

**MORRIS COUNTY  
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING, DISABILITIES &  
VETERANS  
Morris Township  
hybrid  
November 5, 2021**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Christina Brino  
Debra Eckert-Casha  
Tom Mazzaccaro  
Anthony Romano

**STAFF PRESENT**

Shawna Bailey  
Pat Petrillo  
Maria Pilone-Metz  
Maria Rosario  
Jessica Tomalo

**GUESTS**

Victoria Bartolomeo Rutgers student  
Karen Carew DAWNcil

The meeting was called to order at 1:37 pm by *Tom Mazzaccaro*, the 2021 Chairman of the Council, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The September 8, 2021 minutes were accepted and approved.

**Motion: D.C./C.B.**

*Tom* asked *Maria Rosario* to do a roll call for the members.

The *Staff* members introduced themselves.

***Chairperson's Report-Tom Mazzaccaro***

The nominating committee met via conference call on *October 6, 2021*. The following members was nominated for *Chairperson* and *Co-Chairperson* for 2022.

*Chairperson: Thomas Mazzaccaro*

*Co-Chairperson: Rebecca Abenante*

**Motion: C.B./A.R.**

*Tom thanked the members for his nomination, and added he hopes to continue to do a good job, with the knowledge he has achieved serving on this Council. He would also like the Council membership to have better attendance in 2022, and make sure we do have contributing members. Because without contributing members we don't really have a viable organization. Debra Eckert-Casha and I speak of this Advisory Council all the time throughout the month, while in the community.*

## **Staff Reports**

### **Assistant Director of Aging, Disabilities, and Community Programming**

**Shawna Bailey**

#### **AGING**

*Shawna* thanked *Tom* and *Rebecca* for accepting the nominations for next year. She also added that she agrees the more active and contributing the members of this Council are in the Community, the more beneficial all around. You help guide us what is needed out in the Community.

We are currently in talks with *Atlantic Health* on the *COVID 19* booster shots for the homebound that the *County* program administered the initial vaccines to determine how to move forward. We also will reach out to individuals in coming weeks that participated in that program. Any other homebound clients that are requesting first round vaccines are referred to the *Visiting Nurse of Northern New Jersey*

#### **NUTRITION**

Currently the following Nutrition Congregate four sites are open:

Morristown, Morris Mews, Montville, and Roxbury, with at least 30 participants at each site, practicing social distancing and safety measures.

Also opening this month will be Mount Olive and Butler. The first of the year we hope to have all the sites open.

*Tom*: What is the attendance percentage at the sites today pre-COVID?

*Shawna*: I know its lower, I don't have exact percentages, but *Rhea* would be better to answer that question and she is out today. Because we are practicing safety and social distancing, we are not at 100% capacity.

#### **MAPS**

The **TNC** (Transportation Network Company) *generic name for Uber/Lyft. Trans Options is a pilot program through the end of 2022, contracted with MAPS starting on November 22, 2021. They are contracted with Lyft and Uber to book the rides. This program has a funding of \$40,000 per year. (\$20,000 from NJ Transit and matched by Morris County \$20,000.*

*We are going to budget a cap of \$2,500 per month for this service and replenish monthly.*

*Eligibility requirements:*

- *Riders must be registered MAPS riders*
- *They must be ambulatory*
- *They can't be rural residents*
- *They must possess a cellphone to receive text messages.*
- *Rides are on demand or can be booked a week in advance*

*We hope this will fill some of the gaps in transportation in Morris County.*

*Christine added:*

*We are currently working on the SOP (standard operation procedure) between now and November 22.*

*We plan to multi- phase this operation to start because we want to make sure we do this properly:*

*1<sup>st</sup> Phase*

*Trans-Options operation will be offered between 6:30am-10:00am and 3:00pm-5pm to start this program, (because of MAP'S subscription trips morning/afternoon, their vehicles are not available), so MAPS office staff can assist if issues should happen. We intend to start small in November and December to work out any issues should they arise. We also expect the first quarter to be slow, but we will expand and promote the program after that*

*2<sup>nd</sup> Phase*

*Book after hours and weekends*

- *Service after MAPS hours service:  
MAPS hours of operation are 6:30am-5pm Monday thru Friday.*
- *Booking is on demand and also available up to one week in advance*

*3<sup>rd</sup> Phase*

- *This program will expand MAPS service.*

*Christina asked how this works? If they can't get the ride from MAPS, do the riders contact Trans Options themselves.*

*Shawna: Yes, if they meet the criteria and MAPS cannot provide the trip, MAPS sends referral directly to Trans Options, who will then book the trip with Lyft/Uber and the client will receive a phone text message to confirm ride and MAPS will receive an e-mail verification.*

*Christina asked about payment for this service.*

*Christine said it's the same as MAPS, its paid for. Because we are County government, we have purchasing laws and contracting requirements, that is why we don't contract directly with Uber/Lyft.*

