

MINUTES: ADVISORY BOARD ON AGING – Wednesday, April 17, 2019 – 9:00 a.m.
Veronica “Roni” Chenowith Activity Center, 1707 Fallston Rd., Fallston, MD 21047

Members Present: H. Murphy (Rotating Chairperson); K. Cooke, T. Fitzgerald, D. Hanley, M. Kennedy, S. Rattman, C. Sconion **Members Absent:** J. Apperson, A. Callender, M. DiDomenico, A. DiGuardo, L. Garrison, S. Haviland, S. Kelly, D. Klug, P. Lovett, M. Panowicz, C. Patton, T. Poffenberger, K. Robb-McGrath **Staff:** K. Winkowski, M. Pagano **Speaker:** A. Biggs

Introductions: Karen Winkowski and Heather Murphy facilitated the meeting. After self-introductions of attendees, Ms. Ashley Biggs, guest presenter, was welcomed.

Approval of Minutes, October 2018: Approved as submitted by present members and approved electronically by absent members to meet the quorum.

Presentation: Ashley Biggs, MD State Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped, shared information about this agency’s services, which are aimed to promote accessibility to reading resources for eligible participants. To be eligible for this free library service, clients must be certified by a medical or vision specialist, confirming that the client has a physical impairment (visual, physical, hearing, etc.) that prevents them from accessing library services on their own. A paper application must be completed which can be filled out by the medical, nursing, visual or other caregiver professional. The application is usually processed within 3 days; an audio player will usually arrive in 2 weeks. Clients must be cognitively able (they must be able to understand the reading materials). Clients are provided with an audio player so they can enjoy audio books. Books are recorded by a voice actor (not an electronic voice). The player has a 29-hour battery, a plug for a wall outlet, headset, pillow speaker (for private listening), breath switch (used by paraplegics), and a remote control to maximize use of audio books. The player can be adjusted at multiple settings for tone, volume, and other listening comforts. Buttons on the player are designed to accommodate vision-impaired users. Books are recorded on a device that inserts easily into the player. Personalized service is offered—the Library will work with individuals to record books of interest to them. Like any library, users are asked to return books when they are finished reading them. Books are mailed to recipients in special cartons. The US Post Office accommodates audio book mailouts. Books can also be provided using a mobile app or loaded onto a flash drive. Currently, the Library stocks over 110,000 books and 100 magazines. ADA compliant assistive technology is provided by the Library throughout various community library sites in the State. It is estimated that 112,000 persons in Maryland have visual impairments; the Library has reached about 8,000 of these persons. Of those reached, about 60% of them are over age 60, of that 60%, about 50% are aged 80+. When a client no longer wants the player, it is returned to the Library, refurbished, and reissued to another client. Service can be extended to homeless shelters and care facilities (since they have viable mailing address). The program is available in every state in the US, so if a client leaves Maryland, their account can be transferred to another state. There is also an international office in Washington, DC. For more information, visit www.lbph@maryland.gov

New Business: Heather Murphy will continue serving as Rotating Chairperson of the Advisory Board on Aging for another term (to end April 2020). Four board members whose terms will end 6/21/19 have applied for reappointment to another 3-year term.

Old Business: Heather Murphy reported that on behalf of the Board, she provided a letter of support to advocate for Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna’s application for funds to erect some housing units in Havre de Grace for low income citizens, helping them to remain independent in homes of their own.

Administrator's Report (Karen Winkowski): ●Aberdeen Senior Center was damaged in a severe wind storm over a year ago and has re-opened after being closed several months for repairs. During the repair time, participants from Aberdeen were redirected to the Havre de Grace Senior Activity Center, which proved successful. Most of the transferred participants enjoyed Havre de Grace's programs and were content to remain there. Havre de Grace's program numbers increased, such as for classes and the nutrition program. Due to this success, it was decided that effective February 2019, the Aberdeen center would serve the community better as a Parks & Recreation site for multi-generational programs, while Havre de Grace absorbed the senior population previously active at Aberdeen. It has been a win-win situation for the Office on Aging's senior center programs and Parks & Recreation's programs. The Aberdeen Golden Age Club is now a Parks & Recreation function. ●Census 2020 planning is underway. The Census will be conducted electronically, which may prove difficult for seniors who have no access to computers or who are not comfortable using a computer. The Office on Aging (OOA) is planning sessions for seniors to complete their census at a senior center computer lab with assistance from a trained volunteer. Funding for most OOA and other County programs is determined by demographics; it is important that seniors be counted to facilitate more funding for senior programs. The Census 2020 process will begin in March 2020; each household must complete the census. Post cards will be mailed with a unique identifier number that will provide online access to complete the census. It is against the law not to complete a Census. "Census Day" kick-off will be April 1, 2020. If a household fails to complete a census online, another post card will be mailed. If the household still does not complete their census, a census representative will visit them; after that, a paper form will be mailed. Completing the census by phone is an alternative. It was suggested that if Census 2020 issues automated calls to citizens, Harford County may want to also issue automated calls ahead of time to alert citizens that Census 2020 calls are not scams. ●The Office on Aging is now working on the annual Area Plan, a major document required by the MD Dept. of Aging for applying for federal (Older Americans Act) Title III and Title VII funds, which fund most of the Office on Aging's programs. This year's Plan will project data for the next 4 fiscal years. ●Office on Aging staffing: We have hired a part-time health insurance counselor to process Medicare and other health insurance calls (our existing contractor handling insurance calls is still with us; we have also utilized a Senior Solutions worker to assist with insurance calls). We are planning 4 seminars in April and May to educate persons who will be new to Medicare this year (registration is required). We are planning to bring 2 more independent contractors on board to assist with other programs. Our Outreach Division is fully staffed although additional staff will always be needed to manage the growing numbers of clients. ●Our Guardianship program has had challenges placing clients in assisted living facilities, due to lack of funding or inability to qualify for medical need (some clients suffer from mental illness but not physical illness which makes it difficult to get placement for them).

Announcements: ●Heather Murphy announced the Abilities Network has job openings for part time summer hours, helping seniors pack for moving/downsizing. Contact Heather for more information. ●Sue Rattman (The Arc) has been involved in some new programs: serving clients birth-through-death; service access with "no wrong door"; and planning for the future.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 19, 9:00 a.m.; location will be 2nd floor conference room at Office on Aging, 145 N. Hickory Ave., Bel Air, MD 21014. Guest presenter will be Vicki Rahenkamp, Affiliated Sante Group, which administers the new Mobile Crisis Center in Bel Air. A future guest presenter may be Sharon Lipford or Amanda Krisher, Mental Health Administration, to talk about mental health support for seniors. Another suggestion was made that MedStar in Bel Air may allow us to use their conference room for meetings.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Pagano, Harford County Office on Aging