



SENIOR AFFAIRS ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

WEDNESDAY, June 18, 2025

In Person Meeting: 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Location: **Park De La Cruz Community Center**

3901 Landis Street

San Diego, CA 92107

Agenda

Item 1: Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Gwenmarie Hilleary called the Senior Affairs Advisory Board meeting to order at 12:11 p.m.

Marissa Feliciano, Gwenmarie Hilleary, Jacqueline Jackson, Michelle Matter, William Peetoom, Bob Prath, and JB Robinson present.

Antoinette Alioto, Mary Scott Knolls, Juan Sotelo, and Rosemary White Pope absent.

Item 2: Information Item: Myla Barker, Emergency Services Coordinator, County of San Diego

Myla Barker, Emergency Services Coordinator from the County of San Diego, shared her background and experience related to emergency management. She provided an overview of her multifaceted role, which includes serving as a 24/7 duty officer on a rotating weekly schedule to coordinate disaster response efforts, working closely with Sheriffs, Cal Fire, and the American Red Cross to disseminate evacuation information and manage shelters for people and animals. Additionally, Myla leads strategic community engagement initiatives focused on building a community-centered preparedness plan and outreach strategy to ensure meaningful public involvement and reimagine individual responsibilities during emergencies. She also serves as a tribal liaison for 18 federally recognized tribes, the highest number in any U.S. jurisdiction. It was noted that all county employees can be called upon to support emergency responses as needed.

Myla provided an overview of the structure of emergency management, explaining the hierarchy from local jurisdictions to county, state (Cal OES), and federal (FEMA) levels, with each tier

providing support when the preceding level exceeds its capacity. A discussion followed on how emergency services identify and address the needs of older adults. Concerns were raised about older adults living alone or in communal settings who may not fully understand emergency risks, and whether resources and accommodations are sufficiently integrated into planning. It was acknowledged that more work is needed, including reinstating the Access and Functional Needs Advisory Board, which was lost during the COVID-19 pandemic. Encouraging older adults to create personalized emergency plans was emphasized as a priority.

The importance of a whole-community approach was highlighted, with community planning involving workshops and discussions to foster meaningful engagement. Personal preparedness, such as packing a go-bag with supplies, was stressed given that government response can take up to 72 hours. Older adults should aim to be self-sufficient until help arrives, and communities must have a clear understanding of unfolding situations.

Bob Prath noted the dangers heat poses to older adults and praised the “Cool Zone” program. He referenced historical Neighborhood Emergency Response Teams (NERT) in Berkeley, which checked on isolated residents following the San Francisco earthquake, and questioned whether similar programs exist locally, including whether fire departments maintain lists of isolated older adults. Myla responded that CERT programs are active locally and suggested this topic for future discussion. Collaboration among multiple agencies was stressed as essential to building capacity for preparedness and long-term recovery.

William Peetoom noted that while regulations like Title 22 require licensed facilities to have emergency evaluation plans in place, these mandates do not extend to independent group homes that house multiple older adult residents. He suggested that neighborhood watch groups could serve as valuable tools for educating residents at the community level. In response, Myla explained that emergency evaluations are typically carried out by law enforcement in coordination with fire departments. She also noted that San Diego County does not have pre-established evacuation routes due to the unpredictable and fast-moving nature of wildfires.

There was a discussion on coordination efforts in skilled nursing and Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFEs). Gwenmarie Hilleary shared that there is a council that meets monthly to review emergency plans, a practice that was strengthened after the 2014 fires through the establishment of a Facility Task Force aimed at improving coordination and resource sharing.

Finally, communication tools such as the Genesis Protect app, which provides evacuation zone alerts and warnings, were discussed. Community tours and outreach resources are available to support education and engagement around preparedness. Action items from the meeting include following up with Cal Fire on CERT team involvement and the existence of isolated adult lists, adding CERT coordination and advisory board discussions to future meeting agendas, exploring opportunities for workshops, and continuing to promote individual and neighborhood preparedness strategies.

Item 3: Non-Agenda Public Comment

None

Item 4: Review and Approval of Minutes

Gwenmarie Hilleary introduced the item. Bob Prath made a motion to approve the minutes. William Peetoom seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 5: Officer Reports

Gwenmarie Hilleary provided updates on behalf of Antoinette Alioto, who was unable to attend the meeting. Antoinette participated in the AIS Advisory Council and wanted to share that a community member representing the LGBTQ community expressed concerns about being excluded from the Master Plan efforts. Additional updates included the announcement that the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) will continue operating under the Administration for Children and Families. Information was shared about the San Diego Workforce Program, which connects older adult job seekers with meaningful employment opportunities and that funding for Choose Well, a web-based platform that allows individuals to view ratings for assisted living facilities, has been discontinued in the new budget. The County is planning to transition this service to a private entity, such as 2-1-1. Lastly, there were serious concerns regarding potential budget cuts to In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS). Proposed reductions in allowable overtime and provider travel could negatively affect the quality and continuity of care for older adults.

JB Robinson shared that Mayor Gloria plans to issue the budget line-item veto memo, giving the City Council until June 26 to respond.

Item 6: City Staff Liaison Report

No report.

Item 7: Old Business: Blue Envelope

Gwenmarie Hilleary provided an update on efforts to schedule a meeting with Juan Sotelo and the Police Department to explore opportunities for revitalizing and promoting the Blue Envelope program as a key resource.

Item 8: Old Business: County Aging Road Map

No discussion.

Item 8: Board Comments, Announcements, Topics for Future SAAB Meetings

JB Robinson reflected on recent presentations to the Board, noting that it may be beneficial to provide guest speakers with more context in advance. This would help them better tailor their presentations to the committee's focus areas, particularly regarding city initiatives and programs impacting older adults. JB emphasized that this responsibility should not fall solely on the Staff Liaison and suggested that the committee clarify what questions they want guests to address. He reinforced the importance of aligning presentations with the committee's role and jurisdiction.

Marissa Feliciano proposed hosting a workshop focused on disaster preparedness specifically for older adults. Michelle Matter supported the idea and suggested that events be held at City of San Diego Senior Centers. William Peetoom emphasized the need to assess the city's capacity to identify overlaps or gaps in current efforts. While he acknowledged the value of county-level presentations, he highlighted the importance of also using libraries and community centers for outreach. He expressed concern about limited city communication on disaster preparedness and recommended improving engagement through City Councilmember newsletters.

Item 11: Adjournment

Michelle Matter made a motion to adjourn the meeting. William Peetoom seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:14 p.m.