



# LEWIS-MASON-THURSTON AREA AGENCY ON AGING

 [LMTAAA.org](http://LMTAAA.org)

 (360) 664-0791

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## Advisory Council

**Draft Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, April 2, 2025**

**9:30 AM – 11:30 AM**

In Person & Via Teams

### Members Present:

Lewis County: Heidi Buswell, Vice-Chair; Debbie Aust; Tim Wood.

Mason County: Glenn Harper.

Thurston County: Cat McGaffigan, Chair; Michele Horaney.

### Members Absent:

Becky Cronquist; Greg Rohr; Eileen McKenzieSullivan; Anna Schlecht.

### Staff Present:

Donna Feddern, Chief of Programs & Services; Chrissy Franklin, Executive Assistant; Kyle Sanchez, Planning Manager; Valerie Aubertin, Community Supports Director; Chelsea Carter, Contracts Management Supervisor; Alice Cunningham Kane, Contracts Manager; Julie Dasso, IT Director.

### Visitors Present:

Liz Hicker, former Advisory Council member; Willie Merryman; Lewis County Guest; Shelly Willis, Executive Director at Family Education and Support Services; Trista Mason, Director of Kinship Services at Family Education and Support Services; Carol Brock, Timber River Board Chair.

### Tribal Land Acknowledgement, *Heidi Buswell, Vice-Chair*

### Welcome and Introductions, *Cat McGaffigan, Chair*

Cat McGaffigan, Chair, welcomed everyone and introductions were made. In recognizing Autism Awareness month, a video was shared, "Autism and Aging" with researcher B. Blair Braden.

### Approval of the April 2, 2025, Draft Agenda and March 5, 2025, Draft Minutes

A motion was entertained to approve the April draft agenda and March draft minutes by Cat McGaffigan, Chair. The motion was approved by Heidi Buswell, Vice-Chair, seconded by Glenn Harper and passed unanimously.

### By-Laws Draft: second reading amendment Article III – Membership Terms, *Cat McGaffigan, Chair*

Cat read the proposed revision for the amendment Article III – Membership Terms. This was the second reading of the amendment that allows the respective local Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to decide when a member's term ends: if they will continue to be on the council or if the member will be asked to take a break to allow community members that have

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applied to step in. A motion was entertained to move the suggested revisions to our County Commissioners to review and vote at their April meeting by Cat McGaffigan, Chair. Heidi Buswell, Vice-Chair stated she will explain to the County Commissioners what our goal is in revising the Membership Terms as well as inform them that we will do an overview of all the By-Laws this year. The motion was approved by Glenn Harper, seconded by Tim Wood, and passed unanimously. Cat reminded council members that they can readdress the Membership Terms when all the By-Laws are updated this year. Council members expressed they also want to discuss the mission statement. There was continued discussion about the mission statement for the organization compared to a mission statement for the Advisory Council. This will be taken up by the committee to be formed later this year. The committee will allow for discussion with the whole Advisory Council.

## **By Laws and Mission Statement Committee, Cat McGaffigan, Chair**

Cat explained we will contact the Advisory Council members that have volunteered as well as agency staff to create a committee. Once the committee has been established a meeting will be scheduled to start an overview of the By-Laws and Mission Statement.

## **Family Education and Support Services (FESS) Guest Speaker Presentation, Shelly Willis, Executive Director at FESS and Trista Mason, Director of Kinship Services at FESS**

Alice Cunningham Kane, Contracts Manager, shared that FESS is one of the contracts she manages and introduced guest speakers. Guest speaker Shelly Willis discussed the history of FESS stating the program was founded in 2000 by a group of social workers that recognized that there needed to be more resources for caregivers. FESS now has offices in Lewis, Mason, and Thurston County. Shelly introduced guest speaker Trista. Trista started the presentation by handing out family stories and asking Advisory Council Members to read them out loud showing examples of how FESS programs help families in need of support. Trista presented on the Kinship program explaining that the program provides support for guardians taking care of children. Trista stated that most of the families they help are grandparents raising their grandkids. Services have been created throughout the years based off what the community needs are. FESS stays in contact with families ensuring that the children continue to receive support. Brochures with FESS information and pinwheels were handed out. Shelly explained that the pinwheels represent Pinwheels of Hope recognizing Child Abuse Prevention Month throughout April. Shelly stated funding is very important to be able to continue offering services to the community. FESS advocates for the need for services with community members asking for increased state funding. Fundraising events such as Voices of Children not only raise funds but also helps recognize children who are being raised by Kinship Caregivers. Shelly spoke about Kinship Navigators explaining that the Navigator provides information about how to access and apply for services as well as problem solve and advocate for kinship families.

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Trista also talked about the Kinship Support Group meetings that give caregivers opportunities to discuss challenges and support one another.

## **Participation in OAA Month, Cat McGaffigan, Chair**

Cat followed up from March meeting that Older Americans Act (OAA) Month is in May and in the past council members have volunteered to attend city council meetings in their counties to read a proclamation. Multiple Council Members stated they are happy to volunteer and would like to know the dates. Chrissy Franklin, Executive Assistant, will work with agency staff on details and contact council members when she has more information.

## **Community Updates**

Glenn Harper reported the First Annual Death Care and Life Transitions Expo went very well with over 100 attendees and vendor tables. South Sound Manor Event Center in Tumwater stated they would like to hold the event at their venue again in March 2026 by highlighting the services that are provided by LMTAAA. Glenn also reported Death Cafes are expanding, and the dates and locations are on the Elderhood Senior Alliance website.

Heidi Buswell, Vice-Chair, reported she is working on finalizing her training for Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) in Lewis County. The goal to have it up and running is still on track for July.

Valerie Aubertin, Community Supports Director, reported that the Dementia Conference is on May 29<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 2pm at the Lacy Community Center. There will be multiple guest speakers with demonstrations of redirection techniques and activities. There will also be local businesses to provide resources and information. Valerie also reported that the agency will begin accepting applications for the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) starting on Tuesday April 15. To receive a preloaded card with up to \$80 in SFMNP benefits applications will be available on the agency website or community members that qualify can call the agency and the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) department can help with the application process. The preloaded cards will be mailed out the end of May and cards are available to use June 1. Participating farmers markets and roadside stands will have a sign posted that they accept SFMNP cards.

## **Membership & Outreach, Chrissy Franklin, Executive Assistant**

Chrissy reported that there has recently been confusion around memberships in Lewis County and the agency is working with the county to clarify the process moving forward. Applications for Thurston County are currently being reviewed. We have not received any new applications for Mason County. Chrissy stated she had the opportunity to meet with the ADRC Supervisor discussing specific outreach events council members will be able to attend to promote Advisory

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Council membership as well as spend time with agency staff learning more about the services. Chrissy will send members a list of events asking who would like to attend each one.

**Housing Committee** – Donna Feddern, Chief of Programs & Services, reported that we continue to work on a date for the Lewis County Senior Housing Forum in Lewis County. Donna also stated that she is working with local Lewis County organizations and community members on the ongoing concern for housing.

**SCoA March Meeting Report - Glenn Harper** reported that at the most recent State Council on Aging (SCoA) meeting there was a continued discussion of the lack of money being available. The Parkinson's Wellness Project was discussed including education points that will help individuals see early signs of Parkinson's Disease. SCoA also discussed assisted living funds and Medicaid rates. Advocacy efforts were discussed regarding nutrition programs and the increased demand for aging services.

**Socialization & Engagement Committee** – Donna Feddern, Chief of Programs & Services, reported that the Mon Ami program is available and called Well Check on the Senior Services for South Sound website [wellcheck@southsoundseiors.org](mailto:wellcheck@southsoundseiors.org). In an effort to combat loneliness and isolation Senior Services for South Sound is in partnership with the agency. The Well Check Volunteers are here to offer support and companionship. One of the trained volunteers will call weekly, Monday through Friday, to check on clients. Glenn Harper reported that Candles in the Dark is going to stop meeting due to lack of participation from the community.

## **Adjournment**

A motion was entertained by Tim Wood to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Cat McGaffigan, Chair, and it was unanimously decided to adjourn the meeting. The next meeting will be May 7th.

Minutes taken by

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Chrissy Franklin, Executive Assistant

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