

Minutes
Ashtabula County Senior Services Levy Advisory Board Meeting
March 19, 2025
Ohio Means Jobs, 2247 Lake Ave., Ashtabula

Present

Patrick Arcaro
Jerome Brockway
Veronica Hanna
Bob Kenyon
Emory Moore
Mary Pepperney
Joe Rapose
Mary Runyan
Cristine Rutz
Sharone Sing
Ron Smith
Dianne Solembrino
Lynn Zalewski

Absent

Staff

Alissa Drees
Darcy Mosier

BOCC

Kathryn Whittington

Call to Order

Chair, Joe Rapose called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes

Chair asked the floor for a motion to approve the minutes from January 15, 2025. Bob Kenyon made a motion to approve the minutes from January 15, 2025, SLAB meeting. Mary Runyan seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Chair's Report

The chair reminded board members to sign and turn in conflict-of-interest forms to Darcy at the end of the meeting, if they have not already done so.

Joe introduced new Senior Levy Advisory Board member, Paula Pristov. Joe noted, Paula has filled the open chair of resigning member George Peterson, bringing the board to thirteen members.

Funding

Alissa Drees presented the Revenue & Expense Report through February 29th, 2025. Alissa shared the balance forward and actual current revenue is \$986,229.65, Alissa pointed out there has been no levy revenue dropped thus far from real estate taxes; however, it should show in the next couple of weeks. The total contracted expenses year to date is \$330,029.98 leaving an unobligated available balance of \$90,184.68.

Contract Report

Darcy Mosier provided the Contract Report, highlighting that, on average, providers were expected to have used approximately 8% of their annual budgets by January. The Ashtabula County Community Action Agency's Homemaker Services reported only 1% usage, largely due to staffing shortages. Samantha Dragon, Director of Senior & Community Services, cited high turnover caused by uncompetitive pay rates. For Chore Services, the Ashtabula County Council on Aging had used 24% of its funding, primarily for snow plowing. Both Conneaut Human Resource Center and Country Neighbor Program reported 0% usage, which is typical for this time of year as lawn care services begin in the spring. Arcadia Personal Care Services also reported 0% usage in January but has since started serving one client and is receiving new referrals. Catholic Charities reported 17%

usage, and the 2-1-1 Information and Referral Program reported 18% usage. Darcy reminded the board that both programs typically use their levy funding early in the year before transitioning to other funding sources. All other services are operating within expected budget ranges.

Wait List

The Waitlist Report showed that ARHHS Personal Care had two clients on its waitlist due to contracted budget limits. ACCAA Homemaker Services reported 25 clients on their waitlist and CNP Homemaker Services reported 26 clients—both primarily caused by staffing shortages.

Committees

2025 Senior Conference Planning Committee update: Darcy shared that the 2025 Senior Conference Planning Committee met via Zoom on January 28 to address alternatives to the postponed 2025 Senior Conference. The committee proposed distributing promotional swag bags to senior centers and other outreach events to maintain engagement. Darcy met with Director Arcaro to initiate the ordering of promotional items. Once items are received, the committee will determine distribution logistics. The group also noted that vendors had not yet received formal notice of the cancellation and agreed this should be addressed along with a “Save the Date” for the next event. Venue options for the 2026 Senior Conference are still being explored. Darcy contacted Ashtabula Area City Schools regarding the opening of Lakeside High School, which was projected for Fall 2026, though the timeline remains uncertain. Lakeside Junior High was also considered but may not meet capacity needs. Sister Theresa from Saint John & Paul School confirmed availability, offered a site tour, and noted that construction should be completed by late summer 2025. While food service would not be available, the facility usage would include a kitchen and beverage station, and pricing is expected to be affordable. The board reviewed other previously explored venues and recommended scheduling site visits to Saint John & Paul, Lakeside Jr. High, and revisiting the Ashtabula Town Center Mall, which would also meet the conference's needs.

Senior Service Levy Campaign update:

Chair Joe Rapose updated the board on the Senior Services Levy Campaign. Joe shared Dr. Brockway arranged for a provider to print postcards, newspaper inserts, and stickers for home-delivered meal boxes. Lynn Zalewski is overseeing the campaign's budget and finances, while Randy Jones developed social media content. The campaign kicked off on March 3 at Head Start and has received positive coverage in both the Star Beacon and Gazette. Ron Smith reported that 130-yard signs remained from the previous campaign and, after evaluating needs and cost, Ron asked the board their thoughts on ordering additional yard signs. After discussion, it was determined 100 additional signs would be ordered and expected to arrive before the April 1st campaign meeting. Lynn also shared samples of stickers, inserts, and postcards that will be used in newspapers and at upcoming volunteer fairs. Joe reminded members about the April 1st meeting at A-Tech (3:00 p.m., A Building), and Mary Pepperney asked that everyone remind those that were distributing signs to take down signs after the election.

Independence & Wellness/Technology Committee Quarterly meeting update:

Joe also summarized the Independence & Wellness/Technology Committee meeting held on March 17, 2025. The meeting included representatives from Conneaut Human Resource Center (CHRC), Ashtabula County Council on Aging (ACCOA), Country Neighbor Program (CNP), Geneva Area Senior Corp. (GASC), SLAB, and JFS staff. GASC's Carolyn Holden reported completed upgrades to the rear entrance and announced that the Senior Prom will be held on June 26. Barb Klingensmith of Country Neighbor noted winter attendance was low but interest in pickleball is growing, and a summer tournament is being considered. ACCOA's Lisa Bruckman noted increased demand for freezer meals, a newly completed wellness room, and upcoming

programming including budget and decluttering classes. Bus trips remain popular. Ryan Tattre from CHRC shared that average daily attendance is 15, with a recent breakfast bingo event drawing nearly 90 attendees. He is seeking more senior volunteers and hopes to restart the center's newsletter. The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for June 2025.

Board member Mary Runyan expressed her thought about the quarterly Independence & Wellness meetings with the directors being semiannual or annual instead of quarterly. Commissioner Whittington expressed the meetings have been helpful and the board should consider finishing out the year meeting quarterly and revisit the idea of meeting less frequently in the 2026 fiscal year.

Old Business: Joe Rapose pointed out to the board the spreadsheet included in the SLAB packet which provides the complete Contract Report for FY 2024. This information shows the providers expenditures and unused balances.

New Business: Board member Lynn Zalewski shared the Independence & Wellness committee spoke briefly about the new Buckeye Pace Senior Center on Lake Ave., Ashtabula, for seniors 55 and over. Lynn asked the center directors if they felt that would impact their centers attendance. The consensus was this facility centers on a medical concept and attendees will need to be Medicaid eligible. The center directors felt Buckeye Pace Center will not affect their attendance.

Adjourn: Chair, Joe Rapose asked the floor for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bob Kenyon made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mary Pepperney seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Next Board Meeting
May 21, 2025, at 10 a.m.
Ohio Means Jobs, 2247 Lake Ave.**