

City of Las Cruces[®]

2 The following are summary minutes of the **Senior Programs Advisory Board** meeting held on
4 Thursday, February 17, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. at the Eastside Community Center, 310 N. Tornillo
Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

6 **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Chair Judy Chavarria, Member-at-Large
8 Secretary Jo Ann Rodriguez-Haught, Frank O'Brien Papen Center Representative
Dr. Abel L. Chavarria, District 1 Representative
10 Sharlene Wittern, District 3 Representative
Gabriel Montalvo, Munson Center Representative
12 James Mitchell, Sage Café Center Representative

14 **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mona Bedale, District 2 Representative
16 Diane Turo, District 6 Representative
Manuel Contreras, District 5 Representative
18 Cheryl Young, Benavidez Center Representative

20 **GUESTS PRESENT:**

Sonia Saldana, Senior Programs Administrator
22 Chris Behrens, Recreation Facility Manager
Toni Flores, Recording Secretary
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26 **I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Judy Chavarria, Member-at-Large, called the Senior Programs'
Advisory Board meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 17, 2022, at the Eastside
Community Center, 310 N. Tornillo Street, Las Cruces, NM.

28 **II. ROLL CALL:** Roll call was taken, and a quorum was ascertained.

30 **III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Gabriel Montalvo,
32 Munson Center Representative.

34 **IV. MOMENT OF SILENCE:** The Board observed a moment of silence.

36 **V. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:** Sharlene Wittern, District 3 Representative, moved to
approve the February 17, 2022, Senior Programs Advisory Board Meeting agenda as presented.
38 Motion seconded by Secretary Jo Ann Rodriguez-Haught, Frank O' Brien Papen Center
Representative. Vote: 6 Ayes, 0 Nays. Motion carried unanimously.

40 **VI. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Board members had no conflict of interest with any item of
42 business on the agenda.

44 **VII. INTRODUCTIONS:** Board members were introduced.

46 **VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Sonia Saldana, Senior Programs Administrator, was welcomed back
after an extended leave of absence. Lori Garcia-Palacios was commended for the excellent job
48 she did during Ms. Saldana's absence from work.

50 **IX. ACTION ITEM(S):** Chair J. Chavarria requested a motion for approval of the Board meeting
minutes. S. Wittern moved to approve the January 13, 2022, Senior Programs Advisory Board
52 meeting minutes as presented. James Mitchell, Sage Café Senior Center Representative,
seconded the motion. Vote: 6 Ayes, 0 Nays; Motion carried.

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56 **X. DISCUSSION ITEMS - SENIOR PROGRAMS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:** Sonia
Saldana, Senior Programs Administrator, asked for the Board's input regarding Board training.
Board members recommended grief and loss training, technology training specifically cell phones
58 and computers (the basics). J. Mitchell explained his quality of life has improved after he learned
that his AirPods can amplify voices and can be used as hearing aid devices. Learning these
60 simple things make a difference in someone's life. Other trainings that were discussed included
identity theft, scams, divorce, Wills, end-of-life finances, and legal workshops. It was announced
62 AARP and the Non-Metro Area Agency on Aging have good presentations on a variety of topics
and can be contacted to conduct the trainings at the centers if needed. It was recommended that
64 Senior Programs partner with the Fire Department to conduct training on how to identify fire
hazards and fire prevention. There are also people who are hearing or visually impaired who
66 could benefit from resources available in the community. Board members also discussed the
possibility of organizing a community neighborhood watch program at the Eastside Community
68 Center. Chair J. Chavarria stated the best neighborhood watch is the "nosey" neighbor, because
they know what is going on in the neighborhood. The organization of a neighborhood watch
70 program is an excellent way to deter criminal activity in the neighborhood. S. Saldana will be
following up by exploring the possibility of partnering with the Las Cruces Police Department
72 (LCPD) to provide training. LCPD Officer Aaron Glymph was highly recommended by Chair J.
Chavarria to conduct safety training for seniors. S. Saldana will follow up with the Board's
74 recommendations and will look for presenters that can conduct the trainings in English and
Spanish.

76
78 S. Saldana reported Long Term Care staff continue to provide COVID-19 vaccination information
to seniors. She reported many Senior Programs' participants and homebound clients have been
vaccinated. Senior Programs continues to abide by all COVID-19 safe practices and State
80 mandates. There are very few people who remain unvaccinated and are not interested in being
vaccinated for various reasons. Chair J. Chavarria stated that just by talking to people about their
82 personal experience with COVID-19 makes a difference.

