

MINUTES
COMMISSION ON AGING
Virtual

Tuesday, February 22, 2022

Present: Lisa Budlow, Don Gabriel, Natasha Iheme, Jim Lightner, Roy Moreland, Mindy Morrell, Al Muehlberger, Fred Murphy, Mabel Murray, Sheila Roman, Marlene Siegel, Sherita Thomas

Absent: Fran Bond, Lou Marino

Staff: Dayna Brown, Phyllis Myers, Laura Riley

Public: Will Feuer

I. Start Time – 9:10 a.m.

II. Introductions

- New Commission on Aging member – Mindy Morrell
 - Representing Council District 3
 - Recently retired from Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
 - Background in home and community based services, policy work and Medicaid
 - started career as a lawyer with the Maryland Disability Law Center, representing people who were proposed for guardianship

III. General Update – Chair

- Sherita attended BCDA’s Management meeting on February 17 and will provide more information from what was shared
- The Greater Baltimore County Chapter of Jack and Jill reached out to Sherita and wants to know more about supporting caregivers in Baltimore County; Dayna will be presenting them with information
- Laura will give an update on Senior Centers
- February Birthdays – Mabel Murray

IV. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

- Agenda and Minutes approved as submitted

V. Guest Spotlight – Angie Barnett, President/CEO Better Business Bureau of Greater Maryland

- Ms. Barnett has been with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) for 16 years
- Started her career journey in social work
- The purpose of BBB is to get businesses to do the right thing for all the right reasons
- BBB of Greater Maryland has been in business for 105 years (106 in April 2022); BBB overall has been in business for 109 years
- Maryland’s BBB was the 5th BBB in the country; there is a BBB in every state as well as in Puerto Rico and Canada
- Maryland BBB covers the entire state except for five of the Counties that border the District of Columbia
- BBB’s office is located in Baltimore City
- Primarily an on-line business, BBB has 23 employees
- Ms. Barnett shared a PowerPoint entitled “Preventing Senior Fraud”
- BBB uses a “risk index” to help understand which scams pose the highest risk; the risk index focuses on:
 - Exposure – how common is the scam?
 - Susceptibility – did the individual fall target to the scam, losing money or personal data?
 - Monetary Loss - how much money was lost?
- In 2021, consumers 25-34 years old had the highest number of total losses and consumers 35-44 years old was the group that reported the most scams, largely due to the pandemic, which has meant more on-line activity
- In 2020, seniors average loss was \$1,000
- According to the Federal Trade Commission, seniors encounter more telephone scams and they are more likely to report high dollar loss as well
- Romance is one of the top three scams impacting seniors
- Scammers prey upon psychology and emotion; they target individuals who are typically more isolated and vulnerable, and they often use intimidation tactics
- BBB is open to providing weekly or monthly tips on various scams to be published in The Time of Your Life Digest
- BBB suggested that BCDA host events in senior centers to get seniors educated about scams

- BBB has a scam tracker on their website and consumers can go there to report scams and find out what other scams have been reported

VI. Old Business

- No old business

VII. New Business

- Sherita attended BCDA's Management meeting on Thursday, February 17 – she shared with them COA's mission and what they are currently focused. She asked how the COA could support BCDA. BCDA staff will share important information and programming with COA to take to their communities and senior centers.
- Strategies to help prevent seniors from falling victims to scams – adding articles to The Time of Your Life Digest that has information about certain scams and how to protect themselves; adding the data that shows seniors are not the only ones being scammed; possibly add to BCDA's website, a link that is connected to the BBB website; use video technology rather than just written info; market BCDA programs and services on a larger scale – add to March agenda to discuss; COA to work on creating their own fraud prevention presentation

VIII. Director's Updates

- Mask mandate for Baltimore County will be lifted on February 28. The public and staff will not be required to wear a mask in County buildings and mandatory COVID-19 testing for unvaccinated employees will end as well.
- Senior Solutions Conference will be held virtually, with two ½ day sessions – April 6 and April 13
- The Concert in the Park event is being combined with the Volunteer Recognition event this year – May 19 at Oregon Ridge
- Planning has begun for this year's Expo – October 27 at Timonium Fairgrounds

IX. Meeting Adjourned at 10:30 a.m.