

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE OLDER ADULT NEEDS COMMITTEE
CITY OF NOVI
MONDAY, AUGUST 7, 2023, AT 5:30 P.M.**

Member Casey called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

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

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

OAN 23-08-25 Moved by Dooley, seconded by Smith; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

To approve the Agenda.

Voice vote on OAN 23-08-25 Yeas: Casey, Smith, Crawford, Dooley, Nice, Wrobel
Nays: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

OAN 23-08-26 Moved by Nice, seconded by Wrobel; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

To approve the July 24, 2023, meeting minutes.

Voice vote on OAN 23-08-26 Yeas:
Nays:

REMARKS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON:

Member Casey opened the meeting stating that they would continue to pursue focus groups and that \$15,000.00 was allotted, approved by the committee, and that City Council was informed and that they will proceed with the contract. She also stated that she would be meeting once more with Communications Director Walsh, PRCS Director Muck, and the survey facilitator to determine the course of the focus groups. They have determined, at the facilitators suggestion, that the focus groups will be made up of residents only, and that committee and council members will not be present so that there can be unencumbered conversation. All focus group participants will be age 55 or older and will be selected from across the city and from various living situations.

MATTERS FOR COMMITTEE DISCUSSION:

The Committee recapped the main points regarding Senior Transit from the previous meeting so that they might be discussed further and potentially hit anything that may have been missed at that session.

1. Individuals needing transit are likely some of our most vulnerable residents. The committee wants to be sure we are working collaboratively with our transit workers

to assist in “closing the loop” when they might learn of additional needs a rider might have that can be assisted with or provided by our social services team.

2. The availability of transit services after hours remains of interest. The Committee hopes to be able to make transit available for early mornings, later evenings, and especially to be made available for City events.
3. The majority of trips are currently made to provide non-ambulatory medical transit. Some of these trips, particularly those for post-dialysis appointments, can lead to sanitary concerns with blood fall. The committee wonders if these medical transits should be the primary role of the city and if we should instead pivot to more social needs. They discussed the necessity of understanding why seniors are relying on the City Transit services instead of other available, especially when those who are using the services also have transportation services offered by their place of residence.

Member Crawford asked if the City currently has a policy in place regarding a mission for our transportation services and who we serve. PRCS Director Muck explained that our policy is that we offer specialize transit to those 55 and older or those under 55 who have a demonstrated need or disability. Member Crawford went on to say that she believes transportation is one of the final “keys” to independence. She believes we may need to further revise our policy to be able to properly meet the needs of those seniors unitizing the service. It was also reiterated from the first point that the city needs to be more proactive is recognizing seniors needs by training our transit drivers in active listening and being sure they are aware of the various social services and programs offered by the City so that it can passed on in support of those seniors in need.

The Committee discussed the expected assistance from the County with SMART but worries that there will be outstanding gaps that need to be filled by the City ahead of the final implementation of the new changes. PRCS Director Muck informed the committee that SMART intends to have its fixed bus stop routes up very soon and that WORA is will and able to assist with our needs almost immediately as well. For the City to double our own fleet would take some time, at least a year, due to supply issues and the specific needs of senior transportation vehicles to accommodate various medical and mobility devices. The Committee also discussed various monetary concerns such as maintaining a free service versus paid or subsidized as well as the costs involved in hiring more drives and the current pay scale typical to such jobs. Member Nice suggested looking further into communities that already have experience with SMART and/or WOTA to better understand the change that would bring about.

The possibility of the re-introduction of a dedicated senior newsletter/publication or a show focused on seniors was also brought up by Members Crawford and Nice. City administration recognized the interest but suggested that the community already has the Engage Magazine in both print and digital, and that they have see no decrease, only increases in use of services since the dropping of the former senior newsletter. Member Casey pointed out that struggles in breaking through to an intended audience are common: even with the many existing, popular resources that we cannot make someone read something even if we’ve handed it to them. It is often the case that people don’t pay attention to such services until they need them. Member Wroble indicated that she would like to see additional integration of both City and Library offerings in our newsletters. Mr. Muck

responded that the Engage Magazine should be considered the master source and incorporates both City and Library programming, the newsletter should be viewed as a smaller re-enforcement.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION:

The Committee briefly discussed "Blue Zones", areas of the world where people live the longest lives, consistently reaching age 100. Committee members believe that looking into those areas as well as the "Power 9" lifestyle habits associated with them should be looked further into.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 P.M.

Transcribed by Katherine Oppermann,
Executive Assistant to the City Manager

Date approved: August _____, 2023