



# 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, August 8, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Henry  
5 Benavidez Recreation Center, located at 1045 McClure Road, Las Cruces, New Mexico.  
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## 7 **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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

17 Belinda Soto, Henry Benavidez Recreation Center Representative  
18 Carol A Gurule, District 3 Representative  
19 Yolanda Knodle, District 4 Representative  
20 Brendan Shannon, District 5 Representative  
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## 22 **GUESTS PRESENT:**

23 Sonia Saldana, Senior Programs Deputy Director  
24 Chris Behrens, Recreation Facility Manager  
25 Roger Bishop, Nutrition Program Manager  
26 Isaiah Prieto, Kitchen Supervisor  
27 Toni Flores, Recording Secretary  
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- 29 **1. CALL TO ORDER:** Acting Chair Judy Chavarria called the meeting to order at  
30 9:00 a.m. at the Henry Benavidez Recreation Center, 1045 McClure Road in Las  
31 Cruces, NM.  
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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 Acting Chair  
36 Judy Chavarria.  
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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 Larry Altamirano, seconded by Vice-  
41 Chair Steve Gaskell. Motion passed unanimously.  
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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:** Those present introduced themselves.

8. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Acting Chair Judy Chavarria discussed the quarterly newsletter that will be coming out from the State Senior Programs Office.

9. **ACTION ITEMS:**

a. **APPROVAL OF JUNE 13, 2024 SENIOR PROGRAMS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES:** Motion by Larry Altamirano, second by Steve Gaskell. Motion passed unanimously.

10. **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

a. **SENIOR PROGRAMS DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Sonia Saldana, Senior Programs Deputy Director, asked the Board to discuss their concerns regarding the food with Roger Bishop so that he could return to his duties. Board Members requested information about how the menu is determined. R. Bishop informed the Board there are seasonal cycle menus. Currently, the kitchens are using the summer cycle menu. The fall cycle starts in September and the winter cycle starts in December. The summer cycle includes more salads and light foods while the fall and winter cycles include more stews and casseroles. The kitchens also use the satisfaction surveys to determine which meals are more popular and they examine what other municipalities are doing with their Senior Programs' meals. Senior Programs uses cash in lieu of commodities from the Federal Government and use those funds to purchase food that people enjoy eating. One Board Member commented that occasionally there are duplicate dishes on the menu, or the items advertised in the menu are not actually served. The kitchen staff do their best to serve a good variety, but sometimes the produce that arrives is spoiled or there are other problems. Board Members requested more hamburgers and hot dogs even though those are only on the summer cycle. There have been complaints that the food is too salty, so clients are advised to bring their own saltshaker if they like more salt in the food. Kitchen staff rotations are roughly every six months currently, but these rotations generate a lot of paperwork, so staff is considering changing the rotations to once a year. There was general discussion of the pros and cons of rotating staff.

Sonia Saldana presented the quarterly congregate and home delivered meals report as shown in attachments "A-C". Congregate meal donations for April 2024 were \$10,000. The average donation based on the amount of money received and the number of people that attended the meals program was \$0.95. The suggested donation is \$2.50. Donations are reinvested into the program and clients do not have to donate if they do not

1 have the money. Home-delivered meal donations for April 2024 were  
2 discussed. Suggested donation is \$3.00 per meal but average actual  
3 donations are \$0.52. Similar numbers for May and June were also shown.  
4 The annual budget has not yet been approved. Ms. Saldana reviewed the  
5 preliminary numbers. Federal dollars per program were discussed. The  
6 State gives Senior Programs a lump sum every year. This year it was  
7 \$450,000 with an additional \$30,000 because the State realized there was  
8 an increase in salaries and cost of living. Nutrition Services Incentive  
9 Program contributed \$217,808.67 to the Nutrition Program to purchase food  
10 only. The City's grant matches are shown under Commitment of Local  
11 Funds. Ms. Saldana will bring the full budget before the Board once the  
12 final numbers are approved. The goal for home-delivered meal donations  
13 for FY25 is \$90,000 and for congregate is \$92,000. The budget with the  
14 City contribution and other expected allocations along with the grant is a  
15 little over \$2 million. The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren has grown  
16 to serve about 51 children. A suggestion was made to post the contribution  
17 numbers at the Senior Centers, so customers are made aware of their meal  
18 donations. The concern is that people will think that they cannot eat if they  
19 do not donate. Staff occasionally sends out reminders to program  
20 participants about the importance of meal donations and what the donations  
21 are used for.

