



# CITY OF LAS CRUCES

The following are the summary minutes of the **Senior Programs Advisory Board** meeting held on Thursday, April 11, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Henry Benavidez Community Center, located at 1045 McClure Road, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

## **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Chair Gabriel Montalvo, Munson Center Representative  
Vice-Chair Belinda Soto, Henry Benavidez Recreation Center Representative  
Secretary Judy Chavarria, Member-at-Large  
Steve Gaskell, District 1 Representative  
Mona Bedale, District 2 Representative  
Yolanda Knodle, District 4 Representative  
Kirk Loudon, District 6 Representative  
David Hernandez, Eastside Center Representative  
Jo Ann Rodriguez-Haught, Frank O'Brien Papen Center Representative

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Larry Altamirano, Sage Café Senior Center Representative

## **GUESTS PRESENT:**

Ann Snow, Guest  
Nora Barraza, New Mexico Non-Metro Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council Board Member  
Roxanne Weeks, Guest  
Terry Cummings, Guest  
Charles Tucker, City of Las Cruces Inspector General  
Chris Behrens, Recreation Facility Manager  
Toni G. Flores, Recording Secretary

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Gabriel Montalvo, Munson Center Representative, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, April 11, 2024.
2. **ROLL CALL:** Roll call was taken and a quorum was ascertained.
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice-Chair, Belinda Soto, Henry Benavidez Recreation Center Representative.
4. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** The Board observed a moment of silence.
5. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:** A motion was made by Secretary Judy Chavarria, Member-at-Large. Motion seconded by Mona Bedale, District 2 Representative. All in favor. Motion passed.

1 **6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Board Members had no conflict of interest with any  
2 item on the agenda.

3  
4 **7. INTRODUCTIONS:** Guests Ann Snow; Nora Barraza, New Mexico Non-Metro  
5 Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council Board Member; Roxanne Weeks, Terry  
6 Cummings; and Charles Tucker, City of Las Cruces Inspector General introduced  
7 themselves.

8  
9 **8. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Nora Barraza, NMAAA Advisory Council Member, reported  
10 that she feels honored to represent the seniors of Doña Ana County on the  
11 Advisory Council. Dona Ana County is part of PSA4. Las Cruces will be hosting a  
12 NMAAA summit at Hotel Encanto for seniors and providers across the state on  
13 April 17, 2024. Board Members are invited. Ms. Barraza felt that the senior  
14 programs, especially home delivery meals, are underfunded. She hoped to  
15 advocate for additional funding for services as well as for seniors to travel to the  
16 Advisory Council meetings. She was invited to attend Board meetings every  
17 quarter. She also asked for things to report at the meeting next at the NMAAA  
18 Advisory Council meeting to be held next week. She provided her contact  
19 information: 575-640-5637 and her e-mail address is [noralbarraza@yahoo.com](mailto:noralbarraza@yahoo.com).

20  
21 Roxanne Weeks, member of the public, reported that she took an art class on  
22 Monday. She is volunteering to teach classes if needed, anything in language,  
23 Spanish, English, English as a Second Language, French, reading, writing, and  
24 speaking. She asked what services the Center performs and are there people  
25 there not being served and why. She indicated that transportation is the main  
26 problem for most people. There was a general discussion about pharmacies and  
27 markets in Doña Ana.

28  
29 Ann Snow, a member of the public, was concerned about the social engagement  
30 of seniors. She felt that the senior centers should operate for longer hours so  
31 seniors could get more social contact. She asked Charles Tucker, Inspector  
32 General for the City of Las Cruces, what his duties were.

33  
34 C. Tucker reported that his duties are to investigate fraud, waste, and abuse within  
35 the City. He looks for mismanagement of funds, services, vehicles, personnel, and  
36 money. He reports directly to the City Manager. He can investigate anybody at  
37 any time that receives anything from the City. He uses the Benavidez Center from  
38 2:00 to 4:00 on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month. He will try to help  
39 where he can. He described the process of getting a permit to hold a trunk sale  
40 on City property.

