

**CITY OF ESPAÑOLA
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2008 12:30 P.M.
ESPAÑOLA SENIOR CENTER
735 VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL ROAD**

The meeting was called to order at 12:41 p.m. with the following present:

Mayor: Joseph Maestas (absent)
Mayor Pro Tem: Alice Lucero
Councilors: Danielle Duran
Rosario "Chayo" Garcia
Alfred Herrera
Cecelia Lujan
Eddie Maestas
Helen Kain-Salazar
Dennis Tim Salazar

City Manager: Gus Cordova

City Clerk: Veronica Martinez

Staff: Leroy Garcia, Josephine Velasquez, Elias Martinez

Mayor Pro Tem Lucero led the Pledge of Allegiance; Councilor Lujan led the invocation.

Mayor Pro Tem Lucero apologized for Mayor Maestas not attending and stated that this was just the beginning of several meetings the Governing Body would be having before making a decision on this issue.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Lucero presented the agenda for approval. Councilor Lujan made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilor Garcia; motion passed 8/0.

COUNCILOR COMMENTS

This item was reserved for after discussion.

Senior Center Administrative Issues:

Ms. Barbara Deaux, Executive Director of the NCNMED Council of Governments, introduced herself. She stated that she is a liaison between the city and the state Area Agency on Aging (AAA), which is the funding agency. With her were Deputy Director Nancy Arias and Program Manager Diana Rivera.

They gave a brief presentation on the Older Americans Act, which dictates to the Agency Area on Aging what is done in communities and how to do it. They administer the federal and state funding for the Older Americans Act and contract with local governments to provide services to seniors in the community. It also requires them to coordinate the development and improvement of programs, advocate for programs and policies that benefit seniors, provide education and training to seniors and service providers; monitor agencies in effectiveness and compliance of providers. They stood for questions.

Art Mascarenas asked how a person qualifies for home-delivered meals. They have to be 60+ and have a medical condition that prevents them from leaving home; used to require a doctor certification, but there is an assessment document that is now used.

Margaret Valdez asked who monitored the meals on wheels. They answered that it was under contract with Rio Arriba County and they monitor that project.

Mr. Mascarenas asked if the AAA came in and implemented their program who would be responsible for preparing food, delivering food, providing vehicles, etc. They answered that the Agency does not direct that; the city would provide the information on how they planned to do that.

Mr. Mascarenas asked who the contractors were responsible to. A team of evaluators by the Agency does that.

Mr. Mascarenas asked if someone surveyed the people that are consumers. They stated that both through logs of food temp, etc., and some survey of consumers the programs were assessed. They stated that the Agency may get complaints from participants and they contact the provider to assess their performance. Their energy is focused on safe handling of meals because the health of seniors may be very fragile.

Mr. Mascarenas asked how they determine the cost of the meals. It was stated that anyone eligible for services is offered a suggested voluntary donation; anyone else must pay the full cost of the service. He commented on the blend of people that participate at the Senior Center; older and younger seniors, non-seniors and mentally and physically challenged people; he was concerned because the brochure stated no one else could participate.

They stated that when it comes to food funded through the Older Americans Act services, the rules must be followed. For participation in any other events, the provider establishes their own rules. Hospitality is extended to others in the community and is very important for the social aspect.

Mr. Mascarenas expressed his concerns that like other centers, under this program they could run out of food mid-way. He was also concerned that the 1/3 RDA may not be enough since this may be the only meal some seniors receive. They stated that many seniors are malnourished across the country. The program can provide individuals with additional food if necessary.

Mr. Mascarenas stated he was worried that the portions would be strict and people would not be able to have more. They clarified that the RDA rule was a minimum, not a maximum, and they would receive more if they needed more.

A question was asked about diabetic diets and if they were provided by meals on wheels. Ms. Deaux stated that there are diabetic meals already developed and can be offered to the citizens. They work with dietitians both for diabetic and heart healthy meal and is done in a way that they are very tasty and healthy.