*Debra asked if individuals in assisted livings are eligible.*

*Christine no they are technically considered institutionalized residents and currently only individuals living in the Community, because that is who MAPS assist. I am aware of assisted livings that do not provide transportation, the issue is how we determine funding.*

*Debra added she would like to see this available to them in the future.*

*Christine added the first priorities for this program will be after hours and rural service. Not to say that this is a gap in service that I am aware of.*

*Christine suggested that Debra attend MAPS CAC meetings in 2022. We will be discussing this program in more detail.*

*Tom asked where this initiative start from?*

*Christine replied that being she oversees MAPS Paratransit; she knew three years ago there was a grant available for a pilot program for this service and Essex and Sussex Counties received the grants. So, I waited to see how they did, and they did very well.*

*In May 2020 the availability of funding was available again during COVID and we applied and received the grant. The Morris County Commissioners were on board with this idea and matched the NJ Transit grant with \$20,000.*

## **Veterans**

The Firepit event was successful, and all participants will receive a survey to see what feedback we receive.

Jessica will have more information with her Veterans report.

## **Staff Reports**

### ***ADRC-Maria Rosario***

Information & Assistance and case management phone calls for September and October totaled 520 calls. Monthly calls listed below:

September : 251

October : 269

*Christina* asked if there has been an increase in calls?

*Maria Rosario* answered yes.

*Shawwna* added she is working on creating a SAMS report for a more in-depth information for 2022 to provide more in-depth information on the information and referral calls.

### ***Nutrition -Shawwna Bailey***

The Nutrition Project provided the following number of meals:

#### **September:**

Congregate Meals	391
Home Delivered Meals	30,939
Weekend	1,598
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,928</b>

#### **October:**

Congregate Meals	256
Home Delivered Meals	31,035
Weekend	1930
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,221</b>

## HIGHLIGHTS

- **9/1/21-** Distributed Labor Day meal notice with Riddle Activity.
- **9/7/21-** Reopened Montville congregate
- **9/30/21-** Distributed Columbus Day meal notice with anagram quiz activity
- **10/1/2021-** Began distribution of emergency frozen meals
- **10/5/2021-** Distributed placemats for Falls Prevention month and Nutrition Education
- **10/19/21-** Re-opened Long Hill congregate only on Tuesdays at this time
- **10/22/21-** Re-opened Roxbury congregate on Wednesdays and Fridays
- **10/25/21-** Began distribution of emergency shelf-stable meal

### Veterans -Jessica Tomalo

Morris County Office of Veterans Services		—					
Statistics by Month 10/31/2021							
2021	June	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Total Phone Calls		221	245	290	365		
Postal Mail Sent		17	15	25	21		
E-mails		73	138	140	158		
Faxes		2	2	10	5		
Office Visits		NC	NC	8	15		
VA Claims/intent to Files	NA	NA	NA	NA	2		
Referrals		69	43	122	82		
Transports		18	15	77	74		
Paperwork Drop-Off		4	7	3	10		
Field/Home Visit	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC		
Off-Site Meetings/Events	NA	0	3	3	1		
<b>Total Unduplicated Veterans Served</b>				85	182		
<b>NC= No Contact permitted</b>							
<b>NA= VSOs not accredited</b>							
<u>Highlights:</u>							
10/4/21:	Attended Assemblywoman Aura Dunn's ID Event In Mendham						
10/7/21:	Mental Health First Aid Training for Veterans, live streamed course						
10/12/21:	Vet Center update with Willy Tolba, Veteran Liason for Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill						
10/27/21:	Fail-in Firepl Talk #1						

Statistics Respectfully Submitted to ACADV by Jessica Tomala, Morris County VSO

Jessica added the Veteran Service Office is not open, but exceptions are made for special needs.

On October 27,2021, the Veteran office hosted the first Fall in! Fire Pit.

The speakers were veterans who served in Vietnam and Afghanistan. This event was for veterans only, and not open to the public.

It was a discussion for veterans about their time in service, navigating life after service.

Christina asked how many veterans attended the 1<sup>st</sup> Fall in!Fire Pit?

Jessica: 27 RSVP'd, 4 no shows, 2 dropped in.

The Firepit is an informal environment that veterans attend for social and recreational needs at the end of the day, off the record, and a debriefing of their day's events where they were deployed.

*Tom* added he attended, and it was presented well.

*Shawwna* added there will be a survey sent to all that attended

He also asked *Shawwna* to speak to *Christine* about the *Advisory Council* attending the next *Fire Pit*.

*Shawwna*: I will take that under advisement, we wanted it geared towards veterans. We are hoping to have this held quarterly.

*Jessica* added although it was planned as an outside event, the weather was rainy and windy and held inside, and we didn't expect it to be successful.