41  
42 It was reported that expanding facility hours and adding recreational activities is a  
43 budget request that has been submitted for consideration. For FY25 a request was  
44 made for three part-time contract staff members to help staff facilities, set up and  
45 tear down equipment, etc. Then the additional programming can be added. That

1 budget has not yet been approved. If it is, more activities and hours of operation  
2 will be added.  
3

4 Ann Snow indicated that she was not necessarily talking about programming, but  
5 just allowing the centers to stay open longer so people can meet and visit in the  
6 Benavidez Recreation Center.  
7

8 It was reported morning hours at this facility are used to prep home delivered  
9 meals, so people meeting to visit would not have anywhere to sit. The Munson  
10 Senior Center is open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for socializing. The Sage Cafe Senior  
11 Center opens at 9:00 a.m. Staff is trying to get all the centers open from 8:00 to  
12 5:00, but currently there is not enough staff or funding. They are working on it.  
13

14 N. Barraza indicated that the NMAAA works on getting funding for both food and  
15 places to socialize for elders.  
16

17 There was discussion about Dial-A-Ride, social activities, dances, and the  
18 limitations of those services. Suggestion was made for someone to bring those  
19 limitations to City Council. Another suggestion was made to invite Mike  
20 Bartholomew, City Transit Director, to attend the next advisory board meeting, if  
21 available, to hear these comments. There was a discussion with C. Tucker  
22 regarding difficulty communicating or contacting him.  
23

24 **9. ACTION ITEMS:**  
25

26 **9.1. APPROVAL OF MARCH 14, 2024 SENIOR PROGRAMS ADVISORY**  
27 **BOARD MEETING MINUTES:** Y. Knodle requested that on "page 3, line  
28 19 that "Board members" be changed to "Vice Chair B. Medina." Secretary  
29 Judy Chavarria moved to approve the March 14, 2024 Senior Programs  
30 Advisory Board meeting minutes as amended. Motion second by Mona  
31 Bedale. Motion passed unanimously.  
32

33 **10. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**  
34

35 **10.1. SENIOR PROGRAMS DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**  
36

37 In Senior Programs Deputy Director Sonia Saldana's absence, Chris  
38 Behrens reported on the Senior Programs FY25 budget. He stated the  
39 budget is with City Council now for review and approval. The Non-Metro  
40 Area Agency on Aging will be conducting an onsite audit of Senior Programs  
41 the week of April 29, 2024. There is a new contractor for Spanish classes  
42 and the class will be starting week after next. Registration for Beginner  
43 Spanish I and advanced courses will be launching next week. Tuition is  
44 free and class size is limited to 15 per class. There are many new recreation  
45 instructors coming onboard. The Frank O'Brien Papen Center will have

1 many new activities starting soon. Saturday dances have been canceled  
2 due to lack of funds. The cover charge for the Thursday dances is \$3 and  
3 the quarterly dances will be free of charge, as well as the Halloween dance.  
4 All activities are open for anyone who can make it to the venue.  
5

6 **12. UPDATES:**

7  
8 **11.1. CHAIR AND BOARD MEMBERS:**

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10 Jo Ann Rodriguez-Haught reported that things are good in her area. She  
11 reported that City vehicles are still parked in the main parking lot, but they  
12 are down at the far end, so it is not such a bother. A suggestion was made  
13 to bring the issue of concern to Claudia Chavez, Parks and Recreation  
14 Administrator. There are many people coming to the Center and many of  
15 them are new people.  
16

17 Yolanda Knodle reported that last month's dance was great. Everyone was  
18 pleased with the visit from LCPD.  
19

20 Steve Gaskill reported a choking incident that occurred at Munson Center.  
21 He reported a dining room volunteer performed the Heimlich Maneuver on  
22 the participant and saved the participant's life. He hopes the volunteer will  
23 receive recognition from the Mayor. Staff will speak with the volunteer to  
24 see if she is fine with that, but there will be an acknowledgement at the  
25 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner that will be held in April 2024. It was  
26 announced there will be a short interview with KTSM and the plan is to  
27 discuss the Respite Care Program. Other interviews are planned. S. Gaskell  
28 reported there are many new people attending the meals program. He  
29 reported that one of the seniors has made the unofficial slogan of Munson  
30 Center "Come for the Hugs, Stay for the Food."  
31

