

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE OLDER ADULT NEEDS COMMITTEE
CITY OF NOVI
MONDAY, JULY 24, 2023 AT 5:30 P.M.**

Member Casey called the meeting to order at 5:35 P.M.

ROLL CALL: **PRESENT:** Council Member Casey, Council Member Smith, Council Member Thomas, Kathy Crawford, Kim Nice, Debbie Wrobel
ABSENT: Jay Dooley

ALSO PRESENT: Victor Cardenas, City Manager, Jeff Muck, PRCS Director, Kit Kieser, OAS Manager

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

OAN 23-07-23 **Moved by Crawford, seconded by Smith; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**
To approve the Agenda.

Voice vote on OAN 23-07-23 **Yeas: Casey, Smith, Thomas, Crawford, Nice, Wrobel**
Nays: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

OAN 23-07-24 **Moved by Thomas, seconded by Smith; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**
To approve the July 17, 2023 meeting minutes.

Voice vote on OAN 23-07-24 **Yeas: Casey, Smith, Thomas, Crawford, Nice, Wrobel**
Nays: None

REMARKS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON:

Member Casey opened the meeting with an overview of her meeting with Communications Director Walsh, PRCS Director Muck, and a survey facilitator. They discussed two main outcomes, to get a general understanding of the needs that Seniors have and to determine the understanding of what a senior center is, what it means, what it can offer. The first task would be to create criteria for focus groups, likely broken down by age. These groups would meet with the facilitator so that he could find out about the groups housing and transportation situations and learn about how they spend their time, and so much more. The facilitator would use these discussions to drive further conversation and also determine some survey questions. Focus groups could meet in September, allowing him to present his findings to the OAN committee in early October.

MATTERS FOR COMMITTEE DISCUSSION:

City Manager Cardenas began the discussion about Novi's transportation by reporting on a meeting he and Director Muck had with Oakland County regarding the SMART expansion plans. SMART will begin two Novi routes, one along Grand River between Wixom Road and Haggerty, and the other along 12 Mile from Haggerty to Beck, South on Beck to Grand River,

and again along Grand River between Beck and Wixom Roads. He also described a "Para" service that would provide service within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile surrounding each route that would help individuals who need assistance (determined by medical need and a note from a physician) to be driven to the nearest bus stop. SMART should be live in Novi in September. Western Oakland Transportation Authority (WOTA) could also be an option in the future, as well as other services.

Councilmember Casey asked the committee what they believe to be the current needs of Novi's older adults. Member Crawford said that those who need transportation are vulnerable. The communication with their driver might be the only interaction they have with a person in days or weeks. She asked if the drivers are trained about local services such as meal assistance. Training them to be active listeners would allow them to recommend services. They could provide information about programs by having brochures, newsletters, or calendars available on board. Director Muck and Manager Kieser spoke about the daily interaction each driver has with OAS staff. They are familiar with City events and programs. The drivers often bring back insight into the needs of their riders. With most of the drivers being 55+, they have great empathy for their riders. But staff doesn't want to give too much extra responsibility beyond the scope of their duties. It is a physically and mentally taxing job already.

Member Nice asked about the current system and the demand for earlier, later, and weekend hours and how it could be offered. She wondered what data was available for this demand. Director Muck provided a chart that showed the hourly pick-ups by day of the week. The graph shows that most of the rides provided occur within the hours of 9am and 4pm. There is very little demand for rides outside of this timeline. Medical trips have become the priority of the program. Member Casey asked if Novi was the best option for medical transportation, or if there was another option to provide this service. Director Muck responded that facilities are cancelling their services or increasing their rates, which then pushes their customers to Novi. Fox Run has a fleet of unused vans because they increased their rate to \$6.00 per mile. Member Crawford recalled subsidizing services in the past to provide some of the medical appointment rides. She also suggested that the committee might find a way to train seniors on how to use other services such as Uber. Member Casey said that the committee should look at how services are offered and look at changing the fee structure to offset subsidizing some services.

Member Casey wrapped up the meeting suggesting that the next meeting on August 7th be a continuation of the Transportation discussion.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION:

Director Muck brought an article outlining the expansion of older adult services with the development of a new multigenerational center, which will engage people of all ages.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 7:14 P.M.