

**Communications Committee Meeting  
Minutes  
May 20, 2024**

**Attendees**

**CoA**

Jean Dinwiddie, Co-chair  
Beverly Rollins, Co-chair  
Linda Bergofsky  
Virginia Cain  
David Engel  
Bob Levey  
Kathleen McGinness  
Yvette Monroe  
Barbara Selter  
Katie Smith

**Alumni**

Marcia Pruzan

**Staff**

Tina Purser-Langley, Aging and Disability Staff  
Sara Swarr

**Guests**

Chris Doyle

**Roll Call**

Jean Dinwiddie called roll and asked for approval of the minutes from the April Communications Committee meeting. The minutes were approved.

**Ambassador Program**

Jean provided a status update of the program. It has become wildly popular, but it has, however, created a lot of work for the HHS staff. Jean, Beverly Rollins, and David Engel recently had a meeting with Patrice McGhee, Aging and Disability (A&D) Chief; Kimberly Johnson, Area Agency on Aging Chief; and Peter Flandrau, former A&D staff and they discussed issues such as where the Ambassador presentations can be held (i.e., senior centers and recreation centers).

They stated that they want the Ambassadors to keep to a script that staff has reviewed for accuracy and also to stick to County facilities and not churches or private places.

Jean noted that, currently, the Committee is not actively going out advertising the Program. Virginia Cain asked what extra work the Program is creating for staff. Jean responded that the Committee asks staff to provide copies of documents to distribute at the presentations and prepare press releases. Press releases need Public Information Office (PIO) and A&D approval as well as the County Executive's approval.

Jean said that the Committee is trying to update the CoA's website so that individuals can request the presentations. A County email address must be provided to do this. Marcia Pruzan asked whether the Oasis and Inglewood presentations can still be held this summer. Jean responded that because they were requested before the meeting with Dr. McGhee and Dr. Johnson they can still take place. David noted that although A&D does want the program, it does create more work for them.

Tina Purser-Langley stated that the press releases have to go through PIO staffer Mary Anderson and her work gets backed up. It can take a week to get something through. Marcia asked whether the Ambassadors will ever be allowed to go to venues other than County venues. Jean said that for now the Ambassadors have to limit them to County facilities.

Jean stated that a Committee workgroup will be meeting next week to discuss how to make the program more standard. She stated that if anyone would like to join the group please do. Barbara Selter said that the Health and Wellness (H&W) Committee would like to add a couple of slides to the presentation. Jean responded that Barbara should get some slides to the Committee by Wednesday, May 29. Virginia asked whether libraries are approved sites for the presentations. Jean responded yes.

Marcia stated that she developed a separate slide regarding libraries and one on scams. She will send Jean and Beverly a copy of the library slide. All of the presentation slides will definitely be discussed at the workgroup meeting. Jean has already set up a zoom link for the meeting.

David said that the presentations are getting too long, there is not enough time for discussion. Beverly reminded the members that the Ambassador sessions are also being advertised as listening sessions.

Linda Bergofsky asked whether a CoA member who is not an Ambassador can attend a presentation to observe. Jean responded yes. Linda asked whether the Ambassadors should request a certain amount of time to give the presentations. Jean said that they probably should. Linda asked whether the presentations should be recorded. David responded that they probably should. Linda asked whether the Ambassadors should be able to vet the questions and whether they are seeing patterns of questions. She also asked whether the Ambassadors get back to individuals who have questions that cannot be responded to at the presentations. Marcia noted that the Ambassadors are able to respond to most of the questions that are asked.

Jean asked the group whether anyone else would like volunteer to be an Ambassador. Virginia stated that she may try to join the upcoming workgroup meeting. Jean noted that the Committee needs to get an update on posting the presentation request form on the CoA website. Tina volunteered to ask Dr. Johnson about it.

Jean suggested that for the presentation slides an outline should be developed to show where the different slides are located (e.g., the number on the slide). She said that she and Beverly will write a report on the status of the Program. Barbara, Virginia, and Marcia volunteered to help with it. It was decided that this report group will meet in June, or as soon thereafter, to discuss it.

### **Library Liaison Program**

Jean asked whether anyone would like to provide a report on what documents are moving at their libraries. She reported that the multi-lingual sell sheets are not popular at her library (Damascus). Linda said that the Maggie Nightingale library is very small and documents do not move as quickly there as other places. Jean noted that the Life Transition folders are moving quickly at her library.

Jean mentioned that on the CoA's website, the entire Life Transition folder has wound up as one big document. She stated that it should be broken out by the different documents that make up the folder. David suggested that the Committee could have a conversation with Chris Doyle of the website staff to discuss this. He stated that it would be nice if the Committee could have a link to the entire file and then at that link have the different documents with each of their own links. He is not sure whether staffer Tremayne Jones can do that so maybe the Committee should wait and ask Chris. In the meantime, a user is able to select specific pages to print.

Jean reminded the group that, at the last Committee meeting, members discussed reviewing and updating the CoA fact sheets that are available at Ambassador presentations. Marie Sloan is looking at the Hearing Fact Sheet. Linda reviewed the Social Isolation Fact Sheet. Linda commented that it was written during the Pandemic and it needs to be updated. Beverly noted that the Communications Committee's responsibility is to review the fact sheets and, if they need to be updated, return them to the Committee(s) that prepared them for updating. Linda agreed, suggesting that the Communications Committee return them with suggestions for the updates. Virginia and Barbara agreed that the H&W committee should be the one that updates the fact sheets that it prepared.

