

**MINUTES**  
**New Hampshire State Commission on Aging**  
**Monday, May 16, 2022 10:00 a.m.-noon**  
**NH Employment Security, 45 South Fruit Street, Concord, NH**

**Present in person:** Polly Campion, Chair; Carol Stamatakis, Vice Chair; Roberta Berner, Clerk; Susan Buxton, Long-Term Care Ombudsman; Wendi Aultman, DHHS; Janet Weeks, DOL; Patrick Herlihy, DOT; Lynn Lippitt, NH Housing Finance Authority; Appointed by the Governor: Daniel Marcek, Kristi St. Laurent, Suzanne Demers, Susan Denopoulos Abrami, Beth Quarm Todgham  
Rebecca Sky, Executive Director

**Present via teleconference:** Myrna Warnock, DOS; Rev. Susan Nolan, Susan Ruka

**Absent:** Rep. Charles McMahan; Sen. Ruth Ward; Rep. James MacKay; Richard Lavers, NHES; Sunny Mulligan Shea, DOJ; Doug McNutt, Ken Gordon, Harry Viens, Laurie Duff, Susan Emerson

**Presenter:** Ken Johnson, Ph.D., Andrew Carnegie Fellow, UNH Professor of Sociology, Senior Demographer at the Carsey School of Public Policy

**Guests present via teleconference:** 20 members of the public (Jennifer Rabalais, Martha McLeod, Carole Boutin, John Wilson, Richard Danford, Christian Seasholz, Lynn Coyle, LaTonya Muccioli, Sharlene Adams, Jon Eriquezzo, Heather Carroll, Kathleen Vasconcelos, Kristin Barnum, RN, Laura Sheers, Kim Murphy, Melodie Mere, Cheryl Steinberg, Shawn Jones, Theresa Tanon

**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 NH Employment Security and via teleconference. Clerk Roberta Berner took attendance, noting which Commission members were attending in person or remotely. With 13 Commission members attending in person, a quorum was present.

Wendi Aultman made a motion, seconded by Lynn Lippitt, to approve the minutes of the April meeting of the Commission. The motion was approved with a roll-call vote with 12 in-person and remaining remote attending Commission members approving the motion. Patrick Herlihy abstained.

**II. Demographic Update on NH's Older Adult Population and Potential Implications--Ken Johnson, Ph.D., Andrew Carnegie Fellow, UNH Professor of Sociology, Senior Demographer at the Carsey School of Public Policy**

Chair Campion introduced Dr. Johnson and spoke about the Commission's interest in understanding current and projected demographic information about New Hampshire's older population and the state's workforce.

Dr. Johnson's presentation, "Demographic Trends and Aging in New Hampshire," included information from a variety of sources, among them some data from the 2020 U.S. Census. Most of the 2020 Census data has not been released yet, and the demographic impacts of the pandemic were not captured by the Census since the pandemic largely occurred after the data were gathered.

New Hampshire's rapid growth in the 1970s and '80s slowed over the past decade. The state's population experienced a very modest natural increase (births slightly exceeded deaths from 2000-2010). The state's primary source of growth during the decade was from net migration, primarily

domestic. Many of those who moved to New Hampshire in the 1970s and '80s now comprise a sizeable portion of the older population of the state. Fifty-nine percent of New Hampshire's population was born elsewhere—a big difference from other parts of New England. In all other New England states, the majority of their populations were born within the state. Just thirty-three percent of New Hampshire residents over the age of 25 were born in New Hampshire.

Dr. Johnson noted that the birth rate declined sharply during the “Great Recession” of 2008 and has not recovered. And from July 2020 to July 2021, we experienced far more deaths than births because of COVID-19.

From 2015 to 2019 New Hampshire, with a population of approximately 1.37 million, experienced an enormous population turn-over with 244,000 individuals moving to the state and 214,000 leaving the state. The largest percentage of “in-migrants” came from Massachusetts (23%), and the largest percentage of “out-migrants” moved South. Those coming into the state tended to have higher levels of education than those born in the state and remaining here. During the same period, the state registered approximately 61,000 births and 62,000 deaths.

