



CITY OF LAS CRUCES

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3 The following are the summary minutes of the **Senior Programs Advisory Board**
4 meeting held on Thursday, May 9, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Munson Center,
5 located at 975 S. Mesquite, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

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7 **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

8 Acting Chair Belinda Soto, Henry Benavidez Recreation Center Representative
9 Secretary Judy Chavarria, Member-at-Large
10 Steve Gaskell, District 1 Representative
11 Mona Bedale, District 2 Representative
12 Yolanda Knodle, District 4 Representative
13 Martha Lopez, Munson Center Representative
14 David Hernandez, Eastside Center Representative
15 Jo Ann Rodriguez-Haught, Frank O'Brien Papen Center Representative
16 Larry Altamirano, Sage Café Senior Center Representative
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18 **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

19 Kirk Loudon, District 6 Representative
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21 **GUESTS PRESENT:**

22 Chris Behrens, Recreation Facility Manager
23 Peter Duran, CLC Codes Officer
24 Javier Ontiveros, CLC Codes Officer
25 Rosanne Gonzalez, Vamonos Transit Route Supervisor
26 Stephanie Arredondo, Vamonos Transit Route Supervisor
27 Mike Bartholomew, City of Las Cruces Transit Director
28 Toni Flores, Recording Secretary
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30 **1. CALL TO ORDER:** Acting Chair Belinda Soto called the meeting to order at 9:00
31 a.m. on Thursday, May 9, 2024, at the Munson Senior Center.
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33 **2. ROLL CALL:** Roll call was taken and a quorum was ascertained.
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35 **3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Larry
36 Altamirano, Sage Café Senior Center Representative.
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38 **4. MOMENT OF SILENCE:** The Board observed a moment of silence.
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40 **5. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:** Motion by Judy Chavarria, seconded by Larry
41 Altamirano. Motion passed.
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43 **6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Board Members had no conflict of interest with any
44 item on the agenda.

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7. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Peter Duran, CLC Codes Officer; Javier Ontiveros, CLC Codes Officer; Rosanne Gonzalez, Vamonos Transit Route Supervisor; Stephanie Arredondo, Vamonos Transit Route Supervisor; Mike Bartholomew, City of Las Cruces Transit Director and Martha Lopez, newly appointed Munson Center Representative were introduced and welcomed.

8. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

9. **ACTION ITEMS:**

9.1. **APPROVAL OF APRIL 11, 2024 SENIOR PROGRAMS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES:** Motion by Judy Chavarria, second by Steve Gaskell. Motion passed.

10. **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

10.1. **VAMONOS UPDATES/CONCERNS:** David Hernandez expressed concerns about homeless people walking their shopping carts in the middle of the road and shouting at the drivers, interfering with traffic while begging and verbally abusing the drivers when the drivers do not give them money. Codes Officer Javier Ontiveros informed the Board, this is a police issue. City Council met regarding this behavior and do not seem supportive of the suggestions made by Codes Department. Board Members were advised to call the police on the non-emergency line if someone is obstructing traffic. Panhandling on public property is allowed, as the American Civil Liberties' Union (ACLU) sued the City of Las Cruces several years ago. Private property owners can call the police if panhandlers are trespassing. Secretary Judy Chavarria, Member at Large, expressed concern regarding a very old building on Mesquite and Hadley which the owner had removed the doors from. She expressed concern that the homeless who camp there will make a fire and burn the neighborhood down. It was stated the City has a list of buildings which Codes, Fire and Building offices track and can condemn the buildings, if needed. However, the process can take years and is very expensive. The City is also required to keep their properties clean just like private property owners.

David Hernandez, East Side Center Representative, expressed concerns about drivers with their pets in their lap while moving. The police have to see the person driving with their pet(s) on their laps to issue traffic citations or warnings. Mona Bedale, District 2 Representative, spoke about the Neighborhood Watch Program and cleanups in her neighborhood. She was advised to coordinate with Keep Las Cruces Beautiful for roll-offs and supplies for neighborhood cleanups. Board Members were reminded to call Dispatch at 575- 526-0795 first if there is an issue that needs immediate

1 attention. David Hernandez expressed concern about the junk, trash, sofas
2 and other things that have been left on the side of the road for months.
3 Apartments and other commercial properties do not automatically get
4 grappler service. It is difficult to track down the owners to have them pay
5 for the service. Board Members were reminded to call Dispatch to report
6 these issues and advised to ask for the Codes Officer to call back with
7 updates.

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9 The Dial-A-Ride service is being rebranded as Vamonos. These are the
10 small buses. Mike Bartholomew, Transit Director, reported that ridership is
11 up on both fixed route and Vamonos buses. There is no fare regardless of
12 which service you use. The Vamonos buses require proof of ADA
13 requirements before a client can ride them. The Vamonos buses are
14 federally funded. Clients must apply to use the Vamonos service.
15 Scheduling is done through the Via app. Vamonos is a shared ride service.
16 Caregivers are allowed to ride along as long as the client lets the service
17 know when making the appointment. SCRTD is an independent transit
18 district that has routes throughout Dona Ana County. Park and Ride is
19 operated by the NMDOT on weekdays for people to commute to work.
20 Ztrans is a private service that runs from Alamogordo to Las Cruces.
21 Greyhound also uses the Intermodal Center for a bus stop, but the tickets
22 are not available through the City. Mr. Bartholomew was thanked for the
23 update.

