The following are summary minutes of the **Senior Programs Advisory Board Meeting** held on May 9, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at Benavidez Recreation Senior Center, 1045 McClure Road, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**
- Chair Cheryl De Young, Benavidez Center Representative
- Vice Chair Rayla Buchanan, Sage Café Senior Center Representative
- Secretary Judy Chavarria, Member-at-Large
- Etta Kaufman, District 6 Representative
- Rudy Alvarez, Eastside Center Representative
- Gabriel Montalvo, Munson Center Representative
- Jo Ann Rodriguez-Haught, Frank O'Brien Papen Center Representative

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**
- Dr. Abel L. Chavarria, District 1 Representative
- Marilu Darby, District 2 Representative
- Sharlene Wittern, District 3 Representative
- Rick Jackson, District 4 Representative
- Manuel Contreras, District 5 Representative

**GUESTS PRESENT:**
- Sonia Saldana, Senior Programs Administrator
- Michael Garcia, Recreation Facility Manager
- Azucena Saucedo, Assistant Management Analyst
- Toni Flores, Recording Secretary

I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Cheryl De Young, Benavidez Center Representative, called the Senior Programs’ Advisory Board meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 9, 2019, at the Benavidez Recreation Center, 1045 McClure Road, Las Cruces, NM.

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

III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Rudy Alvarez, Eastside Center Representative, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** A moment of silence was observed.

V. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Board members and staff present had no conflict of interest with any item of business on the agenda.

VI. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Roger Bishop, Nutrition Program Manager, and Shelley Nichols-Shaw, Finding Our Voice, was introduced and welcomed.

VII. **ACTION ITEM(S):** Rayla Buchanan, Sage Café Representative, moved to approve the April 11, 2019 Senior Programs Advisory Board meeting minutes. Secretary Judy Chavarria, Member-at-Large Representative, seconded the motion. Vote: 7 Ayes; 0 Nays. Motion carried unanimously.

VIII. **DISCUSSION ITEM(S):** a. Sonia Saldana, Senior Programs Administrator, apologized for the scheduling conflict with the Network Volunteer Center appreciation breakfast celebration.
However, that was the only time that Ryan Steinmetz, Volunteer Coordinator, was available. Board members were asked to provide feedback on the Non-Metro Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council (NMAAA) meeting held in Las Cruces on April 25, 2019. R. Buchanan stated it was very interesting to hear about the challenges that other program providers are faced with. One common issue was the lack of funding. S. Saldana commented other programs throughout the state reported they have limited resources and depend on fundraisers to maintain services. Senior Programs is very fortunate, because the City contributes a significant amount of money for Senior Programs.

Chair C. De Young stated she enjoyed hearing the Advisory Council updates from programs across the state. Secretary Judy Chavarria, Member-at-Large, was very happy that it was held in Las Cruces as opposed to Santa Fe, NM. Chair C. De Young expressed an interest in serving as alternate member on the NMAAA Advisory Council representing Dona Ana County. S. Saldana stated Secretary J. Chavarria and Dr. Abel Chavarria, District 1 Representative, have been serving on the Advisory Council. She will follow up with an email to the NMAAA recommending C. De Young also be appointed as an alternate member of the Council.

At the previous Board meeting, there was a request from the Board to extend an invitation to Roger Bishop, Nutrition Program Manager, to attend the Board meeting to discuss issues of concern with the congregate meals served at the Benavidez and the Eastside Centers. R. Bishop was introduced. Chair C. De Young voiced her concern with the temperature of food served at the Benavidez Center. She reported the food is often served lukewarm, not hot. She stated the problem may be that the equipment is not working properly. When she had lunch at Munson Center, she was shocked at the difference in the temperature of the food. The food was served hot and was at the correct temperature. R. Bishop stated staff checked the equipment of all the centers to ensure it was working properly. It was reported the equipment was operating properly. R. Bishop stated staff also conducts daily temperature checks throughout the serving time to ensure the food is at the correct temperature. The steam table temperature checks that were conducted are at the standard temperature or above, which is 135 degrees. Chair C. De Young stated she has heard a lot of complaints about the temperature of the food. R. Bishop appreciated the feedback and has discussed the issue with the cooks at the centers. He informed the Board the kitchen staff will warm up the food in the microwave, if requested. Rudy Alvarez, Eastside Center Representative, reiterated many times before the participant reaches the serving line, the tray has already been served. R. Bishop stated this issue has been addressed with the Food Service Worker, and it should not happen again. R. Alvarez inquired what is the standard procedure for developing a menu in relation to protein, carbohydrates, etc. R. Bishop stated the daily menu items must meet the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) which is the required quantities of nutrients in the diet that are required to maintain good health for seniors. The menus are planned at least five to six months ahead of time. It is more efficient and cost effective to plan the menus this far in advance. C. De Young suggested serving more hot meals during the winter months, because very often that may be the only hot meal seniors eat during the day. R. Bishop stated there are requests from the center participants for salads, even during the winter months.

