

NH State Commission on Aging
Monday, October 21, 2024
10am to 12:00pm

NH Hospital Association, 125 Airport Road, Concord, NH

Attendance

Present in person: **Members:** Representative James Mackay, Wendi Aultman, (DHHS), Susan Buxton (OLTCO), Brandy Cassada (Dept. of Safety), Danielle Albert (DOL), Polly Campion (Grafton), Sunny Mulligan Shea (NH Attorney General), Carissa Elphick (Belknap), Margaret Franckhauser (Belknap), Beverly Bjorklund, (Sullivan), David Ross, (Hillsborough), Joanne Ward (Rockingham), Jack Ruderman (NHHFA), Daniel Marcek (Hillsborough), Shelly Winters (DOT), Rep. Lucy McVitty Weber (Cheshire). **Guests:** Nick Toumpas, Steve Maloney(NH DHHS Office of Health Equity, Terry Palmer (RLS – Statewide Mobility Manager), Jen Horgan (Alzheimer’s Association)

Staff: Rebecca Sky, Executive Director, Karen Knowles, Project Director, Dan Wise, Communications & Community Engagement Director.

Online: **Members (reason for online participation noted in parenthesis):** Roxie Severance – Clerk (away at a multiday conference), Beth Quarm Todgham (out of state) **Guests:** Jon Eriquezzo (Meals on Wheels), Sara Valli (UNH - ATinNH), Mo Baxley (GSIL), Brenton Fraser(NH Dept. Military and Veterans Affairs), Kristy Stellato, Jennifer Rabalais (UNH - NHAHA), Carole Boutin (NH Action Coalition), Kathleen Vasconcelos, Melissa Lu (UNH), Madeline Ullrich (NH Care Collaborative), Allison Lamontagne (Senator Maggie Hassan’s office) Heather Smith (DMVA), Laura Davie (UNH), Marcia Garber.

Absent: Senator Bill Gannon, Rep Charles McMahon, and Susan Ruka (Carroll), Richard Lavers, (DES), Laurie Duff - Vice Chair, Doug McNutt (Merrimack),

Welcome

Call to Order 10:01

Polly Campion, Immediate Past Chair serving in the absence of Sue Ruka, Chair

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes was made by James McKay, seconded by Rep. Lucy McVitty Weber. Roll call vote; all responses in the affirmative. No abstentions. Motion carried.

Approval of Annual Report

Motion to Approve the Annual Report with changes agreed upon during the discussion today was made by Lucy Weber, seconded by James McKay. Discussion: Laurie expressed appreciation to Rebecca, Dan, and Karen for their efforts responding to suggestions made at the last meeting to develop this final product. Executive Director Rebecca Sky reminded the Commission that the Commission’s enabling statute requires the Commission’s Annual report be delivered November 1st to

the Governor and legislative Leaders. Rebecca requested that minor copy edits be sent to Rebecca or Dan after the meeting to be corrected before submission and this discussion on this motion focus more on content changes. A question was asked if we will prepare a short summary. Response: An executive summary will be prepared once the full report is approved. It will be distributed with the full report. The summary will include priorities and recommendations. No further discussion. Roll call vote; all responses in the affirmative. No abstentions. Motion carried.

Appreciations from Lucy and Polly to all those who worked on preparing the Annual Report. Many heads nodded in agreement.

Voting 2024: Changes, Updates and New Technology

Presentation by Guests:

Erin Hennessey Deputy Secretary of State

Lily Woo, Civics Outreach, Secretary of State

Civic and Voter Coordinator of Sec State office - Education of Voters

Polly introduced Erin sharing that she was a State Representative and co-sponsor of the bill creating the NH State Commission on Aging.

Erin Hennessey introduced Lily Wu, the new civics and voter education coordinator for the Sec. of State Office. She is already an integral part of the department getting information out to not only voters, but all people who are potential voters, including civics programs in the high schools, and more.

Erin provided an overview of the Office of the Secretary of State:

- The Secretary of State is the chief election officer for the state.
 - Maintains archives and records management
 - Provide voter information
- Bureau of Securities
 - Provide information to the public on investing – along with Attorney General Office, and Insurance Department, work to provide information to the public to protect investors and prevent financial exploitation. Check out their website for booklets and information sheets in multiple languages.
- Maintain Business Registries
- Authorize Notaries and Justices of the Peace
- Maintain Vital Records – births, deaths, marriages, etc.
- Governor and Council meeting agendas and minutes are keep on the website.

The NH Secretary of State's Office was invited to have a conversation with the Commission on Aging on how might changes in voter law and technology effect older adults both in the community and in congregate assisted care facilities?

