Miami-Dade County Office of Community Advocacy

Elder Affairs Advisory Board

Monthly Public Meeting

Thursday, July 30, 2026

Stephen P. Clark Center

111 NW 1st Street

18th floor, Conference Room 18-4

Miami, FL 33128

MINUTES

Members Present: Johnnie Kerr, Marina Blachman, Miguel del Rivero, Armando Riera, Danielle Desvallons, Winnie Tang, Alejandra Cortina, Brenda Lampon

Members Excused: Deborah "Debbie" Lowe, Barbara "Barby" Morales.

I. Welcome

Second Vice Chair Armando Riera called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed Board members, guests, County staff, and members of the public. In the absence of Chair Barbara Morales and Vice Chair Deborah Lowe, Mr. Riera presided over the meeting. He introduced Mr. Robert Thompson, Community Outreach Coordinator with the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust, who provided the Board's annual Ethics Refresher Training.

II. Roll Call

Roll call was conducted, and a quorum was established.

Attendance is reflected at the beginning of these minutes.

III. Ethics Refresher Training

Mr. Robert Thompson, Community Outreach Coordinator with the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust, provided the Elder Affairs Advisory Board's annual Ethics Refresher Training. He began by providing an overview of the Commission on Ethics and Public Trust, its mission, and the services it provides to Miami-Dade County officials, advisory board members, employees, and residents. He explained that the Commission serves as an independent agency responsible for interpreting and enforcing the County's Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Ordinance while promoting integrity, transparency, and public trust in County government.

Mr. Thompson reviewed key provisions of the Miami-Dade County Code of Ethics, including conflicts of interest, voting conflicts, prohibited contractual relationships, gift restrictions, outside employment, financial disclosure requirements, lobbying regulations, and the ethical responsibilities of advisory board members. He emphasized that Board members must always avoid situations that could create either an actual conflict of interest or the appearance of impropriety and encouraged members to seek advisory opinions from the Commission on Ethics whenever uncertainty exists before taking action.

The presentation also included a comprehensive review of Florida's Government in the Sunshine Law and Public Records Law. Mr. Thompson reminded members that Board business must only be discussed during properly noticed public meetings and that emails, text messages, and other electronic communications concerning matters that may foreseeably come before the Board may constitute public records. He stressed the importance of maintaining transparency in the Board's decision-making process and advised members to consult Board staff before responding to any public records requests.

Mr. Thompson also addressed the appropriate use of social media by advisory board members. He explained that while members may participate in community activities and maintain personal social media accounts, they should avoid representing personal opinions as official Board positions or using their appointment to endorse political candidates, private organizations, or personal interests. He encouraged members to clearly distinguish between personal and official communications and to remain mindful of Sunshine Law requirements when interacting with fellow Board members through electronic communications or social media platforms.

Board members participated in a question-and-answer session regarding Sunshine Law requirements, Board representation at community events, social media use, ethics reporting requirements, and situations involving potential conflicts of interest. Mr.

Thompson provided clarification on each topic and encouraged members to contact the Commission on Ethics whenever guidance is needed before taking action.

The Board thanked Mr. Thompson for the informative presentation and for providing valuable guidance regarding the ethical responsibilities associated with public service.

IV. Approval of Agenda – July 30, 2026, Meeting

Second Vice Chair Armando Riera presented the agenda for the July 30, 2026, meeting for the Board's consideration.

A motion to approve the July 30, 2026, meeting agenda was made by **Winnie Tang** and seconded by **Armando Riera**. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Approval of Minutes – June 24, 2026, Meeting

The Board reviewed the minutes of the June 24, 2026 meeting.

A motion to approve the June 24, 2026, meeting minutes was made by **Alejandra Cortina** and seconded by **Johnnie Kerr**. The motion passed unanimously without discussion.

VI. Approval of Minutes – May 28, 2026, Meeting

The Board reviewed the minutes of the May 28, 2026, meeting.

