



## **SENIOR AFFAIRS ADVISORY BOARD**

### **Meeting Minutes**

WEDNESDAY, June 18, 2025

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

Location: **Cathy Hopper Clairemont Friendship Center**  
**4425 Bannock Ave**  
**San Diego, CA 92117**

### **Agenda**

#### **Item 1: Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair Gwenmarie Hilleary called the Senior Affairs Advisory Board meeting to order at 12:23 p.m.

Antoinette Alioto, Marissa Feliciano, Gwenmarie Hilleary, Michelle Matter, William Peetoom, and Bob Prath present.

Jacqueline Jackson, Mary Scott Knolls, JB Robinson, Juan Sotelo, and Rosemary White Pope absent.

#### **Item 2: Non-Agenda Public Comment**

None

#### **Item 3: Review and Approval of Minutes**

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

#### **Item 4: Officer Reports**

Gwenmarie Hilleary shared that most advisory boards go dark in August and proposed that this committee do the same. Bob noted that this was a practical approach, and Michelle agreed. With no objections from members, the August meeting will be canceled. There was also consensus to bring forward an item in September to formally amend the bylaws to officially go dark in both July and August moving forward.

Gwenmarie encouraged Board Members to stay alert to developments in senior-related policy at both the state and local levels, particularly regarding H.R. 1 – One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

She also reported that at the County level, a recent Supervisor election resulted in the election of Paloma Aguirre, a proactive Democrat. Bob Prath recognized Aguirre's strong support for older adults during her tenure as Mayor of Imperial Beach, particularly in the development and implementation of the city's Age-Friendly Action Plan. He noted that she regularly attended meetings, remained fully engaged, and played a key role in advancing the plan. Notable accomplishments in Imperial Beach include the creation of community gardens, renovations to the senior center, and other age-friendly initiatives that reflect a responsive approach to community needs.

In addition, Gwenmarie shared that the City of San Diego budget has been approved. William Peetoom inquired about any potential impacts on senior-related programs. Kristi Fenick shared that the full budget is available on the City's website and includes a list of positions that were cut. However, proposed cuts to libraries and parks were restored.

#### **Item 5: City Staff Liaison Report**

Kristi Fenick invited Jose Ysea, Public Information Officer for the City of San Diego Communications Department, to provide an update on emergency preparedness and response, particularly as it relates to older adults and individuals with disabilities. Jose shared that the City's emergency response efforts have significantly improved in recent years. Under the leadership of Chief Christopher Heiser and the launch of the Office of Emergency Services (OES), coordination has been strengthened. Staff from Cal OES now participate in weekly preparedness meetings. Jose emphasized that planning efforts now include a strong focus on vulnerable populations, such as older adults and individuals with disabilities. He also noted that the City's preliminary audit of the storm response from January will be presented to the Audit Committee next Thursday. The audit includes a review of how impacted communities were served and identifies areas for improvement.

Kristi shared that Captain John Morris from the Police Department's Emergency Planning Unit also works closely with the Fire Department on large-scale emergencies and has offered to speak at a future meeting to provide more detailed information. Gwenmarie Hilleary encouraged Board Members to begin formulating questions in advance of the meeting, while acknowledging that additional questions may arise during the discussion. Jose noted that September is National Preparedness Month and there is opportunity to amplify messaging around checking on older adults during emergencies.

Several questions were raised by Board Members for future follow-up. These included the City's evacuation plans for older adults, particularly those in rural or hard-to-reach areas, and how coordination between the City and County is managed. When asked whether a registry exists for older adults and individuals with disabilities, Jose referenced the use of reverse 9-1-1 notifications. Antoinette noted that County-wide registries are often underutilized because they require individuals to opt in. She shared that some service providers, such as Jewish Family Service, maintain internal vulnerable client checklists and recommended greater coordination among organizations.

Bob Prath brought up the Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 – Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities transportation program and Title 22 requirements, noting that while individual emergency plans are required at the state level, there is a lack of a coordinated mass emergency plan specifically for vulnerable populations. He also raised concerns about how the City’s Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) are utilized, specifically whether they are trained or expected to check on vulnerable residents during large-scale emergencies. Gwenmarie added that future discussions should also include questions about transportation during emergencies and post-evacuation services to specifically address needs of older adults.