David stated that he prepared the layouts of the fact sheets. He said that when the Committee started discussing Social Isolation it led to a conversation on Hearing Loss. Some of the information in the different fact sheets is tied together. The H&W Committee is very selective regarding the resources it presents on them. The H&W Committee will need to think the update through carefully. And a copyright date will be included on each one. Linda asked whether David knows of any other County Commissions that prepare fact sheets. David did not know. Jean reiterated that Linda will send her comments to the H&W Committee. Beverly said that she will have Marie also send her comments on the Hearing Access Fact Sheet to the Committee. Jean said that we will follow up with Stephanie Edelstein on her comments on the Resources Fact Sheet.

## **April Meeting Action Item List**

Looking at the Action Items list from the April meeting, Jean noted that the County's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds are gone for the Access Hears Program. Tina confirmed that they are. However, the County will be giving out 480 hearing devices. Tina said that the County is evaluating hearing needs, and there is a need for the devices. But this program consumes staff time. Barbara asked whether there is any data regarding the use of the program. Tina responded that there is and staff are still working on it.

Linda asked, "When was the last time a *50+ in Montgomery County* program was done regarding hearing loss and available services?" She suggested that maybe doing a *50+* episode would be a way to amplify the County's hearing aid program. David noted that Carrie Nieman, MD, an Otolaryngologist in North Bethesda, appeared on *50+* a few years ago. It would be nice to hear from her again. [Dr. Nieman was a guest in October 2023.]

Beverly and Jean discussed the Action Item about the Life Transitions folder and preparing a flyer about it. Barbara said that the full document still needs to be available, but a flyer with a QR code would be nice. Also include the names of the individual documents that are part of the folder. Tina volunteered to prepare the flyer with David's help. Marcia said that there should be more information than just a QR code, maybe also include website information.

Tina noted that she will take 50 Life Transition folders to the older adult event on Friday, May 24. David said that he would take some, too.

## **Review/update of County's Senior Website**

Jean discussed the April meeting with Chris Doyle where the County's new Senior website was discussed. Chris said that the new site will be up at the end of May. Jean is working with staffer Shawn Brennan about reviewing it. Jean asked whether there are any volunteers on the Committee to test the new website. Marcia and Linda volunteered. Jean said that the Committee needs to get access to the website to test it. Linda suggested that there is a way to do it rather than wait for the site to go live. Tina agreed, there should be a test link. Jean said, however, that the Committee does not have access to a test environment. Jean stated that she is not yet sure when Chris hopes to have the Senior site ready.

## ***50+ in Montgomery County* Update**

Jean discussed the upcoming *50+* shows. The May show was with Maryland Secretary on Aging, Carmel Roques, and was very good. World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) is scheduled for June. There will also be a *Beacon* ad about WEAAD. A tribute to Austin Heyman is planned for July that will feature an in-person intimate discussion with folks who worked closely with him. A video of him will be included. The September show will be about older adult employment and October will be about caregivers.

- May – Longevity Ready Maryland

- June – WEAAD
- July – (Potential) Tribute to Austin

Planning Committee meets 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of each month

### **Final Thoughts**

Marcia said that there is an outreach effort in the County to have volunteers work on a scam initiative.

Virginia said that AARP is sponsoring the Rolling Stones Tour.

### **Adjourn**

## Action Items

1. A Communications Committee workgroup will be meeting next week to discuss how to make the Ambassador program more standard. **Set to meet 5/31/2024**
2. The Health and Wellness (H&W) Committee would like to add a couple of slides to the Ambassador presentation. They are to submit the slides to Beverly and Jean by Wednesday, May 29. **Beverly will send Barbara S a note.**
3. Marcia will send Jean and Beverly a copy of the Ambassador presentation slide about County libraries. **Beverly will send Marcia a note.**
4. Ambassadors should request a certain amount of time to give the presentations and the presentations should be recorded. **To be discussed at workgroup meeting on 5/31.**
5. Tina volunteered to ask Dr. Johnson for an update on posting a presentation request form on the CoA website. **6/3 note from Tina: Dr. Johnson indicated that there was a “pause” for the summer on this request and we will pick it back up in September.**
6. Jean and Beverly will write a report on the status of the Ambassador Program. Barbara, Virginia, and Marcia volunteered to help with it. It was decided that this report group will meet in June to discuss it. **Beverly will send a Doodle poll to everyone**
7. The Committee should have a conversation with Chris Doyle of the website staff to discuss breaking out the Life Transition folder on the CoA website by the different documents that make up the folder. Perhaps have a link to the entire file and then at that link have the different documents with each of their own links. **Jean will ask David E to discuss this with Chris.**
8. The Communications Committee’s responsibility is to review CoA fact sheets and, if they need to be updated, return them to the Committee(s) that prepared them for updating. Linda will send her comments on the Social Isolation Fact Sheet to the H&W Committee. Beverly will have Marie send her comments on the Hearing Access Fact Sheet to the Committee. Jean said that we will follow up with Stephanie Edelstein on her comments on the Resources Fact Sheet. **Beverly will send notes to Linda and Marie to have them send comments to H&W Committee. Jean will follow up with Stephanie.**
9. A 50+ episode should be made that would amplify the County’s hearing aid program. Carrie Nieman, MD, an Otolaryngologist, appeared on 50+ in the past. It would be nice to hear from her again. **Jean noted that Carrie was a guest in October 2023.**
10. Tina and David will prepare a flyer about the Life Transition folder with a QR code and website information. **Beverly will send a note to Tina and David about this.**