A motion to approve May 28, 2026, meeting minutes was made by **Alejandra Cortina** and seconded by **Marina Blachman**. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Community Outreach Committee Updates

A. 6th Annual Older Adult Resource Fair (2027)

Staff reported that planning efforts for the **6th Annual Older Adult Resource Fair** have begun and emphasized the importance of initiating venue selection and scheduling well in advance to secure an appropriate location and avoid conflicts with other major community events.

Staff advised that the Community Outreach Committee is evaluating potential venues for the 2027 event. She explained that the **Milander Center**, which successfully hosted the Resource Fair during the previous two years, remains the preferred location due to the positive experience, accessibility, and support received from the venue. However, because attendance has continued to grow each year, the Committee is also exploring larger facilities that may better accommodate future participation. One potential option discussed was the **Miami-Dade County Fair & Expo Center**, which offers a larger indoor venue and ample parking for exhibitors and attendees.

Board members discussed several factors that should be considered before selecting the 2027 venue, including facility capacity, accessibility, parking availability, rental costs, availability of meeting space, and the overall suitability of each location for exhibitors, community organizations, and older adult participants. During the discussion, members noted that the Fair & Expo Center is not available free of charge and that County departments hosting events at that location often rely on grant funding to offset rental expenses. Members agreed that financial considerations should be evaluated before pursuing that option further.

The Board also discussed the importance of selecting a date that minimizes conflicts with other community events serving older adults. Members noted that while the Resource Fair is traditionally held in conjunction with **Older Americans Month**, the month of May also includes numerous conferences, awareness campaigns, community events, and holidays that could affect attendance. Specific consideration was given to Mental Health Awareness Month activities, Alliance for Aging events, Mother's Day, and the observance of Passover. Members agreed that these events should be considered during the planning process to maximize participation from community partners, exhibitors, and residents.

After considerable discussion, Board members agreed that the final event date should be determined based primarily on venue availability. To facilitate planning, the Board identified **May 6, May 20, and May 27, 2027**, as preferred dates for staff to present to the Milander Center. Staff was also directed to review the community calendar to identify any significant scheduling conflicts before returning to the Board with a recommendation.

Staff advised that she would coordinate a meeting of the Community Outreach Committee to continue evaluating venue options, review community event calendars, and report the Committee's recommendations to the full Board for future consideration.

Motion: A motion was made by **Miguel del Rivero** to authorize staff to contact the Milander Center regarding availability for the proposed dates of **May 6, May 20, and May 27, 2027**, and to report back to the Board with available options for further consideration.

Second: Marina Blachman.

Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

B. Older Adult Resource Guide (4th Edition)

Staff provided an update regarding the **Older Adult Resource Guide**. She reported that the English, Spanish, and Creole editions are currently being reviewed and consolidated into a single trilingual publication.

She explained that each agency listing is being individually verified to ensure that contact information, telephone numbers, websites, and available services remain accurate before the guide is submitted to the Miami-Dade County Communications Department for design and production.

To expedite the review process, Board members volunteered to assist staff by reviewing assigned sections of the guide and verifying agency information online prior to publication.

Staff advised that once the verification process is complete, the guide will be submitted to the Communications Department for formatting and printing prior to distribution throughout the community.

VIII. Old Business

A. Board Vacancies Update

Ms. Vanessa Garcia Azzam provided an update regarding the current Board vacancies in **Districts 3, 7, 9, and 11**. She advised that outreach efforts to the respective Commission District offices remain ongoing and that recommendations for prospective Board members continue to be submitted for consideration.

Board members discussed the appointment process and acknowledged that appointments are made at the discretion of each County Commissioner. It was noted that the review and appointment process may require additional time due to the Commissioners' schedules, ongoing election activities, and the internal review process conducted by each District office to identify qualified candidates. Members emphasized the importance of appointing individuals who are committed to actively participating in Board meetings and community initiatives.

Ms. Garcia Azzam also provided an update regarding the residency waiver request submitted for the **AARP-appointed representative**. She advised that staff continues to work with the appropriate offices to obtain the required approval in order to fill the designated AARP position on the Board.

No formal action was taken.

IX. New Business

A. At-Large Member Selection Process

Staff presented the proposed creation of a **Member Selection Committee** to review applications submitted for the newly established at-large Board member positions authorized under the Board's governing ordinance.

Board members discussed the purpose of the committee and agreed that the committee would review applications received from interested individuals and provide recommendations to the Board for consideration. Members also discussed the importance of recruiting applicants with professional experience and expertise in aging services and related fields to strengthen the Board's work and community outreach efforts. Suggestions included encouraging participation from representatives of organizations such as Adult Protective Services, the Department of Elder Affairs, the Department of Children and Families, and other agencies serving older adults.

A motion was made by **Marina Blachman** to approve the creation of the Member Selection Committee. The motion was seconded by **Winnie Tang**.

The motion passed unanimously.

Following approval of the committee, Board members selected **Alejandra Cortina, Brenda Lampon, and Miguel del Rivero** to serve as members of the committee.

A motion to approve the committee membership was made by **Marina Blachman**, seconded by **Miguel del Rivero**, and approved unanimously.

B. Purchase of Name Tags

Staff presented a request for approval to purchase name tags for newly appointed Board members and replacement name tags for current members whose badges had been lost or required replacement.

Following discussion, a motion was made by **Marina Blachman** to approve the purchase of name tags for newly appointed Board members. The motion was seconded by **Brenda Lampon** and passed unanimously.

A second motion was made by **Alejandra Cortina** to approve the purchase of replacement name tags for current Board members using Trust Fund monies. The motion was seconded by **Johnnie Kerr** and approved unanimously.

C. Reimbursement from Trust Fund

Ms. Garcia Azzam presented a request for reimbursement in the amount of **$375.00** from Trust Fund money for payment of DJ services provided by **Marlin de la Salsa** during the **5th Annual Older Adult Resource Fair** held on April 30, 2026.

A motion to approve the reimbursement was made by **Winnie Tang** and seconded by **Brenda Lampon**.

The motion passed unanimously.

X. Announcements

A. Members were recognized for participating in the **Second Annual Housing and Social Services Community Fair** hosted by the City of North Miami on July 17, 2026. Appreciation was expressed to all Board members who attended and represented the Elder Affairs Advisory Board.

B. Members who participated in the **Community Resource Fair** hosted by City of Miami Commissioner Rolando Escalona, in collaboration with State Senator Ileana Garcia and Miami Dade County Commissioner Vicki L. Lopez, were thanked for their participation and continued community outreach efforts.

C. Staff reminded members of the upcoming **Age-Friendly Initiative Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting** and advised that she would resend the meeting information and location details to the Board. It was noted that both Ms. Garcia Azzam and Brenda Lampon planned to attend on behalf of the Board.

D. Members were invited to participate in the **2026 Disability Resource Fair**, scheduled for August 29, 2026, at the Miami-Dade County Fair & Expo Center.

E. Members were reminded that the Elder Affairs Advisory Board would **not meet during the month of August**. Mr. Riera thanked members for their continued participation and encouraged everyone to attend future meetings whenever possible to maintain an active quorum.

F. The next regular meeting of the Elder Affairs Advisory Board was announced for **Thursday, September 24, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**, at **Senior Planet**.

Additional Announcements

Brenda Lampon announced the Mayor's upcoming budget town halls and advised that information would be shared with Board members. She encouraged members to participate in the virtual budget presentation to learn more about the proposed Fiscal Year 2026-2027 County Budget.

Armando Riera announced his election as **President-Elect of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses**, becoming the organization's first Cuban American elected to that leadership position. Board members congratulated Mr. Riera on this achievement.

Winnie Tang announced the upcoming **100th Anniversary Celebration** of the organization she currently serves as President. Board members acknowledged the milestone and extended their congratulations.

Johnnie Kerr announced the celebration of **Johnnie Kerr Day** and recognized the centennial anniversary of the Miami chapter of the Honor Merchant Association. Board members acknowledged both announcements.

XI. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by **Miguel del Rivero** and seconded by **Danielle Desvallons**.

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at approximately **11:59 a.m.**