Office of Community Advocacy

Elder Affairs Advisory Board

Monthly Meeting

Thursday, January 30th, 2025

10:00 a.m.

Westchester Public Library

9445 Coral Way

Miami. FL 33165

Members Present: Betty Hermida, Mario Tapia, Armando Riera, Barby Morales, Rosa Kasse, Lupe Bruneman, Dionne Polite

Members Absent: Johnnie Kerr, Magali Abad, Brenda Lampon

I. Welcome

The meeting began at 10:24 a.m. Katherine introduced the Office of Community Advocacy interns to the board. Mario asked if it was possible to have them volunteer. Griselle told Mario to reach out to her. Katherine informed the board that she was leaving. February will be her last meeting. Vanessa was introduced as the new Program Officer for the Elder Affairs Advisory Board. Vanessa gave a short introduction about herself.

II. Approval of January Agenda

There was no quorum at the beginning of the meeting so approvals were moved. Once quorum was obtained, Rosa motioned to approve the January agenda. Lupe seconded the motion. The motion was passed by voice vote and the agenda for January was approved.

III. Approval of November Agenda

The November agenda was not approved in November because there was no quorum. Approval was moved to January. Betty motioned to approve the November agenda. Dionne seconded the motion. The motion was passed by voice vote and the agenda for November was approved.

IV. Approval of November Minutes

Betty motioned to approve the November minutes. Mario seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote and the November minutes were approved.

V. Approval of October Minutes

The October minutes were not approved in November because there was no quorum. Dionne motioned to approve the October minutes. Armando seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote and the October minutes were approved.

VI. Committee Report

On January 15th, the Community Outreach Committee met at the Stephen P. Clark Government Center. The Committee discussed the list of invitations that went out, the date and location of the fair, and the resource guide. The resource guide should be available soon. We also reached out to Mind & Melody. That will be discussed later in this meeting.

VII. Work Group Updates

State Attorney Work Group: There are no work group meetings until further notice.

Elder Issues Committee: The meeting was Tuesday, January 28th at 2:00 p.m. If you are interested in being a part of this group, please visit healthymiamidade.org to sign up. During the meeting, the EIC went over their needs & assessments.

Age-Friendly Initiative Stakeholder meeting: On Thursday, January 23rd, Vanessa and Katherine attended the stakeholder meeting. At the meeting, they reviewed their action plan, which will be done in February. When we discussed it, there were concerns about how they were getting their information. They told us they got 46% of their information from survey socials where they would go into the community and interview in person. The Alliance and 211 Miami gave presentations on the services they provide and what they've seen in the community.

Lupe asked what the results of this action plan were. Katherine will send the results to the board once the action plan is released in February.

Alliance for Aging: Betty provided an update. At the last meeting, they discussed their audit and deficiencies. The last survey that was done noted that the Black and Haitian communities are utilizing alliance services the least. There is going to be an initiative to try and target Black and Haitian communities. There is a new program opened up called FACE for Alzheimer's because the waiting list for services is so long, they have to find a way to address certain issues while people wait. Anyone who needs this service can call the Alliance. The service offers transitional and provisional services while they're on the waiting list. The Alliance also had a guest speaker that provided information on Mercy hospital that provided service for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's patients. Mario asked for more information on the program.

VIII. Reasonable Opportunity

There were no speakers for reasonable opportunity.

IX. Old Business

Elections: The elections did not take place in November, as required by the bylaws, because there was no quorum. Katherine opened the floor for nominations. For chair, Rosa nominated Mario. Mario accepted the nomination. Mario nominated Lupe. Lupe accepted. Lupe nominated Betty. Betty accepted. The nominees for Chair were Mario, Lupe, and Betty. For vice-chair, Rosa nominated Betty. Betty accepted. Lupe nominated Mario. Mario accepted. For second vice-chair, Mario nominated Betty. Betty accepted. Rosa nominated Mario. Mario accepted. Betty nominated Lupe. Lupe accepted.

