



Clark County Commission on Aging  
Webex Remote Meeting  
Vancouver, Washington

## MEETING NOTES

Wednesday, May 18, 2022  
4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

**Members Present:** Chuck Green (Chair), Nancy Dong, Cass Freedland, Amy Gross, Larry Smith, Tanya Stewart and Pamela Wheeler

**Absent:** Franklin Johnson (Vice Chair), Meghan McCarthy

Note: **highlighted text** indicates ideas to consider for the commission's annual major findings and recommendations.

### 1. Welcome and call to order

Chair Chuck Green opened the meeting and completed a roll call of the Commission members.

#### Approval of agenda

Chuck requested to amend the agenda to add appointing an acting vice chair during the fireside chat.

#### Approval of April 20, 2022 work session and meeting notes

The notes were unanimously approved.

#### Appointment of Acting Vice-Chair

Chuck requested that the Commission appoint Larry Smith as acting vice chair. The motion was approved unanimously.

### 2. Program Highlight: Clark-Cowlitz Fire and Rescue CARES and Fall Prevention programs

- Acting Vice-Chair Larry Smith introduced Sam Lewis, a Social Worker with Clark Cowlitz Fire Rescue. Sam's presentation can be viewed under the May 18 meeting section of this page: <https://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/commission-aging-meetings>.
- Following the presentation, Amy Gross asked if the CARES staff tries to look at the medications a client may have to help with any issues? Sam responded that they both ask about and look at medications depending on the client's comfort level. They give out medication sheets to assist with taking medications and to assist emergency medical staff if they are called. They do their best to review medications and work to answer any questions.
- Amy then asked if the CARES staff suspect that someone is having difficulty taking medications, is there somewhere to refer them for assistance? Sam commented that this is a voluntary program. If someone gives consent, the CARES staff can discuss medication information with their physician.



For other formats, contact the Clark County ADA Office  
Voice 360.397.2322 Relay 711 or 800.833.6388  
Fax 360.397.6165  
Email ADA@clark.wa.gov



- **Public Comment**
  - Lynn Crawford, from the Hope Dementia Support Group asked if the CARES staff has literature they can share with clients? Sam gave out his contact information and can be reached at [sam.lewis@clarkfr.org](mailto:sam.lewis@clarkfr.org) or 360-887-6237.

### 3. Moderated Discussion/ “Fireside Chat”: Innovation Through Connection: Community Activists

Chuck Green introduced the discussion and the guests, including:

- Lynn Crawford, HOPE Dementia Support
- Arnold Dyer, Area Agency on Aging & Disability of SW Washington (AAADSW) Advisory Council
- Mike Reardon, Area Agency on Aging & Disability of SW Washington (AAADSW)

#### Discussion highlights

- *How do you connect most effectively with community members and what information is most easily communicated?*
  - Lynn described the methods used by Hope Dementia and Dementia Friends. Because of COVID, Hope Dementia went to a virtual platform for all of their weekly support groups. They are hybrid and in-person for some groups now. They update their website frequently and they post informational and inspirational messages to Instagram and Facebook nearly daily. They host monthly educational topics for the care-partners of those with dementia.
  - Dementia Friends has awareness sessions, mostly via Zoom. There is a wealth of information that is available that care partners do not have the time to search for and they provide that in weekly meetings and educational meetings.
  - Arnie described the process for starting Men’s Shed. They also attracted several members through meetup.org and social media. Their organization focuses on in person meetings, so COVID was difficult for their group. They used Zoom, but it was not favored by some of their members.
  - Mike outlined that for AAADSW, they used to attend community, health and senior fairs but it was not as successful as their current model.
  - AAADSW updated their communication model in the last 10-15 years building on partnerships with healthcare companies and organizations doing work similar to AAADSW. They asked the question, “Where are there opportunities that we can work together?” And, “Is there a need that you have that our organization can meet?” This built a network of care over several years in Clark County.
  - Building this network of care has been so successful that they now have aging disability resource network (ADRN) meetings quarterly in the county that include healthcare, private and for profit organizations that serve seniors. There are about 40 people from 35 different organizations that share what is going on in their organizations, so there is a really nice cross-training and cross-pollination that goes on.
  - AAADSW also connects most effectively through word of mouth, including board members sharing the message with their contacts. They also hired a communications manager to purposely help with their brand awareness of who they are and what they do. They have raised their profile on Instagram and Facebook this way. Their contact information is the most important piece of information. An example of this is Cass Freedland sharing AAADSW contact information during her discussion during a presentation to Fairway Village. AAADSW can be contacted at [helpingelders.org](http://helpingelders.org) or 360-694-8144.

