



SENIOR AFFAIRS ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

WEDNESDAY, November 19, 2025

In Person Meeting: 12:00 Noon

Location: **Park de la Cruz Community Center**
3901 Landis Street, San Diego, 92105

Item 1: Call to Order

Chair Gwenmarie Hilleary called the Senior Affairs Advisory Board meeting to order at 12:06 p.m.

Item 2: Roll Call

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

Mary Scott Knoll and Rosemary White Pope absent.

Item 3: Approval of the October 15 Meeting Minutes

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

Item 4: SAAB Elections

Bob Prath presented a slate of officers for Board including Gwenmarie Hilleary as Chair, William Peetoom as Vice Chair, Michelle Matter as Secretary, and JB Robinson as Legislative Chair. All nominees have agreed to serve in their respective roles. Bob noted that their combined experience will support continued growth, strategic progress, and the successful execution of board initiatives. Bob Prath made a motion to approve the proposed slate of officers who will serve until June 2026. Antoinette Alioto, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 5: Discussion – Intern to Support SAAB

Gwenmarie Hilleary presented the item, noting that the initiative was first introduced by William Peetoom, who proposed bringing on an intern to assist with research and other projects as a non-voting member. Marissa Feliciano highlighted the value of incorporating youth experience. Michelle Matter suggested exploring the SDSU Board Fellows Program. Bob Prath recommended considering a student who could support Age-Well initiatives, with Kristi Fenick providing guidance. Gwenmarie emphasized that a structured internship through an academic institution would be ideal, particularly to help track legislative matters for JB Robinson, who noted that summaries prepared by an intern would be useful to share with Councilmembers. Antoinette asked about minimum hourly requirements, and Kristi explained that a job description will be needed and that the city's process may take time, but the placement could offer a pathway to future city employment.

Item 6: Discussion – Village Movement

Gwenmarie Hilleary introduced the item and provided a brief overview of the Village Movement. William Peetoom noted that he had reached out to the Serra Mesa Village but had not received a response. Bob Prath shared information about the Tierrasanta Village, highlighted the Beacon Hill model, and emphasized the value of connected services, noting that no Tierrasanta members have been readmitted to the hospital. He also mentioned emerging efforts in City Heights, the need for strong financial structures within Villages, and current AARP intern projects focused on Village development.

Antoinette Alioto shared her expertise working with Village Models, the challenges of funding, and national software platforms, such as Helpful Village, developed by Manuel Acevedo, and Run My Village, which support operations, newsletters, and membership administration. She also shared insights from a conference she attended in Sacramento, with the next conference planned for San Diego, and suggested presenting at Village meetings to build relationships.

Gwenmarie noted the lack of Village Models in South County and asked whether the board should support or encourage development. William suggested building bridges between villages, libraries, and community centers, while Antoinette recommended leveraging local senior centers as launching points by engaging older adults already connected to those spaces. Kristi added that the City Heights model is highlighted in newsletters and she will explore potential speakers for a future meeting.

Item 7: Staff Liaison Report

Kristi Fenick shared that the Age-Well Services winter newsletter is now available. She noted that meetings with Districts 3 and 7 still need to be scheduled, but she emailed each office three times. The year-end report will reflect these outreach efforts. Kristi also reported that the SAAB website has been updated, and the revised bylaws and board member bios are now posted.

Item 8: Update – County of San Diego Aging and Independence Services

Antoinette Alioto provided an update from Aging & Independence Services. She noted ongoing challenges with how resources and information are shared. Both the State and County are working to improve their websites to make them more accessible and easier to navigate. She also

reported that CalFresh benefits have been reinstated for all Californians by the 10th of the month, as usual.

