

DRAFT MINUTES
New Hampshire State Commission on Aging
Monday, June 15, 2020 9:00 a.m.-noon
Held via Video Teleconference

Present: Rep. Polly Campion, Chair; Ken Berlin, Vice Chair; Roberta Berner, Clerk; Sen. Ruth Ward; Wendi Aultman, DHHS; Patrick Herlihy, DOT; Susan Buxton, Long-Term Care Ombudsman; Sunny Mulligan Shea, DOJ; Lynn Lippitt, NH Housing Finance Authority; Janet Weeks, DOL; Appointed by the Governor: Carol Stamatakis, Kristi St. Laurent, Mark Frank, Rev. Susan Nolan, Harry Viens, Susan Denopoulos Abrami, Susan Ruka, Daniel Marcek, and Kathy Baldrige; Rebecca Sky, Executive Director.

Absent: Rep. Jim MacKay; Richard Lavers, DES; Perry Plummer, DOS; Susan Emerson; John Kennedy and Suzanne Demers

Facilitator: Carolyn Russell, NH Department of Administrative Services

Guests: 15 members of the public (Martha McLeod, Carol Currier, Laura Davie, Joan M. Marcoux, Dr. Marianne Jackson, Anne Diefendorf, Bev Cotton, Marcia Garber, Karen Ulmer Dorsch, Carolyn Virtue, Donna Davey, Kimberly Blakemore, Nancy Dorner, Christine Dyer, Rich Crocker).

I. Welcome, Roll Call, Approval of Minutes

Chair Polly Campion called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. provided an overview of the agenda, welcomed the Commission and guests and read “A Checklist To Ensure Meetings Are Compliant With The Right-to-Know Law During The State Of Emergency.” The State of Emergency has been declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A requirement of such compliance is to take a roll call attendance. When each member answers, he or she also must state whether there is anyone else in the room during the meeting. Clerk Roberta Berner called the roll, also asking that the members of the public and presenters attending the teleconference identify themselves. The following attendees noted that a spouse might pass through the room during the meeting, since they were attending from home: Commission members Susan Buxton, Rev. Susan Nolan, Kristi St. Laurent; members of the public Karen Ulmer Dorsch and Nancy Dorner.

Minutes from the May meeting were sent out to Commission members with the agenda for review prior to the June meeting.

Mark Frank made a motion, seconded by Sen. Ruth Ward, to approve the May minutes. By roll call vote, the following members approved the motion: Rep. Campion, Ken Berlin, Roberta Berner, Sen. Ward, Wendi Aultman, Patrick Herlihy, Susan Buxton, Sunny Mulligan Shea, Lynn Lippitt, Carol Stamatakis, Kristi St. Laurent, Mark Frank, Harry Viens, Janet Weeks, Kathy Baldrige, Daniel Marcek, Rev. Susan Nolan and Susan Ruka. A vote was not audible from

Susan Denopoulos Abrami. The motion to approve the May minutes was approved.

II. Update on COVID-19 Task Force

Mark Frank leads the Commission's COVID-19 Task Force, which also includes Sue Ruka, Susan Denopoulos Abrami and Patrick Herlihy. The Task Force has met twice over the past month, and Mark had a slide presentation to detail its work to date. The Task Force has defined its scope as "to make recommendations with the goal of helping older citizens come out of the crisis stronger." The group has focused on issues that have emerged including ageism, social isolation (including the need for broadband), and concerns about the state's long-term care system. Now the Task Force would like to identify others with specific areas of relevant expertise to serve on the team and plans to identify what has been done to date in New Hampshire to respond to the pandemic and toward recovery.

Rep. Campion briefly discussed legislation still under consideration that addresses COVID-19 and its impact on older adults.

Rebecca Sky said that she envisions future Commission task forces as chaired by a member of the Commission but also including a co-chair that is an expert in the specific area of focus. The co-chair need not be a member of the Commission.

III. Introduce Strategic Planning

Chair Campion outlined the process for strategic planning for the Commission. Originally, the process was to take place over one day in person. Now, it is being broken down into three separate video tele-conference meetings over the next month. The first will take place over the next two hours of today's regular Commission meeting; the second will take place from 10 a.m. to noon on June 29; and the third will take place during two hours of the regular Commission meeting on July 20. At the final session, we anticipate defining the Commission's strategic goals and how to work toward accomplishing them.