Secretary J. Chavarria inquired if there is a standard procedure for receiving a second serving of food. R. Bishop explained it is up to the cook’s discretion to offer seconds. It varies and it depends on the meal being served. For example, if it is a meal that will be thrown away, then it will be offered to center participants as seconds. If it is a meal that can be frozen or used in another recipe, then no seconds will be offered. S. Saldana added it also depends on last minute
reservations, cancellations or no shows. Secretary J. Chavarria commented she was very dissatisfied with the way the cook prepared the steak ranchero and the Sopa that was served at the Eastside Center. Both dishes tasted terrible. The former cook used a different preparation method for the steak that made it very tasty and delicious. The new cook uses tomato sauce on the steak instead of the chile con queso sauce. The Sopa dish is prepared differently than how she knows it. She will share her recipe with R. Bishop. She added each cook has their own style of preparing the food. She thought the former cook was very wise in the way that she presented and prepared the food. R. Bishop commented the former cook had a lot of institutional knowledge that Senior Programs lost when she retired. The NMAAA gives the cooks the flexibility of using herbs and spices to enhance the flavor of the food without changing the nutritional value of the meal, which is what the former cook did. Secretary J. Chavarria stated the Picadillo was excellent, and she made it a point to let the cook know. R. Alvarez recommended staff inspect, taste and look at the food to make sure it tastes good, is appealing and pleasing to the eye. Lina Guadian, Kitchen Supervisor, inspects and tastes the food. R. Alvarez stated approximately three quarters of the food is thrown away, because people do not like it. Staff can inspect the trash container and can see how much food is thrown away. There is a lot of wasted food. S. Saldana stated seniors have an option to request a certain food item not be served. A sign will be posted to remind seniors they can opt out of being served a food that they dislike. R. Bishop stated the dietary requirements changed and more fiber was added to the requirements, for this reason the center participants are being served more vegetables. S. Saldana reiterated seniors have a choice and can request not to be served a certain food item. E. Kaufman suggested if a recipe is very successful, it should be used by all cooks at the centers.

R. Alvarez stated Eastside Center participants have commented they want to see more fish added to the menu. He stated beef is served many times during the month, and fish is healthier than meat. He inquired if there is a reason that fish is only served twice a month versus meat which is served multiple times during the month. R. Bishop stated fish is more expensive, and some people do not care for fish. R. Bishop stated the congregate meals and the home delivered meals programs are both showing growth. Most of the consumers enjoy the meals and are grateful for the program. S. Saldana announced Senior Programs will be conducting a survey at the Eastside and Benavidez Centers requesting feedback from the center participants regarding the meals program. R. Alvarez stated as the representative of the Eastside Center, he is voicing the center participants’ concerns. He communicates with the consumers who attend the program, and he asks them how they liked the food. They respond, “It is fit for the pigs.” Many of consumers he asks are not happy with food. S. Saldana replied it is heart breaking and saddens her to hear what people are saying about the meals when other programs in state are struggling with food costs and must rely on fundraisers to maintain services. R. Bishop stated they do the best they can with the resources that they have. The suggested donation of the meal for seniors 60 years of and older is only $2.50, but the average donation received is between $.80 to $.90 a meal. S. Saldana stated the results of the survey will be shared with the Board as soon as they become available. R. Bishop was commended for the great job he is doing with the Nutrition Program.

Michael Garcia, Recreation Facility Manager, updated the Board on the May 2019 list of pending work orders and issues of concern:

Item #5—resurfacing of the sidewalk at the Eastside Center. The Facilities Department has placed this work order on hold pending funding availability. Facilities is aware this is a safety issue that
requires attention. However, due to the lack of funding, it will not be addressed until after July 1, 2019 (Fiscal Year 2020).

Item #37--Signage needed for the men’s and women’s restroom entrances at the Eastside Center. M. Garcia stated new ADA signage has been ordered for the restrooms. However, there has been an issue in receiving the order. Cruces Trophy has been delayed in the process. M. Garcia received the temporary signs that will be displayed until the order for the permanent signs is received. As soon as the signs are ready, they will be mounted on the wall next to the women’s and men’s restrooms.

Item No. 38--Status on the recruitment of a Tai Chi instructor. The Tai Chi classes will continue through June 30, 2019, which is the end of the contract period. M. Garcia is working with the Department of Health (DOH) to recruit a Tai Chi class instructor to lead the classes after July 1, 2019. S. Saldana stated the challenge with the recruitment process is that the instructor must be a certified instructor. E. Kaufmann inquired if a volunteer is interested could the volunteer be certified. M. Garcia stated that is a possibility but would have to be approved by the DOH. The Board will be kept updated on the recruitment process.

Item No. 39 - Status update on the repair of TV monitor located in the hallway of Munson Center. M. Garcia stated the TV is not broken. The issue is with the internet connection. M. Garcia is working with the City IT department to resolve this issue. S. Saldana stated another informational TV monitor is located three feet away in the lobby of Munson Center. It is possible this TV monitor will be removed and placed in the Munson Center dining room.