Ms. Deaux stated that there was a lack of clarity about the program and the funding. She stated that New Mexico had 103 municipalities, 19 pueblos, 3 tribes and of those, the only one who does not receive funds for seniors is the City of Española because it has not in the past followed the rules. She stated that funds available to all other seniors are not now available to the seniors here. She agreed that they need meals, transportation, etc., but if the federal government could provide funding to the City of Española then general funds are freed up to use for other things. She stated that they would like to provide state and federal funds for the seniors; she stated it was not easy to meet budget needs and this was a way to supplement the budget.

It was asked what the qualifications for selecting a center director were. Barbara stated that personnel policy is only determined by City of Espanola; they make no requirements. Mr. Cordova stated that like all Department Directors, the position was selected through an application, interview and selection process.

It was stated that this senior center had the best cooks, good staff and they were sorry to lose a good director, very sad he had to resign. She asked if prices would go up for the mentally challenged participants also. Ms. Deaux stated that the first thing to do with those folks was to determine if they are eligible through the requirements in place, as sometimes they are eligible and aren't aware.

There were comments about the camaraderie that was so important. It was also stated that former director Joseph Maestas was hired and tried to serve the seniors, when he didn't he was fired. Mr. Cordova stated that he would love to explain the circumstances, but could not because they were confidential personnel matters. Barbara Deaux commented that they were not here to discuss personnel issues and commented on the camaraderie, stating that adding more money does not take away from that, or from the quality of the cooks – none of that changes.

A question was asked about what other types of agencies besides local governments provide services and receives funding. They stated that some non-profits such as home health service through ADIS.

It was asked if they received money from the state, why couldn't they take the money and do the same thing they were doing. Ms. Deaux stated that Leroy has a presentation about what the difference would be, and it was not that big a jump.

Mayor Pro Tem Lucero thanked Mrs. Deaux for her attendance at the meeting. She further stated that the changes had not been approved and that he Council would make sure that the changes are for the benefit of the center.

Mr. Leroy Garcia, Community Services Director, apologized to the seniors that there was not accurate timely information given to them. He presented a Power Point on the differences and requirements by the state agency on agency. Leroy stated that the he and the staff of the senior center were there to enforce the policies dictated to them by the City council. Leroy gave a brief overview of the improvements proposed to the seniors' center, and a synopsis of the funding history behind the center. He went on to discuss the changes that would be required of the center should they receive funding from the state or federal agencies:

Current Practices	Required Practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not screen for eligibility; allow consumers under age 60, children, caregivers, etc. The age to be considered a senior is 55 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explained strict eligibility requirements: age 60+; spouse of age 60+, disabled, living in senior housing. All others are considered guests and the full unit cost should be paid or otherwise determined by the City of Espanola.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone is charged flat fee; however, the fee is waived if a senior is unable to pay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers may post a suggested donation; however, cannot charge an eligible consumer, nor deny for inability to pay.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumers are not registered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explained client tracking in detail; and that consumers may receive services from multiple providers. Stated the possibility that their consumers may already be registered in SAMS via Rio Arriba and/or Santa Fe, and suggested they survey their consumers to determine if they were.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments are not conducted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explained that assessments are conducted to identify nutritionally at-risk consumers; and modify/increase their services as needed. The Activities of Daily Living (ADL) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) were explained and discussed as well.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of food prepared is based on their average daily served. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explained that most providers base quantity to prepare by having a sign-in sheet for "next day" meal service with a