In order to prepare for the process, Commission members received summary of results from an initial strategic planning survey, a compilation of background information about the older population in the state, and brief biographical information about each member, Executive Director Rebecca Sky, and facilitator Carolyn Russell.

Chair Campion introduced Carolyn Russell, Senior Operational Analyst for the NH Department of Administrative Services.

IV. Opening Conversation – 20 years down the road, what would be a shame if we didn't address?

Carolyn Russell facilitated an opening conversation around the question, "Looking back 20 years from now, what would be a shame if we didn't address...?"

Comments included the following conclusions to the opener—“It would be a shame if...”

- We didn’t change the culture to see older adults as a source of wisdom and experience rather than as a burden.
- We continued to lump all older adults into the “sick and frail” category.
- We failed to value and pay attention to the vulnerable.
- We didn’t make measurable progress toward the goals and objectives outlined in the State Plan on Aging (SPOA).
- We didn’t do something substantive beyond meeting.
- We took action without adequate thought and research.
- We didn’t replicate good programs and identify gaps in services.
- We didn’t communicate our value to the public in New Hampshire.
- We didn’t align our goals with the age-friendly community concept, which is worthwhile and do-able.
- We were still talking about the need for choice and rebalancing the long-term care system—work that already has been underway for 20 years but has not yet come to fruition.
- We were not established as a recognized and respected voice, a go-to entity for policy decisions in the state.
- We were not more integrative of older adults with those of all ages.
- We had not done more to help people stay in the community longer, facilitating community-based models.
- We didn’t initiate a universal volunteer licensing protocol in the state so that volunteers could work across organizations without repeating the same vetting process numerous times.
- We did not pay attention to what older adults told us through focus groups and surveys through the State Plan on Aging.
- We failed to understand that the final third of our life should be celebrated.
- Older adults continued to feel as if they are invisible.
- We didn’t see nuances within the older population—by age and by ability—and accepted the all-too-common aggregation of older adults into one demographic pot (65+).

V. Vision Statement Development

Rebecca Sky created small groups to meet separately to discuss the draft vision statement crafted by the Strategic Planning Committee. The small groups reviewed the draft statement, survey results regarding the draft statement, and their own suggestions for the development of a vision statement. The small groups then reconvened as the full Commission to share information from the separate discussions. Rebecca is consolidating all of the comments, including suggestions for a revised vision statement. The committee will review the comments and suggestions, develop a revised statement based on the input, and bring it back to the Commission for a vote at the next meeting.

VI. Mission Statement Development

Small groups also met separately to discuss the draft mission statement crafted by the Strategic Planning Committee. The small groups reviewed the draft statement, survey results regarding the draft statement, and their own suggestions for the development of a mission statement. The small groups then reconvened as the full Commission to share information from the separate discussions. Rebecca is consolidating all of the comments, including suggestions for a revised mission statement. The committee will review the comments and suggestions, develop a revised statement based on the input, and bring it back to the Commission for a vote at the next meeting.

Carolyn briefly reviewed the process for continuing strategic planning over the next few weeks. Chair Campion thanked Carolyn and Rebecca for steering the Commission through a complex process all via tele-conference, and she thanked the Commission members for engaging in thoughtful and well-informed planning work today. At the June 29 meeting, the Commission will review and vote on updated vision and mission statements and will then discuss values and begin to tackle strategic goals.

VII. Public Input

Chair Campion invited input from members of the public.

Carolyn Virtue, who operates a Medicaid care management business, asked to reach out via e-mail to all Commission members regarding concerns she has about Medicaid long-term care waivers and flexibility during a time of public emergency. She is concerned that some of the flexibility is being applied to other long-term care populations but not to the older adult population. Chair Campion said that she would e-mail Carolyn Virtue's communication to the Commission immediately after today's meeting.

Donna Davey responded to the suggestion (see Section IV) that volunteers be licensed with some concerns about paperwork and fees being a barrier to some potential volunteers. Chair Campion said that the specifics regarding this suggestion are likely to be worked out later in a subcommittee, and that non-members of the Commission are welcome to be part of subcommittees.

VIII. Adjourn Meeting

At 12:00 p.m., Chair Campion declared the meeting adjourned.