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**Advisory Committee on IHSS Meeting**  
**August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM**  
**Via Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/96661645699>**  
**Dial +1 669 900 9128 US**  
**Meeting ID: 966 6164 5699**

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## MINUTES

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**Committee Members Present:** Sandra Johnson – *Acting Chair*, Warren Cushman, Pamela Jacob.

**Public Authority Staff Present:** Marcella Velasquez – *PA Executive Director*, Saundra Pearson, Hyun, J. Kim, Mitzi Richardson.

**AAS/IHSS Staff Present:** Faith Battles – *AAS Assistant Agency Director*, Everett Robinson, Nicole Hayes, Sheila Reyes.

### **I. Call to Order & Introductions**

- 1) Meeting was called to order at 1:35 pm by Sandra Johnson, *Acting Chair*.
- 2) Overview of Zoom Meeting features and functions by Hyun J. Kim.
- 3) Self-Introductions.

### **II. Action Item: Agenda Additions and/or Revisions**

- 1) Sandra Johnson asked if there are any additions to the agenda.
- 2) Marcella Velasquez recommended passing on the break. Everyone agreed.
- 3) Pamela Jacob would like to discuss the ongoing fraud in IHSS and Caregiver/Provider relationship.

### **III. Action Item: Approval of Agenda**

- 1) Sandra Johnson asked for agenda approval. Moved to approve the agenda by Warren Cushman. Seconded by Pamela Jacob. Motion carried.

### **IV. Adult & Aging Services Updates**

- 1) Alameda County / Social Services Agency (SSA) / In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Budget presented by Faith Battles at 1:42 pm
  - a. Previous budget for fiscal year 2019-2020 was without any major exceptions and looked typical of budget years past. We had a gap that we were able to fill without extraordinary effort. Any additional gaps based on the state’s budget will result in County agencies having to close additional gaps which we will do creatively utilizing value-based budgeting visioning. Currently the County has no plans of limiting services and will continue to move through in terms of Adult and Aging Services (AAS). Budget: \$192 million for AAS Department, \$3.672 million for Public Authority.
  - b. Before the onset of COVID-19, the County enjoyed a very good financial footing including a high credit score a reserve. This has helped us absorb some of the gaps in the budget that needed to be closed as well as provide us solid footing for facing any future gaps.
  - c. Per Warren Cushman, “we don’t know what the federal government is going to do, the

state budget discussions don't know what the county discussions are, and a lot of unknowns. We should be vigilant in terms of these discussions.”

- i. Federal government would back fill those cuts, but we may know how much money is going to be passed down to the state. We will have another forecast from the legislators.
- d. Question from Pamela Jacob, “what’s the budget for IHSS?” A little over a \$178 million for all IHSS per Faith Battles.
- e. Clarification from Marcella Velasquez, “we’re talking about admin budget?” Provider wages and benefits is around \$600 million.

## 2) COVID-19 Impact

The Social Services Agency is responsible for care and shelter of its residents in a natural disaster, which the pandemic is. We are obligated to operate the County’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and staff it daily. The effort to house at risk unsheltered community members is being facilitated through the County’s “Project Room Key” initiative which started with two (2) hotels in Oakland. One of the hotels housed unsheltered community members that have been exposed to COVID-19 and need to self-quarantine. The second hotel is for unsheltered community members that have tested positive for COVID-19 and need to self-quarantine. The County is working with other shelters throughout the county to decompress their population to assure social distancing can happen safely and consistently.

- a. The hotels are 80% full and IHSS has offered services to eligible individuals.
- b. The County expanded our Project Room Key initiative with hotels in Berkeley, Livermore, and Fremont. IHSS can make referrals for these hotels.
- c. Every county employee can be deployed to be a Disaster Service Worker (DSW) and can be assigned to support these hotels, in addition to other assignments.
- d. Shortage of food or food insecurity is a major issue during the pandemic. Alameda County Community Food Bank (ACCFB) has tripled its food distribution; providing 800 carts of food a day which serves 1,000 families. We have deployed several AAS staff as DSWs to support the work at the ACCFB.
- e. There could be a wave of people facing eviction due to the pandemic and the County could see an increase in unsheltered community members.
- f. AAS staff took advantage of leave time in response to the pandemic. At one point, agency wide, 20% of our staff are in and out of the office to care for their minor children.
- g. Most of the department’s efforts for our client population has been around senior nutrition. With the onset of the pandemic congregate meals have been discontinued and everyone can receive meals delivered to their homes or they can drive by and pick up their meals safely.
- h. With the Shelter-in-Place (SIP) order, the state offered various accommodations to support AAS staff completing their work safely. For example, IHSS Social Workers can complete annual reassessments by phone to avoid having to visit the IHSS Recipient in the home.
- i. The County continues to purchase Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all department staff. The County provided every county employee with two washable cloth face masks as well to keep safe while working.
- j. Out monthly data indicates our intake applications are down for IHSS because people are staying inside, sheltering in place and are not being referred for services. We expect that numbers will be back up once SIP is lifted.
- k. Great Plates Delivered program has been distributing restaurant meals to eligible seniors since May 2020. The contract has the capacity to serve 1,000 eligible recipients until the program is discontinued by FEMA.

