

AGING ADVISORY COUNCIL

MINUTES | March 12, 2026 | 1:30 pm



Options to Participate

Wasatch Fire District: 251 E 1200 S, Heber City, UT

Webinar Link provided to members

Attendees

Kendall Crittenden, Chair, Wasatch County Councilmember
Cara Moody, Utah County Senior Volunteers
Carla Merrill, Alpine Mayor
Gale Pace, Retired Senior Volunteer Program
Tonja B. Hanson, Summit County Councilmember
Mardi Sifuentes, Utah County Human Services

MAG Staff

Linda Cole, MAG Aging Co-Director
Jimmy Golding, MAG Aging Co-Director
Dana Bowman, Aging Advisory Records Officer
Andrew Wooley, MAG Technology Support

Guest:

Johnathon Knapton, MAG Director of Public and Government Relations

Meeting was called to order at 1:32pm by Kendall Crittenden, Chair.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes from January 8, 2026 by Gale Pace. Motion was seconded by Carla Merrill and unanimously approved.

Guest Speaker

Johnathon Knapton, MAG Director of Public and Government Relations

Johnathon explained his role in bridging the gap between municipal, state, and federal government levels. He provided a summary of the recent legislative session and its impact on aging services. The session saw a record-breaking 1,000+ bills proposed, with approximately 550 passing. One particular bill of note that will directly impact the aging population is Senate Bill 281. This bill was passed and will create a state fund to match private and corporate donations for Meals on Wheels. It starts with a one time \$250,900 fund and an ongoing annual \$24,600 contribution. This bill was designed to incentivize innovation and self-sufficiency as the demand for senior services is expected to double or triple in coming years. Currently, the Meals on Wheels program shares \$1.75 million in statewide funding. He also noted that MAG held weekly lunches during the legislative session to coordinate with partners including UDOT, UTA, WFRC, and ULCT, and will do so again next year.

Linda Cole added that another significant development was the passage of a bill to increase reimbursement rates for the Aging Waiver program, a critical home and community-based service that provides essentials like housekeeping and medication management to help seniors stay in their homes. Linda explained that the program had been declining because previous rates were so low that providers were losing money or treating the service as charity, leading to a shortage of available help. By approving these rate increases, the legislature ensured the program's viability and secured the necessary provider network to serve aging clients effectively.

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MAG Aging Department Directors' Update

Linda Cole, MAG Aging Co-Director

Linda provided a comprehensive update on the department's growing education program and specialized support services. The education program led by Tanya McDonald has expanded to include recorded sessions for senior centers as well as new Senior Education Series classes covering topics like hospice planning, legal education, and nutrition. A notable new collaboration with USU focuses on Digital Literacy for Dementia Caregivers, a pilot program aimed at helping seniors navigate telehealth and avoid online scams. Additionally, Linda is exploring the possibility of providing kits for Dementia Live that include adaptive tools, such as grip aids for utensils, to help caregivers support loved ones with daily tasks.

Linda also highlighted the success of the incontinence supply program, which transitioned from a one-time purchase to an ongoing service. The program has expanded to include five Amazon subscription slots for the most vulnerable homebound seniors, ensuring supplies are delivered directly to their doors. Linda then briefed the Council on the Four-Year Plan required by the Older Americans Act. As the department enters the final year of the current cycle, Linda requested that the Council review sections 3 and 4 of the upcoming draft in April. This review will culminate in a formal approval and signature at the May 14th meeting before the plan is presented to the state in June.

Jimmy Golding, MAG Aging Co-Director

Jimmy shared with the group that the March for Meals initiative is experiencing a highly successful and high-profile month, marked by an impressive level of community and political engagement. The program has secured participation from nearly every local mayor, alongside appearances from Miss Utah, BYU's Cosmo the Cougar, and UVU's Willie the Wolverine. These efforts are bolstered by a major fundraising push featuring a \$100,000 matching donor, which has already helped raise an additional \$15,000 from the community. To reach the matching goal, MAG is promoting a "Restaurant Rally" where local eateries, including Back 40, Cold Stone, and others, donate a portion of their proceeds to Meals on Wheels. Residents can also support the cause at no extra cost by linking their Smith's or Walmart online accounts to the program.

Beyond nutrition services, the department is navigating a transition for its SHIP (Medicare counseling) and RSVP (volunteer) programs. Due to funding constraints, the RSVP program is being phased out at the end of March, with hopes that the county will take over its management. To ensure the SHIP program remains effective despite this shift, MAG plans to hire a second employee and is actively pursuing grants to elevate one of the positions to full-time.

Meals on Wheels Growth

Jimmy Golding, MAG Aging Co-Director

The Meals on Wheels program is undergoing a considerable transformation fueled by record-breaking fundraising, having recently crested \$1 million in total funds raised. This financial surge has allowed the organization to aggressively target its waiting list, successfully reducing it from 550 people last year to just 217 currently. To support this increase in new clients, the program has expanded its infrastructure by increasing employee routes from five to eight and launching 13 new volunteer routes. The team is also preparing for a major digital overhaul on April 13th with a newly designed database. This system will streamline everything from kitchen production and specialized meal requirements to volunteer tracking and client wellness notes, freeing up staff to focus on growth. While federal and state funding leaves a \$550,000 annual gap just to maintain current service levels, the program's "growth mindset" and recent fundraising success are moving MAG closer to a future where they no longer have to worry about fulfilling basic needs or maintaining a waiting list.

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Social Media Initiatives

Jimmy Golding, MAG Aging Co-Director

Jimmy elaborated on the department's broader strategy to eliminate the service waiting lists and increase public awareness of available senior resources through new outreach tools like highway billboards and social media collaborations. MAG is significantly bolstering its outreach through a dual-strategy of digital engagement and targeted physical mailers. To increase public awareness and drive fundraising, the team has been producing creative social media content on Facebook and Instagram, including timely Olympics-themed videos and showcased the new delivery trucks. This digital presence is designed to reach potential donors and seniors who may not yet realize they are eligible for services. Additionally, Linda announced a new initiative to reach rural residents in Summit and Wasatch Counties who. The department is purchasing a specialized mailing list to send a newly created, localized resource guide and program flyers directly to the homes of residents over age 60 in those areas. This direct-mail approach aims to ensure that even the most isolated seniors are fully informed about Meals on Wheels and in-home case management services.

Councilmember Roundtable

No topics were brought up for discussion from the council.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held Thursday, May 14, 2026 at the MAG Orem office.

Adjourned at 2:40pm.