

**MORRIS COUNTY
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING, DISABILITIES &
VETERANS
Morris Township
June 2, 2022**

Members Present

Debra Casha
Emerson Crooks
Tom Mazzaccaro
Anthony Romano
Fawn

Staff Present

Shawna Bailey
Christine Hellyer
Carmen Kenny
Patricia Petrillo
Maria Rosario
Maria Salazar
Jennifer Van Natta
Rhea Young

Guest

Joan Jensen - MCCOOPO (Morris County Council of Older Persons Organization)
Shayne Daly Long Hill Twp Community Services Outreach

The meeting was called to order at 1:07 pm by *Tom Mazzaccaro*, the 2022 Chairman of the Council, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The approval of April 7, 2022, minutes.

Motion: E.C./A.R.

Chairperson's Report-Tom Mazzaccaro

The Division on Aging Disabilities & Community Programming staff will be conducting the 2022 *virtual* monitoring visits. It is mandatory that each Advisory Council member participate in at least one *virtual* monitoring visit.

Please sign up for at least one visit.

Maria Rosario will send out the schedule to members, beginning June 15-24. The on-site monitoring schedule will be made available to the members also.

Staff Reports

Director of Aging- Christine Hellyer

The Morris County Division on Aging, Disabilities and Community Programming is holding the 2023 spending plan for the Area Plan funding, on June 8,2022,12pm, at the Roxbury Nutrition site, 72 Eyland Avenue, Succasunna, NJ.

We are offering in person and virtual.

We recommend the Council members attend to support our staff

We are mandated yearly under the Older American Act to have a Public Hearing to discuss the Agency’s funding services through the 2023 Area Plan Contract and where it should be distributed. We ask for the public’s input.

We are interested in gaps in services, what are the services they we provide, that we should continue, and what can we do better.

The 2023 Needs Assessment survey was a success. We had 325 responses, and the virtual survey monkey had 100.

Maria added the Planning Program Review today has information for the Council to review and approve.

The Grant-in Aid funding application went out on May 27, 2022 and are due back the end of June.

Emerson asked how the Public Hearing is sent out to the Public?

Christine we post in the two local newspapers, we announce it at Human Services meetings, Morris County web-site, Congregate Nutrition sites and our Providers are advised also.

Office Reports

ADRC-Maria Rosario

Information & Assistance and Case Management phone calls for April and May 2022 totaled 450 calls. Monthly calls listed below:

- April: 311
- May: 139

The Council was provided with back-up they requested for the ADRC calls received.

Nutrition-Rhea Young

The Nutrition Project provided the following number of meals:

APRIL:

Congregate Meals	1,277
Home Delivered Meals	26,236
Weekend Meals	1,972
Total	29,485

MAY

Congregate Meals	2,582
Home Delivered Meals	29,982
Weekend Meals	1,572
Total	34,136

HIGHLIGHTS

- **5/4/22**- Plastic bag ban went into effect
- **5/13/22**- In collaboration with the Macculloch Hall Historical Museum our weekend consumers received self-instructed art kits of local art. A follow up survey was sent the week after to get feedback on future interest.
- **5/16/22**- Our Mount Olive nutrition site is now operational 5 days a week
- **5/16/22**- The Nutrition Program currently has 12 out of 15 sites open for congregate dining
- **5/24/21**- Distributed Nutrition Education on Pre-Diabetes
- **5/24/21**- To Celebrate Older Americans Month theme of Age my Way, our Aging department offered various activities at our congregate centers such as Chair Zumba, Decorating Birdhouses, and Paint & Sip sessions.

The Congregate attendance for the April and May was 216.

Tom asked what the attendance was before COVID? I think it was higher.

Rhea replied yes it was and they are steadily coming back.

A question in chat was "Does MAPS provide trips to nutrition sites."

Christine replied yes if there is availability. And the DAR and MCOHA also provide transportation

Veterans -Christine Hellyer

We did a soft open of the Veterans Service Office on May 9,2022. The veteran was given the option: virtual/in-person appointments.

Our VSO Department assists the veteran filing for benefits.

We also offer information and referral when necessary.

We have a new County funded program for mental health services for the veteran and their families.

We are still in the "process" of collecting data in a different way, reporting the important services provided in specific detail.

65 veterans escorted to clinic

204 Intake calls

228 Veterans served

29 Veteran interviews

27 completed claims:

- 5 disability
- 4 spousal dependents
- 6 burial benefits
- 5 healthcare
- 1 VA education
- 12 intent to file
-

We also had 6 final decisions on claims we submitted:

- ✓ 3 were approved for 100%
- ✓ 1 partial approved
- ✓ 2 denied

The backlog:

- ✓ 2 re-assigned
- ✓ 2 submitted

No appeals were filed

By the end of the year we expect to see what is our success rate and what is our denial rate.

Fawn asked if there is tracking for the denials?

Christine That is not an area that our department can assist.

When we file a VA claim for a veteran, we have to follow the VA guidelines. Its not uncommon to get a denial. We would then move forward with an appeal.

If I see a denial rate of 50%, I will see if we are doing anything wrong and do we need improvement.

We can't do anything about VA denials.

Tom asked if the 2nd veteran interview different from the initial interview?

Christine: if it's the same claim, it is not a new interview.

If **claim** is still open, it is considered a new **contact**

Emerson asked if initial interviews in person or virtual.

