

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**New Hampshire State Commission on Aging  
Monday, October 18, 2021, 10:00 a.m.-noon  
NH Employment Security, 45 S. Fruit St., Concord**

**Present in person:** Polly Campion, Chair; Carol Stamatakis, Vice Chair; Roberta Berner, Clerk; Rep. James MacKay; Rep. Charles McMahon; Richard Lavers, NHES; Wendi Aultman, DHHS; Patrick Herlihy, DOT; Susan Buxton, Long-Term Care Ombudsman; Lynn Lippitt, NH Housing Finance Authority; Sunny Mulligan Shea, DOJ; Elizabeth Bielecki and Michael Todd, DOS; Appointed by the Governor: Susan Denopoulos Abrami, Suzanne Demers, Daniel Marcek, Kristi St. Laurent

Rebecca Sky, Executive Director.

**Present via teleconference:** Susan Ruka, Harry Viens, Rev. Susan Nolan

**Absent:** Sen. Ruth Ward; Janet Weeks, DOL; Ken Gordon, Susan Emerson

**Guests present via teleconference:** 19 members of the public (Cheryl Steinberg, John Wilson, Heather Carroll, Beth Todgham, Jennifer Rabalais, Richard Danford, Laurie Duff, Martha McLeod, Nancy Dorner, Arnold Newman, Jennifer Throwe, Carole Boutin, Beverly Cotton, Emily Morrison from Congressman Chris Pappas' office, Amy Moore, Melody Meres, Joan Marcoux, Michelle McConaghy )

**Closed captioning service provider**

**I. Welcome, Attendance, Review of Minutes**

Chair Polly Campion provided an overview of the agenda and welcomed the Commission members and guests to the meeting. Today's meeting was held concurrently in person at the NH Employment Security offices and via teleconference. Because the state Emergency Order is no longer in place, a quorum of Commission members must be present in person to take action.

Clerk Roberta Berner took attendance, noting which Commission members were attending in person or remotely. Chair Campion confirmed that a quorum of Commission members was present in person.

Minutes from May, June, July and September were distributed prior to the meeting. Because a quorum of Commission members had not been present in person the Commission had not been able to vote to approve the minutes in prior meetings this summer and fall. **Rep. Jim MacKay made a motion to approve the minutes; Lynn Lippitt seconded the motion; the motion was approved unanimously.**

**II. Address Membership Changes**

The Commission will be recommending nominees to the Governor's Office to fill vacancies created by the departure of Pam Jolivette and Kathy Baldrige and the absence of John Kennedy. Biographies of nominees Beth Todgham, Doug McNutt and Laurie Duff accompanied the materials for today's meeting.

Beth Todgham, a resident of Nashua, retired after a long career in newspaper work and community services. She has assumed responsibility of editing a new monthly newsletter to be published under the auspices of the Commission to address issues concerning older adults.

Doug McNutt, a newly retired resident of Merrimack County, most recently worked for AARP on policy issues and previously served as director of the NH-DHHS Division of Elderly and Adult Services. He has

been involved in policies to rebalance the long-term care system so that more people receive services in their homes and communities rather than nursing homes.

Laurie Duff has 32 years of professional experience working with older adult populations, and currently serves as Director of Senior Services for Easter Seals NH where she has worked since 1995. She is active in a variety of organizations including the Center on Aging and Community Living Advisory Board, ServiceLink Advisory Board, Veteran Community Partnership, NH Adult Day Services Association and Rockingham VNA & Hospice.

***Carol Stamatakis made a motion to nominate Beth Todgham, Doug McNutt and Laurie Duff to the Governor's Office for appointment to the Commission; Patrick Herlihy seconded the motion; the motion was approved unanimously.***

### **III. Year 2 Strategic Map Approval**

The Commission's Strategic Map, first adopted as part of the Strategic Plan in fall 2020, covers the period October 2020 through September 2023. The Commission and its Task Forces have worked through the past several meetings to hone Year Two (2021-2022) objectives. A draft of the Strategic Map was distributed prior to the October meeting.

***After review by Chair Campion, Wendi Aultman made a motion to approve the Year Two Strategic Map; Susan Denopoulos Abrami seconded the motion; and the motion passed unanimously.***

### **IV. Annual Report Approval**

The 2021 draft Annual Report was distributed prior to today's meeting. Chair Campion commended Executive Director Rebecca Sky for her good work on the document. She suggested to Commission members that specific wordsmithing of the Annual Report take place after the meeting through direct communication with Rebecca.

Chair Campion posed two questions to the Commission:

1. Beyond submitting the Annual Report to the Governor and specific people within the State Legislature, how might we use the report individually or collectively?
2. How might we leverage the impact of the Annual Report within the next year?

Dan Marcek suggested that the Commission set up meetings with the Governor's Office and the Legislature regarding aging issues in New Hampshire, focusing on the key points within the Annual Report.

Rebecca reviewed the format of the Annual Report and the process for establishing its recommendations from the content of our monthly meetings and through the work of the Task Forces over the summer culminating in the Commission's September meeting. She said that she plans to design the Executive Summary using the introduction and summary recommendations sections to bring more attention to the salient points.

Rep. MacKay said that he was very impressed with the report and was pleased with the emphasis on the importance of behavioral health issues. He said that with 68 as the average age of the state's legislators, the recommendations and information should hit "close to home." He had the following suggestions:

- The Legislature has a continuing education process that hasn't been used much recently but could be used to present important information in the report;
- A legislative public education process could be used as a way to present the information to the entire Legislature.

- Those commissions and other bodies charged with producing plans and reports for the state could meet together to identify points of intersection among the reports and potential avenues to work together.

He suggested that Rep. McMahon and he could work together to move forward the report as a focus of a legislative educational session.

Rep. McMahon said that those legislators who are affected most directly by aging issues in the state will be most interested in the report. He emphasized the importance of specificity regarding costs— including what the cost of doing something might be compared to the cost of doing nothing. He strongly suggested that the Commission begin working soon to ensure that the expenses connected to our objectives are included in the next Governor’s budget, which is crafted then submitted to the Finance Committee.

Chair Champion asked state agency representatives about the timing for such action. Rich Lavers said that the planning process is starting now for the next biennial budget. Wendi Aultman said that in the early stages, departments go through funding exercises to develop their budgets. Patrick Herlihy said that the Governor’s Office will present budget targets to the departments; anything extra needs justification. Chair Champion discussed the need not to confuse our budget request as a Commission with any requests we might suggest on behalf of the state’s older adults. Rich Lavers said that with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars, it is important to have those conversations right now. ARPA funds are going through the legislative Joint Fiscal Committee.

Commission members discussed ways of amending the Annual Report to include advocacy for state financial support for its recommendations and to include explicitly that the Commission should be part of the biennial budget process. ***After discussion regarding the wording, Rep. McMahon made a motion to add to the Annual Report that in cases where the Commission has recommended expenditure of funds to support its recommendations that the Commission be part of the state budgetary decision-making process. Rep. MacKay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.***

Chair Champion asked that the draft Annual Report be approved, understanding that wordsmithing and additional formatting will take place between this meeting and the November 1 deadline for submission. ***Lynn Lippitt made the motion to approve the document; Susan Buxton seconded the motion.*** Additional discussion ensued.

Rep. McMahon discussed issues with housing instability for older adults in some areas of the state, including the issue that infrastructure (water, sewer, availability of first responders) is not in place in many communities so new sizeable subsidized housing projects cannot be built there. He discussed the need to improve existing housing (e.g., with accessory dwellings and handicapped accessibility features added). ***Rep. McMahon made a motion to add to the Annual Report a recommendation to explore financial incentives that could be provided to improve established housing for older adults. Rep. MacKay seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion was passed unanimously.***

***Chair Champion asked for a vote on the outstanding motion to approve the Annual Report. The vote to approve the document was unanimous.***

Wendi Aultman thanked Rebecca for her hard work on the Annual Report, and those attending the meeting applauded, concurring with Wendi.

Given the length of the discussion on the Annual Report, Chair Champion suggested that rather than using limited remaining time during today's meeting, the Infrastructure Task Force do the preparatory work for the November meeting, which will address the workforce crisis. Wendi Aultman said that she would like to participate in the planning of the November meeting.

**V. Newsletter**

Volunteer editor Beth Todgham discussed her plans to produce and publish a newsletter under Commission auspices. For many years, the nonprofit organization EngAGING NH had published a newsletter focused on issues of interest to the state's older adults. They did not wish to continue publishing their newsletter and asked the Commission to step in to publish a newsletter with a similar focus. EngAGING NH members along with others from the Commission serve on an advisory group, meeting with Beth to provide support with the effort.

Beth anticipates that issue number one will be out by November 1. Included in the first issue will be articles on Medicare Open Enrollment and Fuel Assistance. The newsletter needs a name, and a "name the newsletter" contest will be announced in the first edition. Chair Champion expressed her deep appreciation to Beth.

Rebecca said that the newsletter will be considered a service provided by the Commission, not a vehicle solely oriented to promote the Commission and its priorities.

**VI. Public Input**

Chair Champion noted that the Commission had used a closed captioning service for this meeting and asked for feedback about how well the service had worked from those attending remotely.

John Wilson said that although the Commission has dealt with a number of thorny issues in the Annual Report, it did not highlight transportation for older adults as one of the key needs. He suggested that it should have had its own section of the report. Patrick Herlihy responded that the need for transportation is included throughout the report and that the State Coordinating Council for Community Transportation is focused on addressing the concern.

**VII. Adjournment**

Chair Champion adjourned the meeting at noon. The next meeting will take place on Monday, November 22, from 10 a.m. to noon, with the location to be determined. Chair Champion thanked the NH Department of Employment Security for hosting today's meeting.

## COA Candidate Bios

### **Beth Quarm Todgham**

Beth Quarm Todgham is a resident of Nashua having lived there over 25 years. While currently retired, she has a long and varied work history both in newspaper publications and community services doing community outreach and organizing. She was the editor of Parenting New Hampshire from 1997 through January 2008. She worked for many years at Southern New Hampshire Services fulfilling many functions and roles including as their Seniors Count Facilitator and Nashua Community Coordinator. Beth energetically volunteers in many community activities including the City of Nashua's Citizens' Advisory Commission for Community Grants. She was an active member of the Breakfast Exchange Club prior to its disbanding last year. The club focused on older adults. She has also volunteered with United Way of Greater Nashua, RSVP, and the Greater Nashua Area Committee on Aging.