32 Discussion followed regarding medical insurance. Seniors without  
33 insurance are referred to the State Income Support Division to see what  
34 programs they qualify for. A request was made to ask someone from that  
35 office to speak to the Board about resources available for low-income  
36 individuals. La Clinica uses a sliding scale for their fees and charges.  
37

38 David Hernandez, Eastside Center Representative, continues to be  
39 concerned about the road striping on McClure and people driving with pets  
40 on their laps in their cars. He expressed concern about the homeless  
41 people dragging their shopping carts down the middle of the road and  
42 yelling at people in cars.  
43

44 Mona Bedale reported that a new client at the Frank O'Brien Papen Center  
45 had picked up a menu at the library and suggested the different centers

1 should be listed on the menu with contact information for each of the  
2 centers. More Senior Programs' newsletters and Access magazines should  
3 be placed in the library with a page dedicated to the senior centers. Staff  
4 will look into that. Activities are being advertised in the Bulletin as well as  
5 on the City website.

6  
7 Staff reported that they spoke to Mr. David Sedillo about the striping on  
8 McClure and they do not know if Roads Department will get around to doing  
9 that any time soon. They will provide contact information to Board Members  
10 so they can call, if needed. Suggestion was made to invite the Directors of  
11 both Transit and Roads to a meeting. Report was made that the new  
12 electric buses are in and operators are being trained.

13  
14 It was announced there will be a presentation at the Munson Center on  
15 Friday, April 12, 2024, regarding what to do in the case of a fire at the home.  
16 The previous presentation was "Is your house compatible with your age?"

17  
18 AARP is sponsoring a free shredding event at the Walmart on Walton  
19 Avenue on April 27, 2024, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Members were  
20 asked to share information on social media.

21  
22 A driver's safety program will be held at the Good Samaritan Village on  
23 May 14, June 11, and July 3, 2024.

24  
25 First Light FCU has conference rooms available for free. The one at the  
26 Lohman branch is very impressive. The one at the Del Rey branch is  
27 smaller.

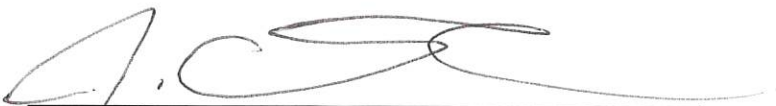
28  
29 Munson Center in partnership with the Branigan Library will be offering  
30 introductory technical classes at Munson Center. Anyone interested should  
31 contact Phoebe Yoder at the Munson Branch Library or the Branigan main  
32 desk.

33  
34 Vice Chair Belinda Soto announced that the food portion issues at the  
35 Benavidez Center that were previously reported have been resolved. She  
36 expressed interest in the presentation on brain health. C. Behrens reported  
37 he is working on local day trips for seniors. The suggestion was made to  
38 talk to David Armijo at SCRTD about transportation.

39  
40 Charles Tucker apologized if he failed to contact anyone and encouraged  
41 everyone to e-mail him if needed. He also mentioned that Councilor  
42 Bencomo hosted an open house and Southwest New Mexico's legal aide  
43 was there. He encouraged Board Members to attend those to get  
44 information.

1 Motion was made to meet every other month instead of monthly. Board  
2 Members discussed that sometimes things come up and then the Board  
3 would not know about it until very late. A suggestion was made to try  
4 meeting every other month through the summer as a test. A vote was taken,  
5 and the motion failed. Monthly meetings will continue.  
6

7 **13. ADJOURNMENT:** Motion by Yolanda Knodle, section by Vice Chair  
8 Belinda Soto. Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.  
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12  
13  
14 Chairperson