Antoinette summarized recent presentations, including one from Elder Law & Advocacy on HICAP, which offers long-term care information, legal support for caregivers, assistance for marginalized communities, guidance on housing insecurity, and help regarding elder abuse for adults 65 and older. Another presentation covered the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, which monitors skilled nursing facilities, RCFEs, and board-and-care homes. The program includes 12 paid staff and 30 volunteer ombudsmen and provides training, witnesses advance directives, and requires an ombudsman to be present for palliative health situations. She also noted that state law requires nursing homes to provide 3.5 staff hours per resident per day.

Antoinette shared that AIS has several subcommittees focused on areas such as healthy aging, affordable aging, nutrition, and various ad-hoc topics. The AIS meeting will be dark in December.

Item 9: Board Comments, Announcements, Meeting Locations/Topics for Future SAAB Meetings

Marissa Feliciano provided an update on the District 4 meeting with Councilmember Foster that she attended along with Jacqueline Jackson and Rosemary White Pope. She shared that the meeting was positive and that Councilmember Foster appeared attentive and genuinely interested in the issues raised. He is exploring expanding rental subsidies for older adults in the budget and maintains a strong focus on affordable housing and permanent supportive housing. As a member of the MTS Board, he expressed interest in improving transportation options for older adults. The group also discussed shifting cultural mindsets to elevate respect for older adults and the need for stronger, more coordinated communication across county districts. Councilmember Foster's office expressed openness to including a "senior corner" in their newsletter to support outreach and information-sharing.

Gwenmarie Hilleary reported on the District 8 visit, noting that there was limited focus on senior issues. While the office was aware of Age-Well programs, they were not focused on senior-specific priorities. The group discussed advocacy needs, along with potential partnerships with AARP and Oasis. Additional topics included challenges with trash services, concerns from older adults about high water bills and access to SDG&E rebates, and the lack of drop-in support to help older adults navigate available resources. Staff expressed interest in expanding case management services at locations such as Memorial Senior Center, Casa Familiar, and the San Ysidro Senior Center.

For District 9, JB Robinson provided an update from the November 3 meeting with the Director of Community Engagement. The office expressed a commitment to being physically present in the community, with staff participating in activities such as Zumba classes. Older adults in this district rely heavily on recreation centers, including the one at Park de la Cruz. Staff noted that nearly all neighborhood planning groups are undergoing community planning updates, presenting opportunities to incorporate older adult needs. The district is taking a proactive approach by having its community liaison visit the senior center in early December to strengthen

everyday engagement. The office also has a team of six interns, including graphic design interns who can assist with developing a toolkit to help seniors understand available benefits and resources.

Gwenmarie suggested that the board consider going dark in December. Michelle Matter moved to approve the cancellation of the December 17 meeting, Jacqueline seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Gwenmarie also reported on the grocery store coupon issue and shared that Vons is resisting participation. Bob Prath shared that he recently joined a Serving Seniors tele-town hall with over 200 participants, where Smart & Final was recognized for participating in the County program. Councilmember Elo-Rivera's office has received numerous inquiries from across the country, reflecting broad interest in the program. While efforts at the state level have not yet been successful, Bob noted emerging interest at the County level from a supervisor.

Bob also shared that during a recent legislative conversation with Councilmember LaCava's office, staff noted that although the district is generally affluent, many older adults in communities such as La Jolla are financially struggling. He highlighted a program in Nebraska that reduced older adult fraud related to cryptocurrency by 20% simply by posting signage on cryptocurrency ATMs, including a written notice warning consumers about the potential fraud risks associated with using these machines. He suggested revisiting this in January.

JB Robinson reported on upcoming changes to individual contributions toward housing vouchers for older adults and individuals with disabilities. The proposed adjustment would increase the required contribution from 28.5% to 32% of income, with a vote scheduled for December 11. Bob provided additional information on shallow rent subsidies, and Antoinette Alioto shared information about a subsidy program administered by JFS in La Mesa.

Gwenmarie shared that there is a potential candidate to fill the vacant Board position and that the candidate is currently being interviewed.

Item 10: Non-Agenda Public Comment

None.

Michelle Matter made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Marissa Feliciano seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:23 p.m.