1. Pamela Jacob would like to thank AAS/IHSS management and staff for all the efforts and support they are providing to the community. Per Faith Battles, it is important for county staffs to hear appreciation from clients and acknowledging them for what they do.

## **V. Public Authority Updates**

- 1) Public Authority Updates presented by PA Staff at 2:05 pm
- 2) COVID-19 related update - Emergency Back Up Provider System (EBU)
  - a. Mitzi Richardson have put in a request that PA implement a back-emergency program. Alameda County registry can only be our back-up providers. There's an additional \$2/hour pay differential for back-up providers; we're able to do a large pool to do this work when recipients lost their existing provider due to COVID.
  - b. Losing an existing provider, registry can recruit to match recipients to a provider. PA will sign for the provider as far as provider enrollment and will screen. There are 915 screened referrals so far since March 2020, but only ten have qualified for the emergency back-up provider. Application has been extended till the end of December 2020.
  - c. Pamela Jacob asked, "Is there a phone number to call?" Per Mitzi, call the PA registry line and we can connect them.
  - d. Alameda County's number is not low compared to other counties. Recipients were not impacted as originally expected. Providers are continuing to provide care to recipients.
    - i. Question from Pamela Jacob, "are you experiencing recipients who have not been seen every day?" Answer is No. Providers were all tested. For instance, if recipient is diagnosed with COVID, and their provider left, then recipient will be eligible for emergency back-up. They need to sign a registry form. Per Pamela Jacob, those people are heroes who are putting their life at risk.
- 3) PPE for IHSS providers – Sandra Pearson reported that PPE are available for pickup since April. All providers can pick up equipment. Essential protective gear can also be requested now by recipients from IHSS. These kits are for recipients, consisting of five masks and ten gloves. We have a fair number of people that come daily and pick up the kits. The number of PPE given out so far is 3,498.
- 4) Provider enrollment updates – In view of COVID, some requirements were waived in order for recipients to get providers. PA are supposed to resume regular provider orientation enrollment in September; to conduct in person or online orientations. With our enrollments, we still have a steady flow of enrollment packets.
- 5) Training Update provided by Hyun Kim. During shelter in place, PA launched a webinar with zoom. We had double the number of registrants. Over 70 people signed up. There are new trainings offered including COVID-19.
  - a. Question from Sandra Johnson, "if we want to sign up, how do we register for training classes?" Call the training registration phone number 510-577-3554.

## **VI. Recruitment**

- 1) Recruitment discussion at 2:18 pm – Per Sandra Johnson, "we need to recruit for our board." Warren Cushman is thinking of reaching out to organizations representing IHSS/agency related people that care about IHSS. Revised recruitment flyer will be sent out to AC members with a list of roles currently available. Sandra Johnson would like to forward it to several organizations. Pamela Jacob wants a description of what the committee does.
  - a. New AC Members – Clifford Shawn Costello was interviewed by Sandra Johnson and Warren Cushman. Advisory Committee fully accept his application to be a member of the committee.
  - b. Subcommittees – Per Sandra Johnson, the committee should be concentrating on

recruitment, which is the most important right now, and committee members agreed.

## **VII. Action Item: Vote by Members**

- 1) Vote taken by members at 2:22 pm
- 2) Vote for new Chair
  - a. Sandra Johnson asked members to nominate a new AC Chair.
  - b. Warren Cushman moved to nominate Sandra Johnson as the new Chair. Seconded by Pamela Jacob. Motion carried.
- 3) Vote on Mr. Clifford Shawn Costello to be a member of the Advisory Committee
  - a. Warren Cushman and Sandra Johnson interviewed AC candidate, Mr. Shawn Costello on Wednesday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 via TEAMS meeting. Pamela Jacob wasn't able to join the interview as she was ill.
  - b. Warren Cushman moved to approve Mr. Costello as a new committee member. Seconded by Pamela Jacob. Motion carried.
- 4) Mr. Costello has been voted in by the AC-IHSS to be a member of the committee with a position as Consumer under 65.
- 5) PA Executive Director Marcella Velasquez will present Mr. Costello to the Board of Supervisors for his appointment as a new member of the Advisory Committee.