### **Doug McNutt**

Doug McNutt is a newly retired resident of Merrimack County. Since 2007 he has worked for AARP on policy issues both at the Federal and State levels. He was especially involved in rebalancing the long term care system so that more people receive services in their homes and communities as opposed to nursing homes. He was a past member and Chair of the New Hampshire Medical Care Advisory Committee (MCAC). Doug also worked on implementation of the Affordable Care Act, particularly on the Medicaid Expansion option. He also served as a member of the Governor's Commission on Medicaid Managed Care. More recently Doug worked on the CARE Act which provides support for caregivers when the person they are caring for transitions from the Hospital and the Uniform Adult Guardianship Protective Proceedings and Jurisdiction Act. He led an effort to create a Uniform Power of Attorney Act for New Hampshire which was passed in 2017. He also worked on legislation which passed in 2020 that raised the caps on Home and Community Based Services under the Choices for Independence (CFI) program so that they are now equal to the costs of staying in a Nursing Home. Doug also in 2020 worked on prescription drug legislation that tasked the Department of Health and Human Services to create an Importation Program for drugs from Canada, to create a Drug Affordability Board and to cap Insulin payments. Prior to his work at AARP, Doug worked for many years at the Division of Elderly and Adult Services spending his last 4 years in service as the Director of the Division.

### **Laurie Duff**

Laurie Duff has thirty-two years of professional experience working with older adult populations. She is currently serving as the Director of Senior Services at Easter Seals NH where she has worked since 1995. (Easter Seals provides services to ensure that people with all disabilities or special needs and their families have equal opportunities to live, learn, work and play in their communities. Easter Seals offers adult medical day Services, homemakers & health Services, memory care options, caregiver resources, and provides assistance to low income women with critical goods and services.) Laurie has served in a large variety of volunteer and other leadership roles throughout her life. She has served as a board member for many organization including but not limited to: The Center on Aging and Community Living Advisory Board, Service Link Advisory Board, Veteran Community Partnership, The Inn at Deerfield Board, NH Senior Companions, and as the Executive Vice President of the Board of Directors for Rockingham VNA & Hospice and President of the NH Adult Day Services Association. She has been very involved with the NH Alzheimer's Association.



# State of New Hampshire Commission on Aging

## Vision

All people have the opportunity to thrive and be valued while growing older in New Hampshire.

## Mission

To be a catalyst for change that values, serves, and celebrates people as they grow older.

### 3 Year Strategic Priorities

October 2020-September 2023

*Develop and advance strategies to improve people’s ability to age in the communities of their choice*

#### Year 2 objectives:

- Support county government innovations to manage the cost of and access to long term services and supports (LTSS).
- Explore the issues of housing, transportation, workforce, and resources for decision making as they impact access to LTSS in the community of one’s choice.
- Identify unique challenges and opportunities of minority populations to age in their community of choice.

*Catalyze New Hampshire towards being an Age-Friendly State*

#### Year 2 objectives:

- Engage with leaders of age-friendly community initiatives to identify models and activities worthy of replication and constructive state level policy considerations.
- Promote age-friendly community work as a way to create livable communities for all of us as we age.
- Collaborate with the NH Department of Business & Economic Affairs to assist it in supporting communities across New Hampshire in age-friendly planning.

*Engage Leaders regarding the Emerging Needs of Older Adults during the COVID-19 Epidemic*

#### Year 2 objectives:

- **Ageism** – Engage stakeholders and subject matter experts to confront ageist perceptions and their social, economic, and political impact.
- **Social Isolation** – Advance and engage in strategies to alleviate social isolation.
- **Long Term Care System** – Advocate for initiatives that improve the lives of residents in long term care and build the resiliency and preparedness of the long term care system against future disease outbreaks.

*Develop Commission Infrastructure to Support Operational Success*

#### Year 2 objectives:

- Assess and facilitate the degree to which task forces are forwarding the goals of our strategic priorities.
- Manage Commission membership and staff to optimize effectiveness.
- Implement Commission process for advising the Legislature and Governor on current legislation and recommendations for public policy.

## Values

**Forward Thinking** – We anticipate the future and are creative and innovative finding new ways forward.

**Collaboration** – We embrace cooperation as complex issues require multiple perspectives for development of meaningful solutions and collective action.

**Public Trust** - We pursue common good in ways that are respectful, accountable, transparent, equitable, and worthy of trust.

**Stewardship** – We seek to maximize benefit from New Hampshire resources.

**Expertise** – We utilize the wealth of knowledge and skills available within our state agencies, businesses, and communities.

**Opportunity** – We strive to amend systematic patterns of disadvantage and marginalization so that all have the opportunity to thrive while growing older.

**Engagement** - We aim to leverage the talents and energy of older people in New Hampshire to create a better future.