, to approve allocating up to \$700,000 annually in Fund Balance reserves to increase annual allocations to current AAADSW contracted providers. This request for funds if approved would be added to the overall 2023-2025 agency budgets.

Councilor Rylander asked how we factor in inflation increases. Christina explained that we spoke with the contractors to find out where their needs are and how the loss of federal COVID money will affect them. Monty explained that we elected to keep them flat with the understanding that in the third year the money may not go as far. Councilor Rylander asked how much the contractors will lose on the federal side, so we know if our funding will offset. Christina stated they reported the money will take care of 50% of their need. They are also looking at qualifications on meals, which were loosened during the pandemic, may be tightened so numbers of clients may be reduced. Monty noted the Agency received about \$3M in federal funds during the pandemic. Commissioner Mortensen asked for more explanation of the disadvantages. Christina explained that we would have to reassess in 2025 to continue the funds past that calendar year on what the impact would be in Calendar year 2026. Commissioner Sauter said that we have to be able to adapt for the future and most of us probably didn't build an 8% inflation into our budgets. He acknowledged that for Klickitat County the money will compensate for about 50%, which will make a huge difference to their funding. Mike noted we are requesting to spend up to the amount, but we may not spend all of it. Commissioner Mortensen asked for clarification on the loss of the COVID money versus inflation and how we are addressing this. Commissioner Sauter explained that the county got additional allocations during COVID, and the county didn't have to subsidize the programs as much as they were before, when the previous money was not sufficient. They're not really adding more services, but maintaining the existing services. In this instance there is no new program or services being added. Commissioner Mahar noted that adding the COVID language in the explanation makes it confusing. Mike noted that likely the pandemic exposed the need that was always there to adequately support our contractors. Mike noted the money was never designed to meet the whole program costs – there has always been a requirement by the Older Americans Act that the contractor match the funds we contribute. Councilor Rylander asked if the contractors will have to document how much their need is. Christina explained that the next step would be to engage with the contractors to find out where their additional costs are and how much they will be. Each contract will be negotiated accordingly. Christina noted that the alternative would be that contractors would have to cut services and as the population grows there will be more unmet demand on services. Commissioner Sauter noted that the Federal money under the Older Americans Act is inadequate due to the current funding not reimbursing sufficiently.

Commissioner Sauter moved to approve SOPPADA #2022-4 To Increase Allocation to Contracted Providers, to approve allocating up to \$700,000 annually in Fund Balance reserves to increase annual allocations to current AAADSW contracted providers. This request for funds if approved would be added to the overall 2023-2025 agency budgets. Commissioner Cothren seconded the motion. Motion carried. Commissioner Mortensen voted nay.

Christina reviewed SOPPADA #2022-5, To Establish A Client Support Fund Program, to approve allocating \$250,000 annually in Fund Balance reserves to launch the Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities of Southwest Washington Client Support Fund Program. Monty noted that we currently have a similar program of about \$300,000 per year but some clients do not qualify for it. We know there are more people that need the services, Rylander asked how many people we might be able to reach. Christina noted this would be to fill in the gaps for clients on existing programs. She explained they might be on a current program that doesn't support a particular need, i.e. a home modification, pest extermination, wheelchair lifts, hospital beds, rental assistance, etc. This would be a one-time funding for a unique need to allow the client to stay safely in their home. Mike also noted the need might be for an air conditioner, wheelchair ramps, rental deposit when transitioning out of the hospital, fans, or utilities. Commissioner Sauter asked if the existing program has exhausted all existing funding (i.e the HOME program) or is it difficult finding clients with a need. Christina noted this it is intended to be a program of last resort. The team is still finalizing policies and procedures, but a client would likely be eligible for up to \$3,500 in one-time assistance. This program would be modelled on our 15-year successful Kinship Caregiver support where we look for other resources to address client needs. We feel we can administer this new program likewise as successfully. Monty noted the Auditors always closely scrutinize the Kinship program and are very complimentary of how well the program is run. Councilor Rylander asked if this would be a new fund. Yes it would be similar to the Kinship program but for other clients. Once the Policies and Procedures are developed it will be delineated as to what qualifies as an approved purchase.

Councilor Rylander moved to approve SOPPADA #2022-5 To Establish A Client Support Fund Program to approve allocating \$250,000 annually in Fund Balance reserves to launch the Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities of Southwest Washington Client Support Fund Program. This request for funds if approved would be added to the overall 2023-2025 agency budgets. Commissioner Sauter seconded the motion. Motion carried. Commissioner Mortensen voted nay.

Christina introduced SOPPADA #2022-6 To Address Caregiver Shortage Support, to approve allocating up to \$50,000 in Fund Balance Reserves to support local home care agency efforts to recruit and retain caregiving staff. Mike noted the money cannot be used to increase wages or offer hiring or retention bonuses. Caregivers are leaving the workforce due to low wages and increasing demands. Christina noted that the longest wait times for caregivers, up to 18 weeks, are in our rural areas. Councilor Rylander asked if we do any outreach or advertising for caregivers and suggested that possibly it would be better to do a campaign on a single point scale rather than allocating it out to individual caregiving providers. Monty noted that there might be some innovative plans to come out of this. Christina noted there might be other resources on how to recruit better that could be shared among the home care agencies. Commissioner Sauter noted he supports the intent and acknowledges there is a crisis. He agreed with Councilor Rylander that we may dilute the impact by giving the money out to individual agencies. He suggested it might be better to use the money to

incubate new methods and new ideas rather than just paying to run an ad for a job. Councilor Rylander suggested possibly using a person (either internal or external) to research best practices for recruiting. He's concerned about what we are actually going to get out of these dollars. He would prefer we come back to the COG board with more concrete solutions. Commissioner Sauter also would like more time for development of the plan. Consensus among the four remaining COG members present was to table the motion until the September 23rd COG meeting.

Mike noted that at the September COG meeting we will review the Fund Balance Policy and consider changes that give us more flexibility and possibly increasing the FB limit again for 2022. Monty added that we do a lot of due diligence when we establish these spending programs until we disburse any funds.

10. Adjourn. There being no further business, Councilor Rylander moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Sauter seconded. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:26 p.m.