



CITY OF LAS CRUCES

The following are the summary minutes of the **Senior Programs Advisory Board** meeting held on Thursday, October 10, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. at the Frank O'Brien Papen Center, located at 304 W. Bell Avenue, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair Mona Bedale, District 2 Representative
Secretary Judy Chavarria, Member-at-Large
Steve Gaskell, District 1 Representative
Carol Gurule, District 3 Representative
Yolanda Knodle, District 4 Representative
Martha Lopez, Munson Center Representative
David Hernandez, Eastside Center Representative
Jo Ann Rodriguez-Haught, Frank O'Brien Papen Center Representative
Larry Altamirano, Sage Café Senior Center Representative

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Vice-Chair Belinda Soto, Henry Benavidez Recreation Center Representative
Brendan Shannon, District 5 Representative

OTHERS/GUESTS PRESENT:

Sonia Saldana, Senior Programs Deputy Director
Chris Behrens, Recreation Facility Manager
Lori Garcia-Palacios, Long Term Care Manager
Sofia Guzman, Senior Programs Case Manager
Toni Flores, Recording Secretary

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Mona Bedale, District 2 Representative, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. at the Frank O'Brien Papen Center, 304 W. Bell Avenue, Las Cruces, NM.
2. **ROLL CALL:** Roll call was taken and a quorum was ascertained.
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was led by David Hernandez, Eastside Center Representative.
4. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** The Board observed a moment of silence.
5. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:** Motion by Judy Chavarria, Member at Large, seconded by Yolanda Knodle, District 4 Representative. Motion passed unanimously.

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

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4 **7. INTRODUCTIONS:** None.

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6 **8. PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

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8 **9. ACTION ITEMS:**

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10 **9.1. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 12, 2024 SENIOR PROGRAMS**
11 **ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES:**

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13 Motion by Judy Chavarria, second by Martha Lopez, Munson Center
14 Representative. Motion passed unanimously.

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16 **10. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

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18 **10.1. SENIOR PROGRAMS DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

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20 S. Saldana, Senior Programs Deputy Director, reported the construction
21 projects are coming along. Munson Center will hopefully be finished in
22 January or February 2025. Staff is waiting on the contract for the second
23 and third phases at the Sage Café Senior Center and hope to start on next
24 phase of the project as soon the funding is secured for the project. The
25 dining room floor at Frank O'Brien Papen Center will be replaced and staff
26 will provide plenty of notice before that starts so people have time to choose
27 a different center to attend for lunch during the floor renovation project. Staff
28 is currently looking for funding to purchase the Eastside Community Center
29 so that the City will own it rather than continuing to lease it. This would
30 make it easier to do improvements to the facility. Staff hopes to finalize the
31 Senior Programs' budget before next month's meeting so it can be
32 presented to the Board. Staff is also hoping to get someone to come
33 present to the Board on fraud alerts. The County is offering property title
34 theft alerts for free. The contact number to sign up is 575-647-7421. Staff
35 suggested that everyone should call the Credit Bureau and lock their credit
36 so scammers have a harder time trying to apply for credit fraudulently.
37 There was a general discussion of various types of fraud that Board
38 Members had seen and what they did to avoid it.

39
40 Chris Behrens, Recreation Facility Manager, reported that all five centers
41 passed their fire code inspections conducted on October 9, 2024 with only
42 a few minor issues that needed to be corrected. The Thursday dance will
43 be held at the Frank O' Brien Papen Center from 2:00-4:00 p.m. and the
44 annual Halloween Bash is scheduled for October 19, 2024, from 3:00 p.m.

1 to 7:00 p.m., at Munson Center. Board members were encouraged to attend
2 the upcoming events.
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5 **11. UPDATES:**

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

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9 Carol Gurule, District 3 Representative, reported that at Munson Center, a
10 sign is posted in the dining room that states people can ask for seconds. C.
11 Gurule recommended the sign be removed since seconds are no longer
12 being offered. The electronic rotating announcements are being displayed
13 on the IPAD by the ice machine at Munson Center where no one sees or
14 reads them. The IPAD needs to be moved to be more visible. The ice
15 machine frequently has puddles of water from spillage. It is a safety hazard
16 that needs to be addressed. One of the long-time volunteers recently lost
17 her husband and C. Gurule asked about sending a sympathy card to her.
18 She asked about people soliciting money in the center, as someone was
19 asking for money supposedly to send to the volunteer for the funeral
20 expenses. All the centers have a "no soliciting on the property" rule. There
21 are not enough saltshakers to put on all the tables. C. Gurule asked for ten
22 or 12 more.
23