	5% variance to have a clear indication of how much food to prepare for ease of raw food ordering, reducing waste, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not keep sign-in sheets; tickets are sold. Stated that they know the consumers because they come in regularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explained that multiple signature sheets are necessary to track Guests under 60, staff, and eligible clients. Serves as documentation of consumers and services being provided
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food from each food group is served; menus are not analyzed for nutritional content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explained that menus must follow federal 1/3 RDA and that each menu had to be analyzed for nutritional content. Contract with Global Nutrition who provides nutritional content services. Also stated and invited them to see our pre-approved menus available from our website. Special dietary needs were discussed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not follow serving portion standards or controls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow strict portion control to minimize waste and ensure nutritional dietary content (again Global Nutrition will provide hands-on technical assistance)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern that if they followed standardized menus and nutritional guidelines, that participation would decrease - that they would not like the food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed misconception that balanced, nutritionally analyzed meals are without flavor or presentation; yet with proper training, they do not have to be. Cooks get direction and assistance from Global Nutrition through actual hands-on cooking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They allow meals to be taken from the congregate site. Example: spouse is home sick, spouse requests take-out meal for him/her 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explained that take-out was against policy according to BID code and standards due to food safety codes and potential liability. Explained in detail the home-delivered policy where temperatures are maintained
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation is limited typically from home to site and back. Occasionally, rides are provided to pharmacy, store, and for outings such as the State Fair. The driver keeps a daily log of rides, according to standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tracking and unit measurement was discussed and explained: A one-way ride is counted as a single unit. If several consumers are aboard the vehicle and multiple stops are made, only the individual who "gets down" is counted as a unit of service. It was explained that some providers confuse the unit measurement and either under count, or over count the units of service

Mr. Garcia also pointed out, though many had heard different, that:

- Options were being considered to secure State funding
- "We are not being taken over by the State or County"
- If we receive funding we need to follow guidelines
- Positions are not being cut
- Hours for workers are not being cut
- The City would continue to supplement funding

Mayor Pro Tem Lucero thanked all for being here and taking the time to listen, that everyone was learning and the Governing Body only wanted what was best for the seniors. She stated that the only thing changing was perhaps the menus and nothing else should change. She pointed out that if we receive money from the AAA, we could have more money for other programs and services.

Councilor Salazar asked Mr. Mascarenas if he would like to say anything on behalf of the seniors. He stated that he understood the city's position that funds were in short supply and not easily acquired. He stated that he would prefer the Center remain independent but understands why the city would look for the funding.

Councilor Duran asked Leroy if we received funding and discovered that things were going downhill because of the funding, could we say we didn't want to participate anymore. Mr. Garcia stated we could - if it became too much of a hardship if the reporting was not worth it, or if the quality of services went down. Councilor Duran stated that she enjoys the center and hopes we can improve it; the Governing Body was trying hard to find new ways of funding, but has no intention of changing the quality of the seniors' life. Mr. Mascarenas stated that before he got old, he would have not considered coming to a senior center, but since he has, he loves it; the food is great, the services and the people are great, it is a good place and they don't want to ruin a good place.

Councilor Lujan asked that the administration please communicate with the people; it was necessary and emphasized that if things are not communicated to the people, it is a loss. She also agreed with Mayor Pro Tem Lucero and Councilor Duran about trying to make the senior center a better place. She stated there was so much to do with a little bit of money and this was an opportunity for funding where they can do more for them.

Councilor Herrera thanked to all who attended. He stated that there are ways to be creative in obtaining funding, and challenged the City Manager to think new ways beyond what we did in the past. He stated that he wanted to make sure that services were not diminished, that they are only made and if we can take advantage of these funding opportunity, then we could provide other services. He shared a story about his mother and how difficult it was for her to eat healthy as a diabetic, and stated he would make sure that the seniors are provided nutritional meals.

It was stated that the seniors had spoken clearly and they want to use the money as they choose to use it; that \$100,000 was not a lot of money in the grand scheme of things and they wanted to have things the way they want it.

Councilor Kain-Salazar stated that she hoped that the issue was clearer; she knows that the seniors need to be heard and they had heard them. Here because she represents THEM. Knows that the city has problems, but doesn't want to cut services to them to pave a street.

Councilor Maestas thanked everyone who was still there, stated that the councilors won't do anything that isn't in the seniors best interest. Will have several meetings and will not make a decision until they study it all.

Councilor Garcia thanked all and dittoed, reminding them that they were not taking money away, but trying to add money.

There being no further business before the Governing Body, the meeting adjourned at 2:31 p.m.

Passed, approved and adopted March 25, 2008.

Electronic copy – signatures on file

Transcribed by Veronica Martinez