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25 **10.2. SENIOR PROGRAMS DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

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27 In Deputy Director Sonia Saldana's absence, Cris Behrens, Recreation
28 Facility Manager, reported senior centers will close the afternoon of
29 Wednesday, May 15, 2024, for scheduled in-service staff training. Flyers
30 were distributed to Board Members and also posted at the centers to inform
31 program participants of the closure. Staff training will be held at Munson
32 Center for all Quality of Life staff. The congregate meals program will be
33 moved to an earlier time to accommodate the congregate meals program
34 participants. Centers will also be closed on Wednesday, June 19, 2024, in
35 observance of the Juneteenth Independence Day Holiday. The demolition
36 on the south side of Munson Center building has been completed and now
37 the new construction can start. The *Six Pillars of Brain Health*
38 presentation/training will be scheduled at next month's board meeting. The
39 Non-Metro Area Agency on Aging has completed the Senior Programs'
40 annual on-site assessment. The auditor was very impressed with the
41 buildings and services. The records check is still in progress. The results
42 of the audit will be made available to the Board as they are received from
43 the State. The new fiscal year begins July 1, 2024, and the official budget
44 has not yet been approved, but the Board will be kept updated on the
45 progress.

1 **11. UPDATES:**

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3 **11.1. CHAIR AND BOARD MEMBERS:**

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5 It was reported that the meatloaf served at Eastside Center was lousy. It
6 was brought up to Patricia Bertoldo, Kitchen Supervisor. The lump gravy
7 was also discussed with Ms. Bertoldo. Ms. Bertoldo spoke to the new cook
8 to hopefully resolve the problem.
9

10 David Hernandez reported that the kitchen at the Eastside Center is short-
11 staffed. There are currently two new people in training.
12

13 Larry Altamirano reported that occasionally there have been two sides of
14 the same vegetable with the meal recently, which is unusual. The
15 continuing issue is the time required to take down the tables to be ready for
16 the exercise classes and the fact that people do not have enough time to
17 finish eating their meal. Serving stops at 12:30 and the dining room is
18 supposed to close at 1:00. The librarian has been trying to get people to
19 leave earlier. Staff is hoping to extend building hours to allow more time for
20 customers to eat their meal. The construction of the addition to the Sage
21 Cafe has started and is expected to be completed by next year so that the
22 dining room will no longer be needed for activities.
23

24 Steve Gaskell, District 1 Representative, reported that there have been
25 complaints about insufficient parking at Munson Center. Staff reported it is
26 due to the construction that is taking place on the south side of the building.
27 The south parking lot is not accessible to consumers because it has been
28 fenced off for the use of the construction crew equipment, but it will be
29 reopened for use once construction has been completed.
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31 Yolanda Knodle, District 4 Representative, reported that a few weeks ago
32 a senior from Benavidez Center reported that she was living in her car and
33 was looking for help. She referred the client to the case managers at the
34 center and the client returned a few days later happy that she was going to
35 get help. She was approached by a few clients asking about hot dogs and
36 hamburgers yesterday. She also reported watery gravy a few days ago.
37 The lines have been very long due to only one server working while the
38 others are preparing things for the next day. The broken window is boarded
39 up while the contractor orders replacement parts, the wall is patched, and
40 the new TV is already installed. The automatic doors have been repaired.
41 There are many new people attending activities as well.
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43 Jo Ann Rodriguez-Haught, Frank O'Brien Papen Center Representative,
44 reported that dogs are not allowed in restaurants unless they are service
45 dogs, but many places allow them because they do not want to offend the

1 customers. Those customers can be ticketed if they are caught in the
2 restaurant with a pet rather than a certified service dog. Other places can
3 let the dogs in at their discretion. It was reported that one day last week
4 they ran out of food and J. Rodriguez-Haught did not receive a meal. The
5 shortage of food was due to the Zumba class because it doubles the
6 number of congregate meal program participants, so there is not enough
7 food.

8
9 Acting Chair Belinda Soto reported that the dishes that are being used at
10 the Henry Benavidez Center are dirty. She provided an example of a glass
11 from the Benavidez Center. Board Members requested that Roger Bishop,
12 Nutrition Program Manager, or P. Bertoldo attend meetings to hear their
13 reports first-hand and address their concerns.

14
15 Board Members discussed suggestions for the parking problems and
16 getting people with wheelchairs safely into the building.

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18 **12. ADJOURNMENT:** A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Yolanda
19 Knodle and seconded by Secretary Judy Chavarria. Motion carried
20 unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

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Secretary Judy Chavarria