In the decade from 2000 to 2010, New Hampshire lost a substantial number of young adults, but that did not hold true from 2010 to 2020. In addition, the state saw an influx of families consisting of working-age adults and their children. Population-change maps by town show that population growth was generally strongest in southern and southeastern New Hampshire and population loss was more widespread in the northern and western portions of the state.

Dr. Johnson pointed out trends in three New Hampshire counties, as an example. Coos County experienced big losses in population, with substantial natural decline (deaths exceeding births) and almost no in-migration. Hillsborough County had strong natural growth and net migration. Carroll County had strong growth, but almost all attributable to net migration, with deaths exceeding births. Net migration to Carroll County included an influx of some older adults.

Overall, New Hampshire continues to age rapidly as does New England. The 2020 population in the state is 16 percent aged 55-64, 11 percent 65-74, 5 percent 75-84, and 2 percent 85 and over, for a total of 34 percent of the population. The state is ranked eighth highest in the country for proportion of the population aged 65 and over (Maine is ranked first and Vermont, fourth). New Hampshire is ranked second for its high median age, with Maine ranked first and Vermont ranked third. In twenty years, baby boomers born between 1956 to 1960 will be in their eighties.

The largest *percentage* of older adults in the state is in northern New Hampshire; the largest *number* is in southern New Hampshire. Both the largest percentage and number of children and working-age adults are concentrated in southern New Hampshire.

Current data show that New Hampshire is becoming more diverse. The white population comprises 87.2 percent of the state's population. The least diverse segment of the state's population is the 65 and older group, and the most diverse is children. The minority population is distributed unevenly across the state. New England continues to be among the least diverse regions of the country.

New Hampshire has one of the lowest poverty rates in the United States, but pockets of poverty exist throughout the state and across all regions.

In conclusion, Dr. Johnson said that current data show us that in New Hampshire:

- Population growth has slowed, but the state has had modest gains from in-migration.
- From 2008 on, the birth rate slowed and during the pandemic, we had fewer births than deaths.
- Demographic changes are uneven across the state.
- Our diversity is growing, but modestly.

He added that migration represents human capital and that the state needs both to retain population and attract newcomers. The growth of New Hampshire's older population he said was "inevitable and soon," with far-reaching implications for the state budget.

Chair Campion opened the meeting to questions for Dr. Johnson. She asked if in-migration to the state was offsetting the growth in the older population. He responded that although much of that growth was among children and working families, it is not substantial enough to offset the growth in the older population.

Commission member Beth Quarm Todgham asked how he and other demographers would handle known issues with the 2020 U.S. Census data. He responded that there were three key areas of concern that might result in a larger margin of error —

- The effect of the pandemic;
- Administrative complications in the data collection process;
- Data privacy rules which add delays and difficulties, especially when the geography and population groups are smaller.

He added that the data were still better than many expected and that at the state level, the data were reasonably good.

Commission member and NH-DHHS Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services administrator Wendi Aultman asked what data is most important for planning programs and services? And how should we value size of a population in relation to percentage of population and/or percent of poverty of a population when distributing aging services resources? She also asked often funders should consider shifting their methodology for distributing resources. He responded that population information is published annually at the county level, but below the county level, decision-makers would need to rely on the decennial Census. He added that the American Community Survey is good quality, but not as accurate as Census data.

Commission member Rev. Susan Nolan asked what we knew about the large population shift from 2015-2019 and how it might affect the make-up of the state. Dr. Johnson referred her to the Carsey Institute's website for additional information.

SCOA Executive Director Rebecca Sky will distribute links to publications. Because today's PowerPoint presentation includes preliminary data, it will not be distributed:

- <https://carsey.unh.edu/what-is-new-hampshire/sections/demography>

- <https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/snapshot/migration-gains-to-NH-are-growing>
- <https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/modest-population-gains-but-growing-diversity-in-new-hampshire-with-children-in-vanguard>
- <https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/new-census-data-reveal-modest-population-growth-in-new-hampshire-over-past-decade>

Commission member Kristi St. Laurent asked if local approvals of housing communities for those aged 55+ versus housing for those of all ages had an impact on demographics. Dr. Johnson said that housing plays into the make-up of a community, but it's not as much an area of focus for his work. To his understanding, family and social environment have the greatest impact on where people choose to retire. He added that 75 percent of New Hampshire towns have a population under 6000 and eighty-eight percent of New Hampshire towns have a population under 10,000 people. None of these towns really have the desire or capacity to be in the "housing business".