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23 Construction at Munson and Sage Cafe Senior Centers is progressing. As  
24 a result of the additions, more activities will be offered next year. Staff  
25 reminded Board Members that the surveys are important to help staff  
26 choose which activities clients would like to see at the Centers. It is  
27 important to choose the activities that people express interest in because of  
28 the expense. There was general discussion regarding methodology for  
29 administering the surveys. Staff will continue to study what they can add to  
30 the activities and menus. Volunteers in other municipalities often must raise  
31 the money for the food they serve. Senior Programs is very fortunate that  
32 the City supplements the grant funding.

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34 The Senior Recreation Program hopes to set up a booth at the Southern  
35 New Mexico State Fair to display artwork created by seniors that will be for  
36 display only and not for competitions. City Hall is working on the insurance  
37 requirements to participate. Once that is worked out, an open call will be  
38 published among the seniors for their artwork. It will be dropped off at the  
39 Munson Center to be set up at the fair. Staff hopes to work out how to allow  
40 their crafters to compete next year. There was general discussion about  
41 how to publicize the art classes. Staff reported that there was a 92.8 percent  
42 increase in attendance for the recreational program over the last year. The  
43 program is entirely City-funded and the increase in numbers will allow staff  
44 to request more funding for the next year; and will be able to offer more  
45 classes, programs, activities, etc.

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**11. UPDATES:**

**a. CHAIR AND BOARD MEMBERS:**

Larry Altamirano reported that the construction projects are moving slow but he is pleased that they are at least working on it. Clients are excited for the projects to be completed. The meals have been good with only a few minor problems occasionally.

Mona Bedale discussed the Parkinson's Support Group and how good of a resource it is. She hoped to pick up more information to pass around. She reminded the Board that the respite care program is very beneficial and some of the home-delivery clients did not know about it.

Martha Lopez discussed that many clients just come to eat and she hopes to find ways to let them know about the programs available. She distributes the class lists when she can. Staff hopes to start utilizing the TV behind the front desk at Munson Center to advertise class, programs and activities. If it works well, maybe this can be added to the other centers. Staff asked for more ideas from Board Members. Martha Lopez reported that most of the people prefer to be told rather than pick up a flyer and read it. Staff will place announcements on the tables once the tables no longer have to be taken down daily.

Jo Ann Rodriguez-Haught reported that clients were disappointed that Linda Miramontes, Frank O' Brien Papen Center hostess, has been rotated to another Center. She noticed an increase in the meal program participants. She thought there were some special needs adults that come in with their senior caretakers but do not eat, as they are not seniors. There are also a few children that attend, but do not eat. She reported that there the posting in Spanish on the TV at the Frank O'Brien Papen Center and it is stuck. Staff will address the issue. J. Rodriguez-Haught reported that the displays of flyers and surveys are in hard-to-see locations, and no one walks behind the desk at the Center to read them. The food has been good except for the one time that Ms. Rodriguez-Haught reported it to Sonia Saldana. There are still five vans parking in the lot.

Steve Gaskell thanked staff for the very nice new clock. The food is still good. The respite care program caregivers interact with the clients but do not always help with things like changing adult diapers or light housekeeping. He suggested that the City provide people who can perform more duties while the primary caregiver is taking a respite day. Staff reported that the budget limits their ability to provide these types of services.

1 Judy Chavarria asked Sonia Saldana about the status of the gentleman and  
2 his son who clean the tables and the father eats and teaches his son how  
3 to clean the tables. Ms. Saldana will look into it. There is work being done  
4 at Kline Park. Some of the improvements include handicap entrances into  
5 the park, a shade structure will be installed, the stage will be repaired and  
6 updated. Board Members were encouraged to go see the new mural and  
7 the work being done.  
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9 David Hernandez had nothing to report because he is having vision  
10 problems. His friends have told him there are problems with the homeless  
11 people riding bikes across the road and disrupting traffic.  
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13 **12. NEW BUSINESS:**

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15 a. **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT:** Committee Chair Steve Gaskell  
16 reported that the committee originally had two nominees for Chair but one  
17 withdrew, so the nomination is for Mona Bedale. Mr. Gaskell invited Board  
18 Members to make last-minute nominations and no one did.  
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20 b. **ELECTION OF A CHAIRPERSON:** A motion was made by Steve Gaskell  
21 to accept the Nominations' Committee recommendation of Mona Bedale as  
22 Chair. Motion second by Larry Altamirano. Motion passed unanimously.  
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24 Larry Altamirano reminded the Board that a meeting can still be held if there  
25 is no quorum, but no action can be taken. Presentations can still be given  
26 and discussed.  
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28 **13. ADJOURNMENT:** Motion by Larry Altamirano, second by Steve Gaskell. Motion  
29 passed unanimously. Next meeting on September 12, 2024 at Munson Senior  
30 Center.  
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36 Judy Chavarria, Secretary