The votes were cast by anonymous written ballot. Lupe was voted the Chair of the board. Mario was voted vice-chair. Betty was voted the second vice-chair. The new board should send their biographies and headshots to Katherine and Griselle to share in the Office and Board newsletters.

Resource Fair: Katherine reached out to Mind & Melody to see what the fee was to have them perform at the resource fair. The fee is $175 per hour. The board agreed we should have them perform for about an hour. Lupe motioned to approve the $175 be taken from the Board's trust fund to pay for Mind & Melody's performance at the resource fair. Mario seconded the motion. The motion was passed by voice vote and the payment for Mind & Melody was approved. Katherine will get the $175 from the trust fund and send it to Mind & Melody to secure their performance for an hour at the resource fair.

We've invited over 160 groups to participate, and registration is due April 21st. There was a brief discussion about the potential to work with a radio station. The price is extremely high. Lupe and Mario are going to speak with their radio station, La Poderosa, to see how we can work with them instead. During the committee meeting, Barby asked if we could wave West Gables Rehabilitation's registration fee as a thank you for their donations last year. The board agreed that was a good idea and Barby motioned to waive West Gables' registration fee. Dionne seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote and the registration fee for West Gables will be waived, if they would like to participate.

Alliance on Aging Discussion: The board began their bi-monthly discussion on the Alliance on Aging. Mario would like the board to send a letter informing the Board of County Commissioners that the Alliance is our County's designated office and has not responded to the requests they've received for their five-year plan. The letter should highlight the multiple complaints that have been received about the struggles that the helpline has been dealing with. The letter should urge the Alliance to fulfill its primary role and resume its in-person services. Since we lost quorum, Katherine will put it on next month's agenda.

Resource Guide: At the last meeting, it was suggested that we contact those who have been included in the resource guide to inform them of the guide and their inclusion and offer sponsorship opportunities. Katherine explained the limitations involved with finding contact information with everyone. Vanessa will try to be as inclusive as possible. Armando motioned to approve reaching out to resources. Barby seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote and Vanessa will reach out to the resources to let them know about the resource guide.

X. New Business

New Ordinance: The new ordinance was sent to us. As requested, the age was lowered to 50 and four at-large members were added. They also went through the ordinance and changed every mention of "elder" to "older adult."

Bylaws: To reflect this ordinance change, Article II, Section a of the bylaws need to be changed to say 50 instead of 55. Lupe motioned to approve the bylaw change. Armando seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote and the bylaws were approved.

Ordinance Change: The Office's boards have been having trouble with attendance. All the boards are asking their members if they would like to make an ordinance change to improve attendance. This is completely optional and up to the discretion of each individual board. Katherine read what the attendance requirements currently are. Acceptable excuse leads to any reason deemed "acceptable." The suggested change is to have 3 consecutive missed meetings or 4 missed meetings over an entire year lead to an automatic removal from the board. The board had a brief discussion about the issue before deciding that they wanted to make the change. Betty motioned to approve the request to change the attendance requirements in the ordinance. Lupe seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote and the board will be included in the office's request to change the board ordinances.

Discussion Items: Rosa shared a concern about home associations. She was informed of multiple complaints that seniors had about their home associations taking advantage of their power. She wrote to many people and did not receive responses. She's asked elders to write statements about what they are going through and said that they need help with following through the instructions they have received. They are told that it is a state issue but when they go to the state, they are not heard. Mario expressed his frustration that there oftentimes doesn't feel like much is getting done. He wants to know how we can actively move things forward and listen to our seniors. Katherine is going to reach out to the Office of Housing Advocacy so we can hear about current plans regarding the issue and move forward with a solution. Lupe suggested that they speak to an attorney. The board ran out of time so the discussion items on the agenda are moved to March.

XI. Public Meeting Review

The board reviewed the public meeting we had in November. Once again, transportation was the greatest issue. We had a lot of feedback on the harm that the change in the County's transportation has caused many older adults.

XII. Announcements

Katherine informed the board of who is approaching their 8-year limits and who is missing their trainings. We have a presentation from the library in March and a presentation from CITT (transportation) in July. The DMV will be at SPCC on Thursday, February 27th.

XIII. Adjournment