
MINUTES

APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS REGIONAL AGING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2025 – 10:30 A.M. APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARDROOM GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Members Present:

Barbara Jardno, Charles Pinson, Glenda Manigault, Edna Pitts-Reid, J.T. Boseman, Joe Dill, Kam Flynn, Steve Luck

Members Absentee:

Beth Grant, Bob Briggs, Brett Gillespie, Dorothy Manning, Jane Hall, Mae Frances Sarratt

Guests Present:

Nick Kulick, Judge Kerry Guillory

Staff Present:

Shelly Mitchell, Pam Anderson, Dani Vankirk, Eddie Styles, Pat Case, Amanda Stewart, Anne-Marie Coogler, Amanda Mlinar

The meeting was called to order at 10:35am by Mr. Dill and an invocation was offered by Mr. Boseman. Prior minutes from June 18, 2025, were approved by Mr. Pinson and a second by Ms. Jardno. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Recognition of Guests: Shelly Mitchell, recognized and welcomed:

There were no new guests to recognize at this time.

Staff Introduction: Shelly Mitchell presented:

We're pleased to announce that the SHIP department has filled both open Benefits Counselor positions following a strong response to our job posting. After interviewing four highly qualified candidates, we selected two outstanding individuals to join our team.

Pat Case, senior staff member in SHIP, re-introduced herself, then introduced Amanda Stewart and Eddie Styles, who both shared their backgrounds and expressed enthusiasm about joining

the AAA and serving our community. We're excited to welcome Amanda and Eddie to the team and look forward to the contributions they'll bring to the SHIP program.

Family Care Giver Update: Amanda Mlinar presented:

** FCG Client Spending Report for 7/1/24 – 6/30/25 and a list of 2025 Upcoming Events was presented to the group **

Questions were asked concerning the abbreviations: FCG – Family Caregiver, WFCGP – Working Family Caregiver Program

We were able to serve 8 working caregivers. This program has closed, and we are unsure if it will return. If it should, we will provide feedback on our challenges and stress the need for more flexibility in the program.

Currently, we are issuing 30 – 25 vouchers per month. In February, we had to start a waitlist, which currently holds 69 individuals. This waitlist is prioritized by need, mirroring other programs. With the expiration of ARP funds, we are re-evaluating our criteria to qualify for the program. Making more stringent qualifications will help to identify those that are most in need of assistance. This will allow us to serve those most in need while better stretching the limited funding we receive.

It is never too early to be contacted about caregiver support. It isn't always monetary help that people need. Our office also provides support with education, counseling, support groups, etc. It's good to know what is available as a caregiver's needs change.

Ombudsman Update: Anne-Marie Coogler presented:

Data for July 2024 – June 2025:

- Cases Opened – 198 cases
- Cases Closed – 175 cases, 279 complaints
- Friendly Visits – 1795 visits, 1,900 hours
- Outreach Events – 47 events, 136 hours
- Information/Assistance contacts – 1,287 contacts, 308 hours
- Resident/Family Council meetings – 18 attended

Of the cases that have closed, the top three complaints include: care, environment, and lastly abuse, gross neglect, and exploitation. In the last year, we have had 3 facilities close: Brookdale in Anderson, Patriot Living of Taylors, and Pine Grove in Greenville. These facilities were OSS facilities. There is also a DSS facility with 38 residents that will be closing due to the owner's retirement.

We currently have 31 volunteers and 2 interns from Greenville Tech. On the COG webpage, there is a Regional Resource Guide that can be printed with a ton of useful information. Please let us know if the link to a web address is broken.

We recently hosted a successful conference for Assisted Living staff, covering a range of valuable and engaging topics. Sessions included:

- Resident and family councils
- Top ten complaints presented by DDH staff
- Chair yoga
- APS (Adult Protective Services) reporting
- Overview of the OSS program, including application process and eligibility requirements
- Home Again program
- Presentation by a legal representative

Attendees found the conference informative and enjoyable. Everyone received a game from Joy for All, a company that creates engaging games specifically designed for seniors.

The 2nd Annual 5K will be held on November 1 in Columbia, SC. All proceeds will benefit the Ombudsman program.

The nursing home personal needs allowance supposedly has been raised to \$60, but this hasn't been confirmed yet.

Mr. Luck shared some of the projects he is working on and expressed a need for furnishing for a building to house the homeless. There was also a discussion concerning Medicaid and the closing of future facilities. SC handles Medicaid properly and there isn't a concern of those facilities closing.

Assessment Update: Pam Anderson presented:

We have completed 3,766 assessments this past year, 300 more than the year prior. There were a few months that we were allowed to conduct assessments via phone. The total of assessments was broken down by county.

We have been able to remove some people from the waitlist. It was shared how many started services by county/by service. We continue to have a waitlist for most services outside of meals.

Nutrition Update: Dani Vankirk presented:

Easley Senior Center will open the first of September. We served 360,000 meals last year in our 6 counties for home delivered and congregate. Currently, we have 25 senior centers; 17 are open fewer than 5 days a week. Funding for the nutrition program is not in jeopardy.

Aging Update: Shelly Mitchell presented:

The Federal Regulations have been amended and updated due to the Final Rule that a member of the Board cannot also be a voting member of RAAC. The Bi-Laws committee will address this and update our bi-laws so we will stay in compliance with the Federal Regs. We have strong people on our advisory committee, and we need you to continue to participate and help advocate for our seniors in the community.

Finance Update: Shelly Mitchell presented:

We received our initial State funding NGA which consists of only new HCBS funds, totaling 2.8 million. We will receive our carry forward from last fiscal year once all AAAs have submitted their yearend reimbursement requests and the state has reconciled their accounts. From the NGA, all the providers have received their budget based on our expected funds.

The COG supported our Insurance program for just over \$45,000 and the Ombudsman program for \$6,000 when we closed out FY25.

ARP funding expires September 30, 2025. With the admin portion of these funds, we have been able to provide computers to allow us to conduct virtual assessments, hardware to support the new database, modules, and other things to help the providers invest and prepare for the capabilities that are yet to come with ServTracker. Internally, we have sent many of our staff to conferences to continue to learn and adopt best practices in our region. We have made good investments and utilized these funds to the best of our ability.

Member Updates and Discussion:

- Discussion – bringing together agencies that provide similar services
- Rebuild Upstate Events – Sept 10 (Greenville) and Oct 2 (Anderson), and a Warehouse Grand Opening in Easley on Oct 9

Meeting Adjourned at 12:05pm.

Next Meeting is October 15, 2025