- *What challenges do you continue to face around advocating for, connecting and communicating with community members?*
  - One of biggest challenges HOPE Dementia experiences is that people want to have support groups, but they can only form these groups if they volunteer to act as facilitators.
  - Another challenge for HOPE Dementia is that many physicians don't get training in caring for someone with dementia and members don't get the support they need.
  - Lynn gave examples of patients that were told they have dementia and that they should Google the impacts or that they were given medication and asked to come back in six months. This gives you an idea of the desperation people feel when getting a life changing diagnosis and not having the tools to deal with it.
  - HOPE Dementia provides informational packets to doctors and patients. There is never a week that goes by that Lynn doesn't mention AAADSW, hospice and palliative care programs to her members.
  - Lynn shared the most difficult thing to communicate is that your loved one has a progressive disease, and these are the challenges you are going to have to deal with. People don't want to hear that.
  - For Men Sheds, Arnie shared their biggest challenge is getting through COVID and being able to meet with members and groups again in person.
  - Another challenge is the rapid growth in north and east county. There are fewer connecting spots with in these areas, so they keep trying to find ways around that to connect with newcomers.
  - Having a communications director has been successful for AAADSW. If people make the call to AAADSW, they will be surprised with how friendly, accommodating and helpful they are. Former Mayor Royce Pollard contacted AAADSW and was very impressed with the service he got without them knowing who he was.
  - For AAADSW, the biggest challenge is that people don't know where to turn. When someone is in the emergency room or is discharged and they need 24 hour care, they don't know where to go. Mike wants AAADSW to be a household name. The organization wants to be the first stop for people. They have a wealth of information. They doubled their staff in the last few years to take calls. They take every advantage to get the word out.
  
- *To deepen connections with and advocate for aging adults, what innovative ideas or technologies might be just around the corner?*
  - Lynn: for people who have dementia, there are many technologies that keep people safe. They have the ability to monitor the use of appliances, for people that have dementia and still live at home. GPS can be used to monitor people's locations and can be a great comfort and help to care givers. Services to help with doing general housework are also very helpful.
  - Mike: Meals on Wheels implemented a program to do check in calls with members during the pandemic that was very successful. Kraydle is a video conferencing platform that also allows people to use their TV for video calls and is easy to implement. AAADSW has been discussing a pilot with this technology.

#### **Questions/comments from COA members.**

- Larry Smith asked if someone calls AAADSW , is there follow up? Mike responded that not all calls get a follow up, it really depends on the nature of call. If AAADSW staff think that

the caller would benefit from a follow up, they will do a follow-up. Their staff also complete routine random follow up calls as well.

- Cass outlined that in the responses to the COA survey, the majority of survey respondents said they wanted in person contact even in the face of technology and hopes that we can go back to that.
- Tanya wanted to applaud the physician education that Hope Dementia provides to physicians and families to keep up the wonderful growth and focus they provide.
- Mike: AAADSW is working with health care companies to provide a caregiver support package with healthcare companies.
- Tanya: One of the biggest challenges for helping parents through the aging process is trying to manage the healthcare files for her parents and keeping her siblings updated. Do they have conversations about that issue? You cannot be an effective caregiver if documents and patient status cannot be shared among family members.
- Mike: Several years ago, AAADSW began work on a Geriatric Workforce Enhancement program and hired a primary care liaison. They have done education of physicians in the aging network on the resources that are available and it has been very successful.
- Larry Smith and Chuck Green expressed their gratitude for the work that the guests do. The guests thanked COA for the work they are doing as well.

#### **Public comments**

- Mark Maggoria commented he has family experience in dealing with dementia and it was an impactful experience. He worked in the emergency services arena for many years and trying to figure out the post-retirement healthcare system has been a real challenge. He applauds all of the work the guests are doing to improve the delivery system.
- Christina Marneris thanked the commission for hosting a fireside chat focused on community activism. There is a shared interest on helping Clark County becoming more dementia friendly. One way to do that is advocating for a standardization of dementia screening as a part of annual wellness checks. She also thanked all of the speakers for the wonderful work they do.
- Julie Erickson cares for elders and asked about the primary care liaison that is part of the Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program. More information about this program is available by emailing [mike.reardon@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:mike.reardon@dshs.wa.gov).

#### **4. General Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

#### **5. Recognition of Pam Wheeler and Nancy Dong**

- The members provided their thanks for the work both Pam and Nancy did while they served on COA.

#### **8. Announcements**

- The commission received the official notice that Amy Gross was appointed to the Public Health Advisory Council. She will be a member until 2025.
- Chuck reminded members that if they have retreat topic ideas, please send them to staff.

#### **9. Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 5:54 p.m.

***The Clark County Commission on Aging provides leadership and creates community engagement in addressing the needs and opportunities of aging.***