Kristi will invite Captain Morris to present at the September meeting. She also shared an update on the Cathy Hopper Friendship Center, which is currently undergoing a kitchen remodel. Members were invited to tour the facility following the meeting. Kristi noted that the project is being supported by a grant from the San Diego Community Foundation, with additional funding provided by John Hopper.

#### **Item 6: County Aging Council Representative Letter**

Gwenmarie Hilleary introduced a draft letter to Jana Jordan, Chief of Agency Operations at the County of San Diego Aging & Independence Services (AIS), requesting that Board Member Antoinette Alito serve as a designated representative to the AIS Advisory Council.

Bob Prath raised the possibility that such a request might require changes to the Advisory Council’s bylaws. However, Gwenmarie clarified that no structural changes or voting privileges were being requested, only formal recognition of the Board’s interest in participating. Antoinette Alito echoed this, emphasizing that the goal is simply to have our participation acknowledged as an engaged and contributing body.

William Peetoom made the motion to approve sending the letter, Michelle Matter seconded, and the group voted unanimously in favor.

#### **Item 7: Old Business - Fire/Police – Regarding Emergency Response**

There was no additional discussion, as the topic was addressed earlier in the meeting.

#### **Item 8: Old Business - Blue Envelope**

Gwenmarie Hilleary provided an update on efforts to meet with the Police Department to explore opportunities for revitalizing and promoting the Blue Envelope Program as a key community resource. She shared that Jose Ysea will assist with coordination efforts.

#### **Item 9: Old Business – County Aging Road Map**

No discussion

#### **Item 10: Board Comments, Announcements, Topics for Future SAAB Meetings**

William Peetoom raised the question of whether there are specific organizations the Board should strengthen relationships with, emphasizing the importance of having “boots on the ground” and ensuring alignment with the agendas of key partners. Kristi Fenick will review past meeting minutes from before the Board’s reestablishment to help identify any previous connections. William also asked if City Council Offices could designate a point person for aging issues. Kristi agreed this could be addressed in a letter to Councilmembers, which will be discussed at the September meeting.

Bob Prath asked whether the Board has the capacity to sponsor events and referenced his collaborations with AARP and the City on fraud prevention events that have seen strong community turnout. He questioned whether we should be participating in similar efforts. Gwenmarie Hilleary clarified that while direct sponsorship may not be feasible, the Board should seek more meaningful involvement and stronger connections as outlined in its bylaws.

Michelle Matter highlighted the group’s collective expertise in aging and proposed that the Board continue to identify gaps in the City’s Age-Friendly Action Plan and elevate those issues to Mayor Gloria. Antoinette Alito agreed, stressing the importance of listening to the community and using data to drive recommendations.

Bob noted that community feedback was collected as part of the Age-Friendly Action Plan and suggested we regularly ask, “Are you considering older adults and the changing population in your planning?” He emphasized that City departments should proactively seek our input. Kristi reminded the Board that Jose Ysea offered to enhance the Board’s visibility and community outreach.

Bob also proposed hosting listening sessions, referencing the County’s past efforts to engage older adults directly. William suggested these sessions take place in each Council District to increase accountability and public awareness of our work. Gwenmarie supported the idea, reiterating the value of public education on aging issues.

Antoinette provided a brief update on AIS, noting that Adult Protective Services (APS) will present year-end data in September. She reported an increase in referrals for older adults and confirmed that the Home Safe program will continue due to renewed state funding.

Bob gave an update on senior fraud, highlighting Paul Greenwood’s continued involvement and the estimated \$7 billion in annual losses due to fraud affecting older adults. He noted that while this issue is particularly urgent for aging populations, cities across the country are beginning to replicate local models. APS continues to investigate such cases, referring them to the FBI and law enforcement when appropriate.

William asked whether he could accept a speaking invitation on behalf of the City in his capacity as a Board Member. Kristi clarified that while members cannot officially represent the City, she would be happy to provide an update as a staff member.

## **Item 11: Adjournment**

William Peetoom made a motioned to adjourn the meeting. Marissa Feliciano seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:57 p.m.

DRAFT