84 Chris Behrens reported a contractor has been hired to make some improvements to the Russ
Boor Community Garden at Munson Center. The contractor started the work the week of
86 February 14, 2022. Thus far, the crew have completed the cleanup work and have prepared the
garden beds for the upcoming planting season. The crew will be installing a new irrigation system.
88 It is a simple, robust, and durable irrigation system that requires minimal maintenance. As soon
as the work is completed, a meeting will be scheduled with the community garden volunteers to
90 begin the planting season. S. Saldana stated the reason the garden was started at Munson
Center was to help feed seniors. She asked for the Board's input regarding the produce harvested
92 in the garden. She asked if the Board members felt it was more beneficial to package the produce
and give it to seniors in need to prepare a meal at home or should the produce that is grown in
94 the garden be incorporated into the meals prepared at the centers. She stated in previous years,
the produce grown in the garden was distributed to seniors, and they greatly appreciated it. If
96 this is the Board's recommendation, then an announcement will be made and posted at the
centers notifying the participants of the days the produce will be distributed, on a first, first serve

98 basis. Smaller portions were recommended because most seniors either live alone or with their
100 spouse. They will benefit from smaller portions of what is grown in the garden. There are,
102 however, individuals who need extra assistance, in these instances the case managers can work
104 with those individual to find resources in the community. After further discussion, there was Board
consensus that the food harvested in the community garden should be used in the food prepared
at the centers. This is the most beneficial method for the use of the food for all the participants.

106 **XI. CHAIR AND BOARD MEMBER UPDATES:** J. Mitchell inquired if there is a tentative
108 reopening date for Sage Café Senior Center. S. Saldana stated at this time there is not a
110 reopening date set for Sage Café. She reported participation has increased at the two the Grab
112 N' Go meal sites. Currently, the Grab N' Go meal sites are serving more people, than the three
congregate meal program sites combined. Currently, Sage Café is serving approximately 130
people per day for lunch. If the Sage Café was to reopen, there would be very limited space
available for in-person meals because of the social distancing requirements. S. Saldana stated
she will begin the discussion with staff about the possibility of reopening the center for recreational
activities, such as walking, hiking, or a jam session.

114 Secretary J. Rodriguez-Haught reported people like the convenience of the Grab N' Go Meals at
116 the Frank O'Brien Papen Center. The participants enjoy socializing with the hostess, Linda
118 Miramontes.

120 Chair J. Chavarria stated she has noticed many of the participants of the Eastside Center stay to
122 socialize after the meal. Some say they do not like to eat alone and enjoy coming to the center
to socialize with their peers. Socialization is very important to seniors.

124 At the previous Board meeting, Chair J. Chavarria stressed the importance of attending Board
126 meetings on a regular basis. She contacted Board members with excessive absences and
128 reported Rick Jackson, District 4, and Rudy Alvarez, Eastside Center Representatives, are no
longer interested in serving on the Board and have resigned as members of the Senior Programs
Advisory Board. Board member Manuel Contreras, District 5 Representative, was also contacted;
however, M. Contreras expressed interest in continuing to serve on the Board. The recruitment
process will begin to fill the vacancies.

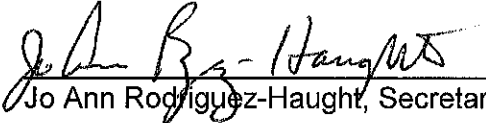
130 The Nominations Committee, consisting of Chair J. Chavarria, Dr. A. Chavarria, and Dianne Turo,
132 presented the following slate of officers for 2022 for the Board's consideration--for the office of
134 Chairperson, Jo Ann Rodriguez-Haught; Vice Chair, Gabriel Montalvo; and Secretary, Mona
Bedale. C. J. Chavarria opened the floor for nominations for the election of Board Officers for
2022. There being no nominations from the floor. Nominations ceased. J. Mitchell moved to
136 accept the slate of officers for 2022 as presented by the Nomination's Committee --J. Rodriguez-
Haught, Chair; Gabriel Montalvo, Vice Chair; and Mona Bedale, Secretary. S. Wittern seconded
138 the motion. Vote: 6 Ayes, 0 Nays. Motion carried unanimously. New Board officers will take
office at the March Board meeting.

140 Chair J. Chavarria requested future Board meetings scheduled at the Eastside be held in the
142 meeting room not the dining room. She had a difficult time hearing because of the background
144 noise in the dining room. S. Saldana will follow up with her recommendation.

146 Chair Judy Chavarria announced the next Board meeting will be held at the Munson Center, 975
S. Mesquite Street, Las Cruces, NM.

148 **XII. ADJOURNMENT:** J. Mitchell moved to adjourn the Board meeting at 10:04 a.m. S. Wittern
150 seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

152 Submitted,

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Jo Ann Rodriguez-Haught, Secretary


Toni Flores, Recording Secretary