

**Senior Millage Allocation Committee Meeting
February 7, 2014, 8:00 AM, Law Library,
Calhoun County Building
315 W Green Street, Marshall, MI**

Art Kale, Acting Chair- Called meeting to order 8:05AM and roll call

Roll Call: Auton, Bolton, Booth, Chappell, Dunn, Kale, Kalnins, Powers, Moore

INTRODUCTIONS: Senator Mike Nofs, Greg Moore from Nof's office, Mary Jo Byrne, Joanne Konkle, and LuAnn Sommers

Carl Gibson introduced Cheryl Pierce as the new part time assistant for Senior Services to cover the office in Rodna's and Carl's absences.

Staff: Carl Gibson, Cheryl Pierce and Lora Stevens

Agenda - Moore and Chappell: Motion, Second and Approved

Minutes for December 06, 2013 - Moore and Bolton: Motion, Second and Approved

Presentation on Senate Legislation #636: Landline Discontinuation of Support:

Mike Nofs / Greg Moore spoke about the Senate bill that is being considered in Lansing – Senate bill #636. This bill will not require companies to provide or maintain a land line beginning 2017 – current law does.

Rationale:

- Current cables into homes are not just voice to voice - internet and other companies are using it, broad band, video, and phone. Citizens only have one line to house and most people in rural areas have the land lines. ATT and other phone companies have to maintain the old system, costing them money but not the companies that are using these cables. Landline companies want this to be fair for all companies to cover costs of upgrading cables.
- Smart wireless phones are small and not much power and do not have a large antenna. So you need to look at the bars to see if you have service and they occasionally drop calls. This bill is not replacing these types of phone only the land lines coming into your home.
- New wireless phone units for your home have a bigger antenna and more power than the current land lines. A few legislators went up north and to the UP with the new devices and never dropped a call but their smart phones did. It has a battery and doesn't need an outlet unless the battery is not working or charged up.
- About 5 years, internet protocol technology (IPT) service went into homes on same old cables. Now no wires are needed and if you remove this service you will not have to dig up cables.

- If you lose power this device will work for a little while, with a battery backup Land lines continue to work as long as the cables were not damaged. Current cell towers do have generators if electricity goes out to continue your service

- FCC just approved trials for companies to see if the disconnect what will work. Our bill is will come into effect fill 2018 for Michigan but the federal it was 2015. Federal Government has already approved this and it will happen in the future.

Booth (SMAC Vice-Chr) arrives and Chairs the Meeting.

SMAC DISCUSSION:

- Moore stated he has WOW cable and they came out and replace lines and didn't use the original ones to the house. He said to check with the exchange for your area to check to determine if you have service and other availability to your home to have reliable service, esp. 911.
- Lifeline and medical alert companies will work on these phones. Life lock is wireless already.
- Having to purchase bundled services should not be a requirement.
- Chappell feels it is the cost on fixed income senior. Will they give a competitive pricing? Seniors only want phone service.
- Powers, concerned that 2,000,000 people in the state, mostly seniors that only device in the house that works is the land lines when power goes out. This bill should be mandated that it works. (G Moore reported this not an ALECK bill, back ground lobby group which writes bills.)
- Gibson what will happen to phone books? Greg Moore stated he loves his phone books, but most people are now using internet, so they will become obsolete. Concern that seniors still use their phone books for everything.

CONSENSUS reached around this concept: Auton asks how do we help get these 2,000,000 people into the new age, how do we re-focus our energy to help our seniors get ready for this change.

Chappell would like to have the government help these seniors by offering training to them. Sommers feels this might help; 911 can't find you right now and counties are changing into this advanced 911 center - upgrade centers.

(G Moore and Nofs left at 9:00)

Gibson discussed 2013 Service allocations funds and feel that the home heating cost will be going up and increasing request for assistance will be coming in.

Old Business:

RAMPS and Resources:

Moore reported on a Feb 3rd meeting at Community Action to bring together a number of organizations that are involved with building and/or funding home access ramps. Community Action be the point of contact for eligibility screening and applications. Other participants included Habit for Humanity, Rgn 3B AAA, and Senior Services of SCM.

ISSUE:

- Seniors and disabled looking for service – e.g.. safety ramps into house when a senior is released home from institutional care and needed ASAP. In different counties you must have a permit (which takes days or weeks), Kalamazoo has no permit, but Calhoun must have a permit, and sometimes you don't have time to get the permit. Concern about liability. Sometimes the need for ramps are short term but may turn into a long term needs.

- Kalamazoo builds ramps in modular (sections) that have parts that are removable. Labor and cost avg. \$1500 for a ramp. Every inch high, you need to go out a foot, this can take up room in the front of the house to stay in codes regulations. Some houses don't have that much room in front. Built ramps are hard to re-use because of this and contractors are afraid to re-use because of the liability. Community Action Agency will take the lead to look into develop eligibility for this. There is interest and need to find ways to build them.

New Business: Director report - handout.

Discussion on high costs for fuel heating fuel. Several different communities across the state are discussing fuel cost for this winter, particularly propane. Home Heating Assistance may need to request additional funds if the extra Energy resources they receive do not last long.

Mini Grants - Gibson handing out draft application proposals to be review by board members. Need to be finalized, still in draft form. Booth asked that everyone review the applications and bring back to March meeting. A 1-page mini-grant form is for services \$5,000 or less; the other form is for requests above \$5,000 to \$20,000 that have longer duration.

Gibson requested input on demographic reports for services. Reporting by zip codes would be easier for seniors but there are 23 zip codes in this County. Do you want demographics report quarterly, easier then monthly? Calhoun County has it on its Road Department's website.

Gibson recommends sending a brief report of the Senior Needs Assessment survey to the 6,000 households that were sent a survey a year ago. It would be an inexpensive to send a one page summary and a brochure about services available; the Rgn 3B AAA would co-sponsor this mailing. The SMAC agreed that this would be effective way to inform those who took the time to respond?

Gibson reported that the basement offices are almost finished and that Senior Services will move, but dates are not firmed up yet.

Discussion on Senior Health Partners Partnership Agreement. While the normal buy-in for collaborating Partners is an \$50,000 annual fee, Senior Services can participate for only \$25,000, as Senior Millage supports it current in many ways. Will have to change the draft MOU (3 year) to \$25,000/per annum, not \$50,000.

Senior Fair - April 10th at Marshall Middle School in gym, planning meeting next Tuesday. Oaklawn Hospital, the City of Marshall and other partners are collaborating on this annual event. Flyers for the event will be distributed at the next meeting..

Adjourn 9:30 am (Touring the garden level - rehabilitated offices for Senior Services)

END OF MEETING