

**MORRIS COUNTY  
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING, DISABILITIES &  
VETERANS  
Morris Township  
hybrid  
September 8, 2021**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Christina Brino  
Emerson Crooks  
Debra Eckert-Casha  
Kyra Faison-Gardner  
Tom Mazzaccaro  
Anthony Romano

**STAFF PRESENT**

Shawanna Bailey  
Kasey Errico  
Christine Hellyer  
Pat Petrillo  
Maria Rosario  
Rhea Young

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 June 4,2021 minutes were accepted and approved with the request to correct the date.

**Motion: D.C./K.FG.**

The Staff and Council members introduced themselves.

Christine announced this is the first time we are trying the hybrid for the meeting.

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

I would like to begin with a moment of silence honoring those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001. And the thirteen serviceman/women that lost their lives at the end of the twenty-year war.

*Advisory Council* members are needed for the Nominating Committee to nominate a slate of officers for the 2022 Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

Anyone interested in serving on the Nominating Committee can contact *Maria Rosario*.

And if you are on that Committee, you cannot be nominated.

He also requested everyone to attend the local 9-11 events to honor those who lost their lives on that day, twenty years ago.

Tom also thanked the Staff for the two full days of Funding Review session of two million dollars.

### **Staff Reports**

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

**Christine Hellyer**

#### **AGING**

*Through Ida*, our services still continued. Our Care managers reached out to their clients to make sure the seniors and disabled they were okay. Morris County was lucky. Several Counties weren't: Bergen, Gloucester, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Passaic and Somerset, FEMA can be reached at [1-800-621-3362](tel:1-800-621-3362), or [DisasterAssistance.gov](http://DisasterAssistance.gov).

*July 31, 2021*, was the last day for the appointments for the COVID 19 J&J vaccines for homebound seniors and disabled partnered by Morris County and Atlantic Health. And in August all vaccines were administered. The total for this program was over 3,000.

*Visiting Nurse of NNJ* is still taking referrals for the first and second Moderna vaccines. I don't have an update on boosters.

CDC (Center for Disease Control) has not indicated if J&J vaccine needs booster shots. Tom added when this is received, we will have to get that out to the Community.

*Emerson asked if we provide transportation for shots?*

*Christine: MAPS* has throughout this time has prioritized vaccine appointments. We will do everything to make sure the senior/disabled residents get to the sites. Along with *Atlantic Private Care* and the *Morris County Office of Hispanic Affairs*.

*Also, the State of New Jersey offers free UBER/LYFT by calling 211.*

#### **Nutrition**

The pilot program, pre-bagged produce bags for those who received Farmer Market vouchers but are unable to get to the farms in *July* with *Ort Farms* was a success, with Jessica Jimenez and Rhea Young making all the arrangements. We received many thank you letters, and we are hopeful to move forward with this for next year.

#### **MAPS**

Has been running at 100% capacity since the middle of July.

*The TNC (Transportation Network Companies) grant for on **demand** shared ridership **contract** was awarded to Trans Options. We will work with a provider (Trans Options) who will then work with a transportation network company (Uber/Lyft). MAPS rider's accessibility to rideshare options.*

*I am hopeful before the end of 2021 we will provide the first trips.*

*This is a pilot program with limited funding of \$40,000, \$20,000 pilot contract from NJ Transit and Morris County's match of \$20,000.*

Kasey Errico, reported she had just received a letter from the NJ State Department of Human Services, Division on Aging, containing the results of the Programmatic and Fiscal assessment for our programs in 2020 from the State on The Aging, Disabilities and Community Programming Department.

*There were no adverse findings for 2020.*

The *State* commended the *Morris County* staff on our great strengths and highlighted the following:

- ✓ We were commended our dedication and commitment to seniors and caregivers especially through these challenging times, the *Covid 19 Pandemic* and the unknowns that were with it.
- ✓ We didn't interrupt service deliveries, especially the Nutrition home delivered meals program and the additional Saturday meal that was supplied to the homebound residents.
- ✓ The Emergency Preparedness Program Events was also highly praised:
  - Shelf stable meals
  - First aid kits
  - Emergency Preparedness information for seniors
- ✓ The Technology utilization provided by the County for the staff to provide a high level of service to the Community to work remotely/office seamlessly.
- ✓ They appreciate the commitment and dedication of all the Morris County workers of the Aging, Disabilities and Community Programming Department.