## **VIII. Other Discussion Items**

- 1) Other topics discussed by Committee members at 2:25 pm.
- 2) Legislative update & budget impacts of Covid-19 on IHSS
  - a. Per Warren Cushman, the impact of COVID-19 to the budget must be communicated and must watch the issue of moving parts with Federal and State. Mr. Cushman said, "be vigilant about this and move forward."
- 3) Back-up IHSS Registry and how to plan for emergencies
  - a. Warren Cushman's concern is nobody knows how long COVID will exist. We need to plan for emergencies and how to deal with it. There seems to be an interplay with SSA and EOC, but who does what and where SSA sits to emergency preparedness with regards to disaster?
  - b. Per Faith Battles, questions about food or shelter is handled by SSA. This agency is responsible for disaster related needs such as food, care, and shelter. Sheriffs has the say with emergency operations and EOC are responsible for it.
  - c. Warren Cushman would like to know who's the EOC contact person.
  - d. Faith Battles will send the EOC head contact information to the committee via email.
- 4) Relationship with SEIU 2015 Union and what the union asks for during Covid-19
  - a. What's going on? IHSS and SEIU 2015 labor organization met in April for their quarterly meeting. Per Marcella Velasquez, "we discussed distribution of PPE, the directive from CDSS was that Public Authority be the lead organization in distributing the PPE. We also must track and report back to CDSS. SEIU 2015 asked to participate, so in conjunction with SEIU 2015 we were able to get the word out to all members, PA created flyers/handouts to spread the word out for those eligible. Criteria for disbursement has changed."
  - b. SEIU is willing to assist IHSS with Emergency Back-up System. We advertised in the lobby, websites (IHSS and PA). There's an extra \$2/hr. for EBU providers.
  - c. During the pandemic, there are changes in regulations; CARES act, IHSS providers became eligible for COVID related sick leave thru December 31, 2020 for a maximum of two (2) weeks. COVID leave is an addition to the 16 hours Sick leave.
  - d. When COVID first hit, we anticipated providers might lose benefits due to recipients being hospitalized or turned positive to COVID and not able to work. Therefore, in

March, providers were authorized a “hold harmless” period where benefits were not terminated. Fortunately, the majority of providers have been able to retain benefits and continue working.

- e. According to Pamela Jacob, “some of the providers are reducing” in her building. Is there any provision to extend the one month?
  - i. Health benefits are negotiated benefit. There is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between PA and SEIU. There is a ceiling for providers to qualify for eighty (80) hours of work. Any potential in light of COVID, the decision made by Board of Supervisors have to be agreed upon by SEIU, who represent providers.
- 5) CICA Membership / Annual Dues / CICA Rep(s)
  - a. Sandra Johnson would like to know about CICA annual dues and how many representatives are allowed.
    - i. Payment for CICA membership has been processed. It is \$1000/yr. membership. Alameda County PA is part of CICA.
    - ii. Sandra Johnson and Warren Cushman have been attending the CICA meeting.
    - iii. How many representatives are we entitled to? Marcella Velasquez will reach out to Mr. Bean, Executive Director of CICA to verify this information.
    - iv. Per Warren Cushman, CICA is doing a really good job in reaching out to members. “Glad to hear we’re renewing membership and I find it really helpful and informative.”
    - v. CICA will be doing webinars in the future.
- 6) Next Advisory Committee Meeting (Oct/Nov/Dec)
  - a. Marcella Velasquez would like to recommend that the Advisory meets on December 3, 2020 as Maxwell Park Room is booked quarterly or make zoom as back up.
  - b. Rooms are a little difficult to reserve. Subsequently hold meeting virtually.
  - c. AC Members is concern about waiting till December with COVID changing so many things.
  - d. Consider meeting in October and look at that point on what’s to come.
  - e. Sandra Johnson prefers zoom meeting.
  - f. Everyone agreed to meet on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 via Zoom meeting.
- 7) February 2020 AC meeting minutes was sent to the members for review but is missing on the agenda for members approval. It will be an action item on the next Advisory Committee meeting in October.

#### **IX. Action Item: Ethics Training Compliance**

- 1) Sandra Johnson asked Pamela Jacob to complete Ethics training at 2:47 pm.
- 2) Pamela Jacob is having issue completing Ethics training due to lack of equipment or computer.
- 3) Per Sandra Johnson, Pamela Jacob should be able to do it on a cell phone or another alternative.

#### **X. Public Input (Time Limit: 3 minutes per speaker)**

- 1) There is no public input.

#### **XI. Meeting Adjourn**

- 1) Sandra Johnson asked if there’s anything else members would like to discuss; answer is no.
- 2) Warren Cushman moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Pamela Jacob.
- 3) Motion carried and meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm.