



City of Las Cruces®
PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

**SENIOR PROGRAMS ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

January 14, 2016—Benavidez Recreation Center

PRESENT: Chair Felix Vega (Eastside Center Representative), Marilu Darby (District 2 Representative), Sharlene Wittern (District 3 Representative), Rick Jackson, (District 4 Representative), Renee Short (District 6 Representative), Judy Chavarria (Member-at-Large), Juliette White (Henry Benavidez Center Representative), James Gibson (Munson Center Representative); Kent Palmer (Sage Café Representative)

ABSENT: Bill King (Frank O'Brien Papen Center Representative)

GUESTS: Sonia Saldana, Senior Programs Administrator; Sonya Delgado, Recreation Administrator; Claudia Chavez, Recreation Manager; Nellie Garcia, Dial-A-Ride Supervisor; Richard Hanway, Transit Operations Supervisor; and Toni Flores, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Vega called the Senior Programs Advisory Board meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 14, 2016, at the Benavidez Recreation Center, 1045 McClure Road, Las Cruces, NM.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: It was noted that no Board members or staff present had a conflict of interest with any item of business on the agenda.

INTRODUCTIONS: Sonya Delgado, Recreation Administrator; Claudia Chavez, Recreation Manager; Nellie Garcia, Dial-A-Ride Supervisor and Richard Hanway, Transit Operations Supervisor, were introduced and welcomed.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: Rick Jackson, District 4 Representative, moved to approve the December 10, 2015, Senior Programs Advisory Board meeting minutes as presented. Judy Chavarria, Member at Large, seconded the motion. Vote: 9 Ayes; 0 Nays. Motion carried unanimously.

SENIOR PROGRAMS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: Sonia Saldana, Senior Programs Administrator, stated at the previous Board meeting there were several questions regarding the transportation program. Nellie Garcia, Dial-A-Ride Supervisor, and Richard Hanway, Transit Operations Supervisor, provided an overview of the Dial-A-Ride transportation service.

N. Garcia stated the Dial-A-Ride transportation service is a paratransit service offered by the City of Las Cruces Roadrunner Transit. The service provides curb-to-curb transportation service to qualified individuals with disabilities and individuals 60 years of age and older who reside within the city limits. Dial-A-Ride vehicles are wheelchair accessible and are operated by trained drivers. The service requires individuals to complete an application. Fares are \$2.00 for each one-way trip for qualified individuals with disabilities. The service is currently free for senior citizens, but donations are encouraged and appreciated. N. Garcia stated the senior transportation service is beyond capacity. Currently, there are three vans assigned to the senior

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50 centers. The vans are filled to capacity. A fourth van was added but it has also reached
51 capacity. For this reason, seniors must call at least two weeks in advance to schedule
52 transportation services. She explained the Dial-A-Ride service receives federal funding to
53 provide transportation services to individuals with disabilities, as a result transportation requests
54 from the disabled community must be honored within 24 hours. Since the disabled community is
55 top priority, senior citizen transportation requests are often times denied or placed on a standby
56 list. There are no guidelines through the federal regulations for senior patrons. Dial-A-Ride
does not receive funding for transportation services for seniors.

58 James Gibson, Munson Center Representative, recommended making City Council aware of
59 the situation. N. Garcia added the Transit Department is working on a proposal to begin
60 charging senior citizens \$2.00 for each one-way trip. The proposal will be presented to City
61 Council by the end of the year for approval. R. Hanway stated that by not charging seniors, a
62 strain is beginning to be placed on the transportation system. There is an issue because the
63 disabled community is beginning to complain and question why senior patrons do not pay a
64 fare. By implementing a fare for seniors, it will make equitable and fare to all patrons utilizing
65 the transportation services. N. Garcia stated seniors are being encouraged to use the
66 RoadRUNNER Transit fixed route bus system. This will help to remove some pressure off the
67 Dial-A-Ride service. Seniors can ride the fixed route system for \$.50 a ride or \$1.50 for
68 unlimited rides. It costs the Transit Department \$20.00 to provide a one-way trip. This
69 includes the cost of the fuel, driver's salary, maintenance, etc. R. Jackson stated it is a great
70 service. R. Short asked if the proposal to council will include discussion about expanding
71 services in order to meet the demand for transportation services. She stated the demand for
72 transportation services will continue to increase because Las Cruces is becoming a retirement
73 community. N. Garcia stated the first step will be to implement a \$2.00 fare for seniors. Many
74 seniors may not be able to afford the \$2.00 charge per ride and the senior ridership may
75 decrease. R. Short voiced issues of concern expressed by the assisted and independent living
76 facilities she visits on a regular basis. The clients of those facilities have requested additional
77 vans and extended hours. N. Garcia stated the City of Las Cruces has more Dial-A-Ride vans
78 in operation than the City of Santa Fe. The goal at this time is to encourage the seniors to use
79 the fixed route bus system to relieve some of the pressure off Dial-A-Ride. S. Saldana
80 suggested conducting an educational campaign on the transportation services available in the
81 community at each of the centers. N. Garcia stated that the Transit Department's 10-year long
82 term plan includes the expansion of service hours and transportation services to other areas. R.
83 Short requested a copy of the Transit Department's 10-year plan. Board members also
84 requested a report of the number of people placed on the standby or denied list. R. Short
85 volunteered to provide Dial-A-Ride transportation service information to the assisted and
86 independent living facilities. N. Garcia and R. Hanway were thanked for their report.

88 Claudia Chavez, Recreation Manager, reported on the December 2015 Recreation monthly
89 report. She stated beginning next month the reports will contain only three month's worth of
90 data and the font will be enlarged. C. Chavez reported new classes and new instructors will be
91 coming on Board in the next few months. Board members questioned the low attendance for the
92 walking group which is attributed to the cold weather and the scheduling of other programs and
93 activities at the same time as the walking group.

94

96 K. Palmer, Sage Cafe Representative, expressed concern about the cancellation of the
Enchance Fitness class at the Sage Cafe Senior Center. K. Palmer stated people with physical
98 disabilities benefit from the classes. He inquired if it possible for the Recreation Department to
provide fitness classes at the Sage Cafe. S. Saldana stated she has not received notice from
100 the New Mexico Senior Olympics that the Enhance Fitness classes are being cancelled. The
classes will continue as scheduled at the Sage Café Senior Center. Board members inquired if
102 it is possible to begin a walking group, Tai Chi, and other non-structured class at the Sage Cafe.
S. Saldana will follow up.

104 S. Saldana reported on the Senior Programs' Public Hearing held on December 21, 2015, at
Munson Center. A summary report of the public comments received was distributed to the
106 Board members. S. Saldana reiterated one issue of concern expressed at the public hearing
was the \$4.00 per day lapidary use fee. After the public hearing another concern that was
108 received was the high cost of the silver jewelry kits. She explained the proposed activity fee
schedule includes eliminating the registration fees for all open studios and changing to a \$1.00
110 per drop-in slot. In an effort to make the fee schedule equitable and fair, Senior Programs is
proposing to charge a fee of \$1.00 per day for activities that did not have a fee in the past such
112 as billiards. She stated there were no negative comments received at the public hearing about
the \$1.00 a day fee for billiards. Introduction classes are being proposed for the gourds and
114 mosaics classes. The gourd painting open studio will also change from \$9.00 for a six-week
session to a \$1.00 per drop-in basis. If there are not enough people registered for the
116 introductory classes, then the class will change to an open studio. There will be no change to
the quilting and crochet classes. These classes will be free of charge. J. Gibson stated the
118 \$1.00 a day fee was very reasonable. S. Saldana stated that as a result of the concerns
expressed by the participants in regards to high cost of the silver jewelry kits, Senior Programs
120 has conducted research on the kits and has been unsuccessful in finding lower-priced kits.
After further discussion, S. Saldana requested Board members review the proposed Senior
122 Programs' Activity Fee schedule. Board members will discuss and provide a recommendation
on the proposed fee schedule at the next meeting. The new registration system called e-trak
124 was discussed. Board members inquired how participants will be tracked to make sure
everyone registers and pays the fees at the front desk. S. Saldana stated there are different
126 options being discussed such as wrist bands. The staff does not want to burden seniors, but
they want to make sure all individuals coming into the center register at the front desk.

128 J. White, Benavidez Recreation Center Representative, stated the kits are good quality kits and
130 very reasonably priced. She is a participant of the silver jewelry class and stated it is a great
class.

132 J. Gibson stated the \$4.00 per day lapidary open lab fee is too high. Attendance has decreased
134 by 50% as a result of the fee. Board members inquired why the quilting and crocheting classes
do not have a daily use fee. S.Saldana stated the participants donate quilts and baby caps to
136 the community. Last year they donated to different organizations such as La Casa and Jardin
de Los Ninos.

138 S. Saldana provided an update on the January 2016 Senior Programs' Open Action Items.
140 Action Items number 12--promote the bond issue to get funding for the central kitchen design
and number 13—implementation of a congregate meals program at Sage Cafe are in the works.

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142 Action Item number 14--purchase and installation of the acoustic panels for the Munson Center
144 multipurpose room will be underway by mid-February 2016. An update will be provided at the
next Board meeting.

146 **CHAIR AND BOARD MEMBER REPORTS:** R. Short stated the Village at Northrise is
148 interested in bringing people to play Bingo at the Sage Café Senior Center. J. Chavarria, Non-
Metro Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council member, announced volunteers are being
150 recruited from the outlying areas of Anthony, Mesilla, Chaparral, Placitas, Radium Springs and
Dona Ana to form an advisory board for the county. Please contact J. Chavarria if you know of
152 someone who is interested in serving on the county advisory board. Meetings are rotated and
held on a monthly basis at each of the county senior centers. Transportation is available.

154 J. White requested an update on the grief counseling sessions. S. Saldana stated she
156 contacted La Clinica de Familia, which is the agency that has the contract for mental health
services in the community. La Clinia is very understaffed and cannot keep up with the demand.
158 She has talked to private providers, but it is not cost effective for them to provide services in the
centers. She will continue to conduct community outreach to find a licensed therapist that is
willing to come to the center to provide counseling services.

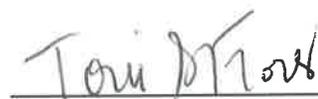
160 **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** The Nomination Committee consisting of Chair Felix Vega, Judy
162 Chavarria, Sharlene Wittern, and Juliette White presented the following slate of officers for 2016
for the Board's consideration. The slate of officers for 2016 include: Felix Vega for the office of
164 Chair, Judy Chavarria for the office of Vice Chair and Marilu Darby for the office of Secretary. J.
White moved to approve the slate of officers as presented by the Nomination Committee. R.
166 Jackson seconded the motion. Vote: 9 Ayes 0 Nays. Motion carried unanimously.

168 **UPCOMING MEETING:** The next regular Senior Programs Advisory Board meeting is
170 scheduled for Thursday, February 11, 2016, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at Eastside Center,
310 N. Tornillo Street, Las Cruces, NM.

172 **ADJOURNMENT:** J. White moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 a.m. R. Jackson seconded
174 the motion. Vote: 9 Ayes; 0 Nays. Motion carried unanimously.

Submitted,

176 
178 Marilu Darby, Secretary


Toni Flores, Recording Secretary