*Kasey* also extended her appreciation and gratitude for all the hard work they do everyday to make sure they serve the Morris County residents on a daily basis. *Christine* added that the support of the *Commissioners* and the *Administration of Morris County* made it possible, especially with the technology. We appreciate the accolades.

## **Staff Reports**

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

Information & Assistance and case management phone calls for June, July and August, totaled 1,052 calls. Monthly calls listed below:

- June: 404
- July: 315
- August: 333

Debra asked if we had the breakdown of the calls.

Christine replied we would include that in our 2021 annual reports.

## **Nutrition -Rhea Young**

The Nutrition Project provided the following number of meals:

### **JUNE:**

Congregate Meals	-----
Home Delivered Meals	32,096
Weekend Meals	1,658
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,754</b>

### **JULY:**

Congregate Meals	-----
Home Delivered Meals	31,427
Weekend Meals	2,068
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,495</b>

### **AUGUST:**

Congregate Meals	697
Home Delivered Meals	31,022
Weekend Meals	1,624
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,343</b>

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

- **6/30/21**- Distributed Fourth of July notice with holiday themed word scramble
- **7/7/21**- Began distribution on produce bag pilot with ORT FARMS for Senior Farmers' Market. We delivered 134 bags in total to homebound seniors at local housing units
- **7/16/21**: Celebrated National Ice Cream at Morris Mews. Seniors enjoyed scoops of vanilla ice cream with their choice of assorted toppings.
- **7/22/21**- Distributed Nutrition Education: - Exercise for Older Adults & Preventing Dehydration
- **8/16/21**- Soft reopen with two nutrition locations; Morristown and Morris Mews. At Morris Mews, seniors took turns hitting a pinata design in the shape of the COVID-19 virus. With the final swing, seniors enjoyed grabbing items such as hand sanitizers, socks, tissues, toothpaste, lotions, gloves Hershey's' kisses
- **8/31/21**- Distributed Labor Day meal notice with Riddle activity

**Veterans -Jessica Tomalo**

<b>2021</b>	<b>JULY</b>	<b>AUGUST</b>	<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	<b>OCTOBER</b>	<b>NOVEMBER</b>	<b>DECEMBER</b>
Total Phone Calls	221	245				
Postal Mail Sent	17	15				
E-mails	73	138				
Faxes	2	2				
Referrals	69	43				
Transports	18	15				
Paperwork Drop-Off	4	7				
Field/Home Visit	NC	NC				
Office Visits	NC	NC				
VA Claims/Intent to Files	NA	NA				
Off-Site Meetings/Events	0	3				

NC = no contact

NA = VSOs not accredited

**VSO Start Dates**

Jessica Tomalo: 6/21/21

Maria Salazar: 7/19/21

We attended two outreach events:

- Vet Fest at Vasa Park in Budd Lake.
- Roundtable discussion at Mike Sherril's office.

*We attended the accreditation course National Association of Veterans Serving Organizations (NAVSO) and are awaiting our PIV (personal identification verification) cards.*

*Emerson asked if the Veterans VSO's will accept veteran cases from Mr. Robinson from Dover, when they are certified. There are claims that he has are backlogged.*

*In the beginning we were referring them to him, but now we were told we can no longer send them to him.*

*And the veterans should be made aware if they already have a claim initiated by Mr. Robinson, it will add additional time processing their claim, if transferred to us.*

*Shawna: And if they want to transfer their claim to us, we must know if he is POA (Power of Attorney), completed the intent to file. He would have to switch that to our office with the proper paperwork and that is a process with Veterans Administration.*

*Maria we are currently building up veterans' files so when we receive our PIV, we will have everything needed to submit a complete claim.*

- ❖ *Emerson updated us on the Vet Center. He said he had a positive meeting with Mikie Sherrill and Corey Booker. There is a bill being written by their offices. I asked them to let me know when it has a number so we can support this bill.*

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **COMMUNITY RELATIONS- Christine Hellyer**

We are pleased to announce we have two new VSO's (veteran service officers) *Jessica Tomalo*, who joined our staff on June 21, 2021, and *Maria Salazar* on July 19, 2021.