Chair Campion said that it seemed clear that with the state's changing composition by age, education level, income level, and diversity that "one size fits all" responses could not be the answer for service providers deciding on distribution of services. She wondered about service providers transporting services from higher density areas to those with sparser populations. Dr. Johnson agreed that a "one size fits all" response wasn't the answer and said that he hoped that the Commission and others would make an informed use of the data. He urged attendees to make sure that in-migrants were part of the discussions, since they could bring a great deal of expertise.

Executive Director Sky noted the significance of counties in providing long-term care services to the older population. Counties with the highest proportions of older people have fewer tax dollars to support their nursing homes. She also noted that older adults also impact the economy of the state.

Other comments by attendees included the following:

- The in-migration of those with resources and education could be a rich source of expertise, but those people are likely not service workers who we need badly but who may not be able to afford to live here.
- We consistently lose younger adults who could do the jobs we need done. How could we tweak the educational system to connect with those people to retain them in-state?
- Could we consider ways to connect with the spouses of those moving into the state for work? Should we be reaching out to realtors?

Chair Campion said that it would be helpful to have a debriefing meeting about the information presented today and asked that those attending send her a note with any thoughts and suggestions.

### **III. Update on COA Activities at the Statehouse (Information sent with meeting materials prior to the meeting)**

Chair Campion referred attendees to the grid of bills that the Commission has been following this session and said that the Legislature is coming to the end of the session, with Thursday the last day for committees of conference to file their reports. She said that she will share the list of Commission-supported bills with Governor Sununu at the volunteer recognition event this afternoon.

#### **IV. Update—Age-Friendly State Task Force, Task Force Co-chair Dan Marcek**

Co-chair Sunny Mulligan Shea and Executive Director Sky attended a one-day conference in Boston sponsored by the Age-Friendly Institute. Dan Marcek asked Ms. Sky to share highlights from the meeting. Rebecca described a presentation on California's Master Plan on Aging. A Master Plan differs from a State Plan on Aging. Master Plans are a long-term vision for a state (often 10-year plans) developed with the support of executive and/or legislative leadership. State Plans on Aging respond to federal requirements and are more narrowly focused on Older Americans Act-funded programs. The California Master Plan priorities include: Housing for All Stages and Ages, Health Reimagined (focused on closing equity gaps and increasing life expectancy), Inclusion and Equity – Not Isolation, Caregiving that Works, and Affording Aging – Economic Security.

Dan Marcek spoke about the Task Force's continued work advocating for State support of an assessment of older adult transportation needs. He also said the Task Force is collaborating with UNH in the hopes of convening a forum with University of New Hampshire leadership and faculty with an intention to spur more research on aging issues. The new dean of the UNH College of Health and Human Services has a background in gerontology. This Task Force also has sought connection with the Dept. of Business & Economic Affairs. Task force members have attended meeting of Community Economic Development Regions with a hope of bringing to their thinking and action an age-friendly perspective. Also Rebecca participated in the development of an Office of Planning and Development PLAN webinar on Livable/Age-Friendly Communities on June 16<sup>th</sup> from 12 to 1 PM. This involves collaborating with AARP, Southern, Strafford, Rockingham and Southwestern Regional Planning Commissions. The Task Force also reviewed the Commission website to recommend improvements to promote our agenda of an Age-friendly state.

#### **V. Other Updates: Older Adult Volunteer Awards and New Hire Progress**

Rebecca Sky reminded members that the Older Adult Volunteer Awards ceremony would take place this afternoon in the Capitol's Executive Council Chambers. Governor Sununu will be present for the event. Annual recognition of older adult volunteers in New Hampshire has taken place for 60 years, but today's ceremony will be the first to be held in person since the pandemic. Those honorees not able to attend today's event will receive their awards in their own communities. She said that the group of honorees is diverse and impressive and encouraged Commission members to attend the event.

Rebecca shared that the posting for the Communications and Community Engagement Director for the Commission did result in applicants and that interviews were occurring.

#### **VI. Public Input**

No member of the public asked to address the commission.

#### **VII. Adjournment**

Chair Campion adjourned the meeting at 11:51 a.m. The next meeting of the Commission will take place on June 20, 2022