24 Jo Ann Rodriguez-Haught, Frank O'Brien Papen Center Representative,
25 reported that things at Center are going well. The City vehicles now have a
26 designated area to be parked on the northeast side of the building; however,
27 that takes away from the center participant's parking, which is close to the
28 dining room. She has observed some City vehicles which are still being
29 parked in the participant parking lot. However, if she complains then more
30 parking may be taken away from the seniors. Staff will look into the problem
31 again. Complaints can also be made to the Parks and Recreation Program
32 Director, Steven Bingham, by calling 575-541-2550. He may be able to help
33 get the City vehicles moved.
34

35 Steve Gaskell reported that he is now receiving Meals on Wheels and the
36 drivers he's met, Mark and Valerie, are great and the meals are good.
37

38 Secretary J. Chavarria reported that the Eastside Center front desk
39 receptionist is a very nice young man, and he told her that someone came
40 into the Center and was attempting to get a second meal. Staff explained to
41 him that he could not get another meal because he had already used his
42 card. She met a lady who does classes to help people with fall prevention,
43 focusing on their balance and she would like to have that lady do a
44 presentation to the Board. Staff requested her contact information so they
45 can set that up.

1
2 Martha Lopez offered Munson Center for the balance classes. She reported
3 that it is a good program, and they have difficulty finding places with enough
4 room for the class. Everyone liked the shortbread, but some complained
5 that it was too fatty. The new server did not know how to serve the noodles
6 with the stir-fry. She suggested changing the donation to a fee since not
7 everyone is putting in the money. It was reiterated that the centers receive
8 funding from the State, for this reason, a fee for the meals cannot be
9 implemented. The meals are by donation only.

10
11 Yolanda Knodle, District 4 Representative, reported that at the Benavidez
12 Recreation Center the only drinking glasses available are the little juice
13 glasses and the clients are using multiple glasses--one with chocolate milk,
14 one with ice, one with water, and then a coffee as well. The center runs out
15 of glasses frequently. S. Saldana said she would follow up with Roger
16 Bishop, Nutrition Program Manager.

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18 Larry Altamirano, Sage Café Representative, reported that the Center ran
19 out of the chicken fried steak on Monday and substituted gravy and biscuits.
20 There is a server who is inconsistent with the serving portion of the food.
21 The servers should give consistent portions no matter what. People
22 sometimes just sit at the tables and visit when there are people in line
23 waiting for a seat. Staff will work on a sign to ask people to move to a
24 different spot to visit so others can eat. Staff watches the trends of how
25 many people are coming to eat each meal. This gives them an estimate of
26 how much food to prepare and cook, but sometimes it may not be very
27 accurate. Discussion followed regarding the reservation system.
28 Advantages and disadvantages of the two systems were discussed. Staff
29 will try to find a better way to make sure that the centers do not run out of
30 food.

31
32 David Hernandez, Eastside Center Representative, reported that he spoke
33 to the staff of the Eastside Center kitchen. The staff heard there were
34 complaints about the food being improperly cooked. They told him that
35 sometimes things go wrong and asked for understanding from the clients.
36 Other than that, everything is fine. The drivers for Meals on Wheels
37 reported to him that everything is fine with them as well.

38
39 Lori Garcia-Palacios, Long-Term Care Manager, and Sofia Guzman, Case
40 Manager for Senior Programs, were introduced and welcomed. L. Garcia-
41 Palacios gave a presentation about the Grandparents Raising
42 Grandchildren program. There are approximately 60 grandchildren and 28
43 grandparents. The program is available to individuals 55 years or older,
44 who reside within Las Cruces City limits are raising grandchildren or are
45 raising someone else's children. The children must be 18 years of age or

1 younger to qualify for the program. Monthly support group meetings are
2 held at Munson Center and feature educational presentations from various
3 organizations, agencies, etc. The program also helps with school supplies,
4 clothes, afterschool/summer programs, and other things. The program
5 receives funding from City, County, and State. Information pamphlets were
6 handed out.

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8 The Long-Term Care Program also offers respite care services to people
9 caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's or Dementia. The program contracts
10 with a local home health agency to provide respite care services, up to four
11 hours a week, for the caregiver to have some time off. The program can
12 also help by providing hygiene items, nutritional drinks, etc. Steve Gaskell
13 reported that the program has helped his family immensely.

14
15 A suggestion was made to have volunteers learn CPR, as someone at
16 Munson was choking and another client help him.

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18 Next meeting will be Thursday, November 14, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. at the
19 Sage Café Senior Center.

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21 **12. ADJOURNMENT:**

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23 Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Larry Altamirano. Motion
24 seconded by Secretary J. Chavarria. The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

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Secretary Judy Chavarria