Both VSO's will be accredited during the training at the end of August, at which time the office will be able to resume processing claim submissions for veterans.

Morris County Homebound Vaccination Initiative Program that we partnered with Atlantic Health ended on July 31, 2021.

VNA of Northern NJ is taking referrals. Individuals should be referred to them at VNA COVID 19 hotline: 973-451-4121.

*Morris County* ranked 20 among the top 500 "healthiest communities", according to an analysis of health and wellness in 3,000 communities across the US.

The **Eviction Moratorium** is set to be lifted in the coming months. We need your assistance in helping to get the message out within your municipality to tenants and landlords that there is substantial Emergency Rental Assistance funding available to assist those who have been unable to pay their rent obligations due to impacts from COVID-19. Utilizing Emergency Rental Assistance funds to bridge the gap of unpaid rent serves both tenants, landlords and their communities so that lives are not disrupted through a backlogged court system, families and children are

not displaced and potentially made homeless, and landlords can maintain their livelihoods as our communities strive to recover.

If you have any questions about this Emergency Rental Assistance funding, please contact our Human Services Department at 973-285-6868.

**LEGISLATIVE REVIEW-Debar Casha**

The Committee met on Thursday July 8, 2021, and reviewed the following bills and recommend the following to be endorsed by the Advisory Council:

**Senate No. S220** – Makes total property tax exemption for 100% disabled veterans retroactive to effective date of determination of total disability; requires State to reimburse municipalities for reimbursement of property taxes paid to veterans.

**Motion: T.M./D.C.**

**Senate No. S1035** – Provides that persons between the years of age with disabilities are eligible to receive direct support professional service from DHS.

This Bill will ensure that the Department of Human Services programs currently available to persons 21 years of age and above are also available to persons between high school and 21 years of age. It closes the gap. It assures that DHS services are available after graduation from High School and up to 21 years of age to eligible persons.

**Motion: T.M./D.C.**

**Senate No. 407**– Establishes “Naturally Occurring Retirement Community” (NORAC) pilot program; appropriates \$250,000. (**This is for Mercer County only**).

*This bill as currently written was not supported by the Advisory Council members attending this meeting.*

*On July 29,2021 the attached letter was sent on behalf of the Advisory Council.*

**Planning Program Review- Christine Brino**

*The Planning/Program Review Committee members and members from the Advisory Board meet on August 10, 2021 to discuss and review the new applications for 2022 Area Plan Contract Funding, and meet on August 20, 2021 to discuss and review the new applications for 2022 Grant-In-Aid Funding.*

***Also, for discussion and approval today: (attached spreadsheet) at a closed session.***

**United Way:** Modification Request **APC 20-14-070**

Decrease: Information & Assistance units of service from 83 to 61.

Decrease: Outreach units of service from 188 to 52

Increase: Public Awareness units of service from 121 to 149

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

Advisory Council accepted modification

**Employment Horizons:** Modification Request **GIA 2174**

The Agency is requesting a fee adjustment from \$30 to \$35 retroactive January 1, 2021. (from 2,400 days to 2,057 days)

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

Advisory Council accepted modification

**Cornerstone:** Modification Request **GIA 2141**

Decrease Outreach units of service from 6,758 hrs to 6,408 hrs and increase Adult Day Care units of service from 9,016 hrs to 9,366 hrs.

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

The Advisory Council accepted modification.

*Debra* does the retroactive effect their budget? Not that it's a significant amount \$5.00. Are they going to get reimbursed back to January 2021?

Christine No, they are not going anything they bill forward; you can't back bill.

And this is due to additional COVID 19 expenses.

**Adjourned: 2:45**

***The meeting will now go into Closed Session for review of the 2022 Funding Applications.***

***Next meeting:  
November 5, 2021***