Item No. 40 - Munson Center sidewalk improvement project status update. The Munson Center sidewalk remodeling project started this morning and is expected to be completed by the end of next week.

Item no. 42 - Update on the recommendation to post photos of participants celebrating a birthday on the bulletin boards or display on TV monitors at each of the centers. M. Garcia will proceed with this recommendation only if he receives 100 percent approval from the center participants, because Senior Programs does not want to exclude any senior. Senior Programs will continue to display on the TV monitors at each of the respective centers the names, month and day of birth for center participants. J. Rodriguez-Haught expressed concern about the Senior Programs membership card that includes the birth date and last four digits of the social security number of the participants. She questioned the reason for the information to be printed on the membership card due to identity theft concerns. S. Saldana explained the state’s system requires staff to obtain this information from participants. S. Saldana will follow up with the NMAAA to determine what information can be removed from the membership card due to the concerns expressed.

Item no. 44 - Status on the floor remodeling project at the Benavidez Center. The purchase order to replace the floor at the Benavidez Center has been approved. The project is scheduled to begin very soon. The contractor will work on the project during the weekend, so it does not negatively impact the programs and services at the Benavidez Center.

Item no. 47 -- M. Garcia stated two replacement and two new bridge pool sticks were purchased for the Eastside Center.
IX. **UPDATES:** M. Garcia provided an update on the piano playing at the Eastside Center. A schedule for the piano playing was developed as per the center participants’ recommendations. The time was split before and after the lunch hour. The time change has resulted in a positive change.

R. Alvarez recommended Senior Programs purchase t-shirts with the City logo for Board members to represent Las Cruces at this year’s annual New Mexico Conference on Aging. After discussion, it was agreed that Network Volunteer Center t-shirts will be provided to those attending the conference. S. Saldana announced that due to budget constraints, Senior Programs only allocated funding for four Board members to attend this year’s conference. First preference will be given to Board members who have never attended the conference. The conference will be held August 13-14, 2019 at the Sandia Resort and Casino Conference Center in Albuquerque, NM.

S. Saldana reported staff will be meeting with the Food Bank staff to address concerns with the food being distributed during the Food Distributions. She has received complaints from seniors stating that they are unable to use the food that they receive at the food distributions. As an example, seniors received a case of mayonnaise during the April food distribution. Several of the seniors stated they did not know what to do with a case of mayonnaise. A survey will be distributed to receive feedback from seniors on the types of food they can use. Senior Programs wants to be resourceful and provide only the food items seniors need, want, and can use.

J. Rodriguez-Haught stated there has been an increase in the congregate meals program. R. Buchanan, Sage Café Representative, stated there was an emergency during the food distribution at the Sage Café on Monday, May 6, 2019 where 911 was activated. When emergency personnel asked for the address of the facility, the individual who made the call was unable to locate the physical address of the building. There is no address on the outside of the building. R. Buchanan recommended the street address of the facility be placed on the outside of the building facing the road. M. Garcia will follow up with a work order to the Facilities Department.

Shelley Nichols-Shaw, Finding Our Voice (an advocacy group for people who like to speak out on different issues especially for the elderly and disabled) was introduced and welcomed. S. Nichols-Shaw stated she was interested in donating custom address tiles for the Sage Café Senior Center. S. Saldana will check with the Facilities Department on the address requirements and will contact S. Nicholas-Shaw.

S. Nichols-Shaw stated Senior Programs needs to have the sidewalks properly marked. She stated New Mexico State codes states that you should have the access areas for the disabled clearly marked. S. Nichols-Shaw has also addressed the City in reference to the City Hall parking spaces and the light poles across from City Hall that were installed in the middle of the sidewalk. The light poles obstruct the walking path for disabled individuals. Two of the four parking spaces at City Hall are still not in compliance. She has previously discussed this issue of concern with the City but stated the City is not upholding that state law, which has been in existence for the past 10 years. The purpose of the law is to prevent people from parking in the disabled access areas. That is one of the main goals of the program is to provide accessibility for everyone.

R. Buchanan announced that Ryan Steinmetz, Network Volunteer Center Coordinator, submitted two nominations for the New Mexico Conference on Aging volunteer recognition awards. The
nominees consist of Frank Lovato for the Gregorita Chavarria Arts Award. F. Lovato helps with the music offering throughout the year, and the second nominee is Jim Schaefer for the K. Rose Wood Outstanding Older Adults Award. Mr. Schaefer is a dedicated volunteer for the Food Distributions. He comes in early the day of, or day before to setup for the food distributions five times a month.

The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, June 13, 2019, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Eastside Community Center, 310 N. Tornillo Street, Las Cruces, NM.

X. ADJOURNMENT: R. Buchanan moved to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 10:38 a.m.

Submitted,

[Signature]
Judy Chavarria, Secretary

[Signature]
Toni Flores, Recording Secretary