*Debra* asked if statistics were available on where the veterans served?

*Jessica* yes more than half in attendance were Viet Nam vets. And the Afghan veterans look towards the Viet Nam veterans as mentors.

*Debra* asked how the information about the Fire Pit was made available?

*Jessica*: *Maria Salazar* made flyers that were distributed throughout the community, *Morris County* website, and Facebook pages. We also reached out to colleges.

*Maria Pilone-Metz* asked could we reach out to towns/township, to see if there is a contact active with veterans to get the word out?

*Debra* added liquor stores, meal sites are good places to put flyers. And word of mouth from attendee's telling others of their experience at the 1<sup>st</sup> Fire Pit.

*Tom* added that typically most VFWs are the veterans from Viet Nam and wars previously.

*Afghanistan* and *Iraq* war veterans have started to join the Legions and VFW's

*Shawwna* added previously the *Commander Summit* meetings that were held quarterly before COVID, were to provide greater communication between the County and the individual VFW's and American Legions, and to bring that information back to their members. As that progressed, we met that need.

And when *Jessica* and *Maria* came on board, they mentioned an idea of a socialization recreational program, where veterans can come in and speak freely, an open forum, not a support group.

*A Vet Center is a community-based counseling center that provide a wide range of Social and psychological services including professional readjustment counseling to eligible Veterans, active-duty service members, including National Guard and Reserve members and their families.*

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Community Relations- Shawna Bailey**

The Committee met on October 7, 2021, and the following topics were discussed:

Medicare open enrollment – also known as ***the annual election period or annual coordinated election period*** – refers to the annual period (October 15 through December 7) during which Medicare plan enrollees can reevaluate their coverage. Generally, we advise people to file for Medicare benefits ***3 months before age 65***. Remember, Medicare benefits can begin no earlier than age 65.

**NORWESCAP** has **SHIP** (State Health Assistance Programs)  
Counselors available at 973-784-4900.

**Morris County Senior ID** cards available for a fee of \$5 This service is available to Senior citizens 55 years of age and older, that no longer possess a driver's license and need a photo id for identification purposes. This service is by appointment only, and at the Morris County Administration building, County Clerk's Office.

A question raised at the coordinator's meeting: Can this service be made available mobile for those that can't make it to the Morristown location. A call was made, and they said not at this time.

### **Legislative Review- Debra Eckert-Casha**

The Committee met on *Thursday October 7, 2021*, and reviewed the following bills and recommend the following to the Advisory Council to endorse:

**Senate No. S394** – Provides gross income tax credit for certain expenses paid or incurred for care and support of qualifying senior family member; designated as Caregiver's Assistance Act.

*The Council agreed to reserve comment at this time.*

***Motion: C.B./D.C.***

**Senate No. S1596** – Requires Sexual Assault Response Team to include person trained in interacting with persons with developmental disabilities; designated as "Harrison's Law".

*It seems this bill was originally introduced by Senator Bob Andrzejczak of NJ's 1st district back in 2019. It received the designation of "Harrison's Law" by Senator Andrzejczak likely in honor of a constituent personally affected by the issues addressed in this legislation. Unfortunately, as Senator Andrzejczak retired before this bill completed its passage through the legislature, it was then picked up by Senator Beach and Senator Ruiz who maintained the chosen designation.*

***Motion:C.B./D.C.***

**Congressional H.R. 4853-** This Act is to establish nonvisual accessibility standards for certain devices with digital interfaces, and for other purposes.

**Motion: C.B./D.C.**

*Christina* will keep us posted on the status of this bill.

**Senate No. 3296** – Establishing veterans' affordable housing preference; authorizing bonus fair share credit for veterans' affordable housing.

***This bill is a duplicate from May 6, 2021, Coordinators meeting and presented to Advisory Council on June 4, 2021. The letter to Senators went out on June 15, 2021.***

### **Program Planning Review-Christina Brino**

The subcommittee met (*via Teams*) on *October 7, 2021* and discussed what tool the agency should use in determining the priorities for 2022. A survey was recommended, committee will decide at the next meeting.

### **Public Comment-**

*Victoria Bartolomeo* added that she is a *MSW* student at *Rutgers*. Her field placement is with Homeless Solutions. They have vacancies and are accepting referrals. The information she received from this meeting today will have great content for her policy class assignment by attending this meeting.

*Kristen Carew from DAWNcil* said the *Veteran information and transportation provided today will be very helpful for her clients.*

*Anthony* questioned the press release of *Mikie Sherrill*: Additionally, this legislation has been endorsed by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, (VFW), the American Legion, and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

*Jessica* said all three organizations on a national level publicly endorsed this legislation.

**Adjournment:3:05pm**

**Motion: C.B./D.C.**

**Next meeting February 3, 2022**

**Motion to go into closed session: C.B./D.C.**

***The Council went into closed session after the public signed off.***