

**Tompkins County Office for the Aging  
Advisory Committee Meeting**

**April 28, 2025**

**Hybrid**

**9:30am**

**Members present:** Lesser, Beyers, Dean, Shearer, Mallison, Stamm, Roe, Hultberg

**Liaisons:** Askew, Wells, Burger, Lindhorst, Evans

**Staff:** Monroe, Bullis, Lyon, Maine

**Public:** Charlie Hart, Abigail Connor

**Excused:** Hillson, Champion

1. Lesser called the meeting to order at 9:30am. Introductions made.
2. Public comments: No public comment.
3. Member comments: No member comment.
4. February meeting minutes approved unanimously.
5. COFA Update:
  - Federal funding: received information about a leaked draft budget. ACL (Administration for Community Living) which is the federal body that oversees the Older Americans Act (OAA) was eliminated. They have split the OAA into pieces which are now under various departments within Health and Human Services. This budget laid out some cuts and eliminations of programs under the OAA.
  - Proposed reductions: home delivered/congregate meals- 120 million nationwide, 8.4 million for NYS; proposed eliminations: Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, IID health promotion programs which would affect Lifelong; State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) and our HIICAP; ADRC (Aging and Disability Resource Center). Other programs that still affect us are HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program), SNAP
  - This is not set in stone. We have several months of advocacy to do. We need to come together to advocate. We are working with our county administration. Still unsure what this is going to look like with local and state funding.

Lesser asked about the potential for substantial cuts to Medicaid. How much of an impact would that have on seniors? Monroe responded that nursing homes are a significant piece of it. Unsure what the exact numbers are locally but we would see a significant impact. Bullis commented that Managed Long Term Care would affect seniors (in home aide service, etc.)

Monroe stated that other cuts that don't fall specifically under aging but would affect older adults include Traumatic Brain Injury waiver, Alzheimer's research, mental health and substance abuse programs, Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare and dual eligibles, the Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program, and Americorps.

- Annual Luncheon May 9<sup>th</sup> 12pm-2pm. Elizabeth Bergman from Ithaca College is the speaker. Two outstanding volunteers, Mary Chapman and Wil Lawrence.
6. Liaison Reports:
- a. Burger: Lifelong-
    - Annual Meeting and Luncheon Thursday, May 29<sup>th</sup>. Please RSVP by May 19<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Corinna Loeckenhoff from Cornell will be speaking.
    - Looking for nominations for their Barbara J. Halbert volunteer award which will be presented at the luncheon.
    - Thank you to Bill and Lisa and all those who sent emails and letters regarding the Library Place community room. Lifelong was able to finalize an agreement with the prospective buyers and are expecting that they will be closing sometime in May. Still working out details but will have up to 20 years use of this space.
    - Finished tax season. They had at least a 15% increase from last year. Totaled around 1000 returns in 11 weeks with mostly volunteers.
    - Volunteer Fair April 30<sup>th</sup> from 2-4pm
    - Musical Memories Café on May 20<sup>th</sup>. Free program for caregivers and care receivers to come together for a meal and live music
  - b. Evans: Foodnet-
    - Mac n cheese bowl with be on May 7<sup>th</sup> from 4:30-7 at the Ithaca Farmers Market. Tickets are on sale. If anyone interested in volunteering, they can reach out to AJ Bouchie at [abouchie@foodnet.org](mailto:abouchie@foodnet.org) or calling 607-266-9553. This fundraiser feels really important this year with everything that is going on.
    - In March 2025 delivered over 15,000 meals through their various contracts, etc.
    - New Community Dining Program in Slaterville Springs on Tuesdays; up to 25 people attending.
    - Advocacy: Foodnet is starting to collect anecdotal information from clients about what service they are filling, what effect clients would face if Foodnet did not exist.

Beyers suggested getting more articles out in local media to educate the public. Monroe agreed that this is important but that we're not quite there yet. There is still so much up in the air and it's hard to educate people when you're not sure what to tell them. COFA will be meeting with county Admin and our communications department to begin to figure out how to structure this information and form a plan with Foodnet and Lifelong.

Evans added that the 3 main things staff are saying when met with questions or concerns from public: we will continue to serve meals to our community until we are physically and financially unable to do so which isn't today; take a moment to think about where your concerns lie and consider making a reoccurring gift to the agency or sector of the work that you believe in; think about who in your community needs the help and contact those organizations to ask how you can volunteer to help them.