A very robust presentation on this topic and subsequent conversation took place. Highlights:

- SoS produces and distribution of Pocket Voter Guides (4 languages) to explain voting process, items a person needs to vote, how to vote absentee, as well as how to become a poll worker. This information and responses to commonly asked questions or misconceptions has been shared with libraries.
- Secretary of State's Office has done a lot of speaking to groups and others in advance of the election.
- There is relatively new program that allows any NH resident to vote in honor of a Veteran, in recognition of their sacrifices. The program provides space for a person to write a small statement about the person they are voting in honor of.
- In many towns for over 20 years a Dominion product called AccuVote has been in use to count ballots. They are quality machines (not connected to the internet) but parts and ongoing vendor support in the future is questioned. The Ballot Law Commission in NH approves new electronic ballot devices and have given conditional approval of two new devices. One that is in 21 towns already called VotingWorks which is more voter friendly which has a large screen and large print letters. Very accessible.
- PollPads are another new piece of technology in use at polling places. These are used for checking-in voters with their ID's. It reads the ID's but does not scan or save the data.
- Future goals to update accessible voting equipment - Accessibility means supporting voters who have vision, hearing, or mobility issues that interfere with voting. Touch screens, large keyboards, large print, puff devices that can be used instead of pencils. A bill was signed into law this last legislative session requiring accessible, private voting for not just national elections, but local elections too.
- Mention was made that more poll workers are needed in towns across New Hampshire, as well as the need for older poll workers to mentor younger poll workers. The Secretary of State's Office requested the Commission's help in recruiting poll workers.

Discussion:

- James McKay commended NH on doing this work
- The Commission on Aging Newsletter, *AgingMatters* was offered as an avenue for getting out voter information to older adults. The Secretary of States Office was invite to be put in contact Beth Todgham, the editor to publish info.
- Polly asked for info on the changes in the law:
 - Accessibility (previously discussed).
 - Response: In January of 2022 the Secretary of State's Office hired a communications director who also does outreach to people who may experience accessibility issues with voting. Work is being done to the website as well. A member of the public, Sara Valli the new director at ATinNH, (UNH Assisted Technology support for the public) offered to partner with the Secretary of State's Office to demonstrate assistive voting technology to those who could benefit towards building awareness.
 - Town clerk delivery of absentee ballot to residential care facilities (HB1098)
 - Response: this puts in writing what was already largely being done, i.e. – it won't have much impact. Town clerks can explain to residents in nursing homes that they are able to keep their domicile at their previous residence if they desire.

- Another Question: Once this new law is in place, and the higher threshold for voting is made clear to voters, will the Secretary of State's Office monitor the impact on voting relative to population? Response: Voting statistics are published on the Secretary of State's website. This includes how many people are on the the checklist in NH. A follow-up question asked is this data was stratified by age. The answer is no.

Update on the NH Paid Family & Medical Leave Program

This agenda item was postponed as Rich Lavers is out sick.

Open enrollment for individuals for this program is from December 1st through January 31st. While many new parents utilize the benefits of this program, Rich would have shared data indicating that other caregivers are not. The question is whether there is role for the Commission (or ADRC who work with caregivers) to promote this program among caregivers?

New Business:

- Rebecca asked those who are interested in being on the State House Team for the upcoming legislative session to stay after meeting to for 5 to 10 minutes. Currently there are 170 LSRs (Draft bills.)
- Two ARPA funded projects that the Commission on Aging posted RFPs for will have contracts with vendors approved at the Oct 30th G&C meeting. Commission members interested in diving deeper on AgeWellNH work or Transportation Planning should be in contact with Rebecca.
- Rebecca's Resignation: Polly expressed appreciation for Rebecca's work, diligence and dedication that has supported the Commission towards becoming the robust group it has. The work is still moving forward. The position will be posted on the 16th. Please share the posting with candidates you feel could continue the Commission's mission. Backgrounds in public health, public policy, relational coordination, management, communication skills are all helpful.
- Older Adult Volunteer Awards – Will start accepting nominations in January through March for the May event. If you have a candidate now, even without a nomination written, please share that name with Karen. She is willing to work with nominators to develop the narratives need be.
- Volunteer NH does their own Awards in the Fall of each year. Volunteer Drivers have been nominated for the Spirit of NH Awards. Find the awards online and vote for Volunteer Drivers who do so much for our older residents.
- Medicare Open Enrollment started Oct 15th and will run through Dec 7th. Please encourage anyone needing options counseling to call their Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) ASAP. Appointments are filling up rapidly and in some places may be gone. Call 1(866) 634-9412. Changes afoot:
 - Harvard Pilgrim and WellCare supplemental plans have withdrawn from NH.
 - Aetna reduced availability and services
 - Humana reduced availability
- Good website on financial exploitation, Scam, fraud prevention: <https://stayconnectednh.org/>
- FTC has a good website and free handouts organizations can order to disseminate: <https://consumer.ftc.gov/scams>
- Meeting adjourned 11:43