Christine they are given the option.

Emerson what filing assistance is given, added filing a claim is an issue for veterans.

Christine the veterans are advised what paperwork is required to file a claim before appointment.

Tom asked if the reporting could provide the veterans age/period of service?

Christine: The data base "Access" is not user friendly, but in time will probably be able to abstract that information.

Tom asked is there an update on the Veteran Centers? And is it still considering Morris View?

Christine I know the County College of Morris has interest as well.

It is now at the Legislative level to be moved through Committee, and voted on and then to New Jersey.

And if Morris County offers two areas for free, it's probably a likelihood they will be approved.

Committee Reports

Community Relations-Tom Mazzaccaro

The Committee met on May 24, 2022, and discussed the following ideas for disseminating the information discussed at their meetings were to come up with a marketing program:

- Distribute flyers for *MAPS* and *DAR* vehicles.
- Contact WMTR radio and County College of Morris. to interview Christine Hellyer.
- Reach out to municipalities to designate a contact person to distribute the information from their meetings.
- Invite Brian Murray, Morris County Director of Communications to the meeting
- Commissioner liaisons for Department of Human Services:
K. DeFillippo & T. Selen.

Christine added that Commissioner Selen will meet with Kasey Errico, because he had many inquiries on what services we provide.

Legislative Review

The May meeting was cancelled due to staffing issues.

Planning Program Review-Christine Hellyer

The subcommittee met on May 27, 2022 and briefly discussed the results of the 2022 needs assessments survey, hard copies and online.

The results are as follows:

2022 Funding Priorities

Top 10:

- 1.- Information & Assistance**
- 2.- Adult Day Care**
- 3.- Seniors Centers**
- 4.- Transportation**
- 5.- Certified Home health Aides**
- 6.- Housekeeping**
- 7.- Home Delivery Meals**
- 8.- Caregivers Services**
- 9.- Socialization & Recreation**
- 10.-Exercise Program**

Motion: E.C./F.Z

D.C. asked where is Housing on the Funding need priorities, because it is a big issue Christine we fund more than the top 10 and we take into other things into consideration when we do the Contract review.

We are looking to fund "Creative Housing Assistance. To connect a care manager to help individuals call housing, apply for housing, fill out paperwork.

We encourage house sharing. The individual can help financially and assist in chores.

Emerson asked about minor repairs for seniors' homes.

Christine we have the Fix-it program through Hope House, for minor repairs.

We also have Community Development for major repairs.

We would like to find a chore program

Tom asked what are the sources for the funding?

Grant-in-Aid: \$1,232,546 , we don't anticipate additional funding.

Area Plan Contract: \$961,097

Area Plan Contract will receive ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Additional Covid related funding and that amount is not determined as of yet. (July/August). These additional funds will be offered to current Providers based on increases of services.

We anticipate putting out RFP's (Request for Proposal) to Providers for the Chore program, Shopping, Housing counseling.

Tom what are sources of the funding?

GIA County

APC Federal (Older Americans Act) and State

Tom has the County contributed more in the past years?

Christine GIA tends to be flat but about 3 years ago they received an increase of about \$75,000.

Emerson asked if our Department has any involvement with FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) during COVID?

Christine My Department doesn't work with FEMA.

New Business

Christine Department updates

- We have three college interns for the summer, 1 for Nutrition and 2 for Aging.
- Our Nutrition Department is in the process of starting the Farmer's Market Voucher program. The individual must be 60 or older and will receive a \$30 voucher to purchase fresh fruits and produce at local farms. And this year there are additional satellite produce stands.

This is a needs-based program, for seniors, it is overseen by the WIC (Women, Infants, & Children) Program and must be financially eligible.

We partner with senior housing units, and we will be reaching out to 3 more to see if they would be interested in participating.

We do have a wait list.

Last year we partnered with Ort Farms and three senior housing units and gave out 125 bags of fruit/produce to seniors, and gave ORT farms their vouchers for those that couldn't get out to visit farms.

- We also purchased cloth bags, due to the ban to distributed at the end of the month to MAPS residents with information on the importance of vaccines/boosters
- Visiting Nurse of Northern NJ is still offering COVID vaccines/boosters to homebound residents. They are offering initial vaccines and 1st and 2nd boosters-973-539-1216.

Debra added the bag idea would be a great way to get out to the Community Services offered in Morris County.

Emerson added that *The Moving Wall* will be hosted at CCM on July 7, through July 11, 2022, and gave out flyers.

Fawn suggested an idea of an incentive that retired, unemployed veterans be considered to be involved in the public-school systems in lieu of the recent Texas school shooting. Senator Bucco is looking into it.

Tom added there are certain areas to be taken into consideration responsibility, liability, are they working on their own, employed by the school system.

And what would their function & responsibility be of a resource officer.

Tom asked for an update on the County foodbanks.

Christine *Interfaith Food Pantry* partners with *Rockaway, Roxbury* and *Butler* nutrition sites and provides home delivered meals clients once a month with a grocery bag full of non-perishable groceries that our drivers deliver.

Joan asked if the Interfaith Food Pantry impacted by the infant formula shortage?

Christine I will find out.

Joan added that the veterans, that are the less honorable discharge and need mental health services and the homebound seniors that can't get to the farms. And the key word is **CONNECT**.

Adjournment: 2:31pm

Motion: E.C./A.R.

Next Meeting: September 1, 2022