Lesser asked Evans about donors in more rural areas. Evans stated that there are donors in every single community.

c. Askew: StateWide-

- Attending as many outreach events as they can and trying to keep up with all the information that is coming out for all the different hats that they wear
- Teach ins: May-NYS Office for Mental Health will talk about prevention and health initiatives; June-Telehealth for older adults. Can register for those on their website.
- Can sign up for their monthly fraud toolkit which includes newsletters, articles, social media about the latest scams that are happening

Roe asked about an update on the advocacy for the Help Line? Askew stated that she hadn't heard anything at this time.

d. Lindhorst: LLH-

- Attending outreach events in the community
- Volunteer Appreciation Celebration at Stewart Park on May 18<sup>th</sup> from 4-6pm
- Recently had a fraud presentation co-hosted by Lifelong and Love Living at Home. Can be viewed on their YouTube page.

e. Wells: Gadabout-

- Received a letter from the Federal Transit Administration on April 24<sup>th</sup> to grant recipients basically saying to cease and desist any diversity, equity and inclusion that they do and that they have legal obligations that require their cooperation with federal authorities including immigration and customs enforcement.
- Gadabout does receive FTA funds through Tompkins County; still trying to process this letter. Have not received any word that their funding is affected in any way.

Mallison asked about the program that Gadabout had hoped to launch to streamline reservations for rides? Wells responded that this is their new scheduling and dispatch software. Have been using it since the second week of May 2024. There are still items that are waiting to be launched but have been using the scheduling portion of that for about a year. They are experiencing an increase in ridership while having a lack of drivers and vehicles. Working on getting those drivers filled. Have ordered some new vehicles which should arrive in December. Not yet at the point to provide same day transportation. That is the ultimate goal with this software.

7. Discussion: Abigail Conner, Environmental Planner, Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability- Flood Map Discussion

- Overview of FEMA flood insurance rate map updates and where we are at.
- Started discovery for updating these maps by looking at the data in May of 2014. Kicked off the process after reviewing 5 years of research in 2019 and started their review with municipalities in 2022 which led to the release of data in January of 2023. Maps will go into effect on June 18, 2025.
- Adoption seems to be going well for municipalities. There were no appeals filed from Tompkins County during the 90-day appeal period, which is good.
- The data is important. Prior to this the current effective maps were from the 1980's. There have obviously been some significant changes since then.

- There is no question that there will be a financial impact to those folks who are required to purchase flood insurance when these maps go into effect. But the data is regarding risk and the requirement for insurance is because there is risk for folks that are living where they are.

Beyers asked if people should have their insurance in place by June? Conner explained that any property in a hundred-year flood zone, or what they call the 1% special flood hazard area, any structure touched by that layer would be required to have flood insurance.

- Their understanding through the National Flood Insurance Act is that you are required to get flood insurance within 45 days of notification from your federally backed mortgage lender. If you don't have a federally backed mortgage lender, or you have paid off your mortgage, you are not required to have insurance.
- If you do not acquire insurance within the 45-day notification, the bank would place a policy which they assume would be more expensive.
- Not sure when those notification letters will come. The Planning Department is not notified of when the letters are sent. Could come at different times depending on the lender.

Lesser asked about mitigation efforts potentially being taken by the city and the effect that might have on the requirement of flood insurance. Conner stated that the goal of the city in what they are looking into is to build some kind of mitigation. The city can then submit that plan to FEMA and if FEMA decides to verify that it will change the maps. It would show that scientifically, the water will not affect the areas that it originally would have because of the mitigation.

- Conner recognizes there has been frustration throughout this process. States that FEMA is a federal agency that is doing their best. Their willingness to partner and work with them and make changes locally was great.
- Tompkins is represented by FEMA Region 2. Not sure how the federal cuts might impact funding. There is state funding for now.
- On county website under "Flood Resources" there is a lot of information and a walk through of the new maps and how to use the maps. Also, information on flood insurance with FAQ's, links and videos.
- Have also trained 211 to be able to walk folks through the maps.

8. No old business

9. No new business

Next meeting will be the Annual Luncheon May 9, 2025.

Meeting adjourned 10:50am