AGING ADVISORY COUNCIL

MINUTES | May 14, 2026 |1:30 pm

MAG
AGING & FAMILY SERVICES

Options to Participate

MAG Office: 586 E 800 N, Orem, UT 84097
Webinar Link provided to members

Attendees

Kendall Crittenden, Chair, Wasatch County Councilmember
Cara Moody, Utah County Senior Volunteers
Carla Merrill, Alpine Mayor
Claudia Barillas, Utah County Human Services
Jan Jonsson-Kirkham, Lehi Senior Center
Kena J. Mathews, Community Action Housing Director
Nancy Madsen, Caregiver Coalition
Tonja B. Hanson, Summit County Councilmember

MAG Staff

Linda Cole, MAG Aging Co-Director
Jimmy Golding, MAG Aging Co-Director
Dana Bowman, Aging Advisory Records Officer
Ann Humpherys, MAG LTC Ombudsman

Guests:

Darren Hotton, AARP Utah
Trason Dixon, Park City Senior Citizens, Inc.
Jeff Goodall, Caregiver Coalition

Meeting was called to order at 1:30pm by Kendall Crittenden, Chair.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes from March 12, 2026 by Tonja Hanson. Motion was seconded by Cara Moody and unanimously approved.

Council Business

Kendall Crittenden, Chairperson

Linda Cole presented a nomination for Jeff Goodall as a new member of the Aging Advisory Council. Jeff introduced himself as a facilitator for a Caregiver Support Group, a member of the Utah County Caregiver Coalition, and volunteer.

MOTION: Cara Moody made a motion to appoint Jeff Goodall as a new member of the council, seconded by Claudia Barillas, and passed unanimously.

Guest Speaker

Darren Hotton, AARP Utah Associate State Director of Community Outreach

Darren shared key insights into the state's caregiving landscape. Drawing from his extensive background in aging services—including roles with the National Council on Aging, New York Medicaid, and serving as Utah's Medicare Education and Outreach Director—Darren highlighted how unpaid caregiving functions as the hidden backbone of the healthcare system. He emphasized that a major hurdle in providing support is that most individuals do not self-identify as caregivers; they view their actions simply as helping a parent or checking on a neighbor, which often delays them from seeking outside resources until they reach a breaking point.

The scope of caregiving in Utah carries a massive economic and personal toll. Roughly 28% of adults in the state, or between 600,000 and 700,000 people, provide care, giving Utah one of the highest caregiving rates in the nation. Collectively, these individuals contribute 490 million hours of unpaid care annually, an economic value worth $9.9 billion when calculated at an equivalent rate of over $20 an hour. This demands an intense juggle, as 35% of these caregivers are part of the "sandwich generation" who manage jobs and children alongside their caregiving duties. Furthermore, 45% of Utah caregivers navigate these burdens completely alone, leading to high rates of physical burnout, emotional stress, and financial drain. This isolation is severely magnified in rural areas, where long distances and a shortage of formal home health aides leave families entirely self-reliant.

To address this growing crisis, Darren suggested that the healthcare system must professionalize how it views caregiving, noting that family members are often expected to perform high-level, skilled medical tasks, such as managing in-home dialysis, with little to no formal training. He urged case managers to shift their approach by actively factoring the caregiver's well-being into integrated care plans rather than focusing solely on the care receiver. By utilizing a framework of identifying, assessing, connecting, and validating caregivers, professionals can intervene before a medical or emotional crisis occurs. Validating their work by attaching an economic value to their hours helps caregivers reframe their high-stress roles and view themselves as vital, skilled components of the system.

Darren announced that AARP has consolidated its digital library of resources through a centralized QR code and a direct text line, allowing individuals to text "caregiving" to 50757 for immediate assistance. Additionally, the Utah Division of Aging and Adult Services will launch a topic-specific caregiver website in November, aligning with National Caregiving Month. This upcoming portal will categorize resources by specific needs, making it easier for residents to find specialized support for diverse scenarios, such as caring for veterans or disabled children.

MAG Aging Department Directors' Update

Linda Cole, MAG Aging Co-Director

Linda shared a few quick community updates and resource announcements. Following the success of the "Caregiver at the Movies" event, the Caregiver Coalition is introducing a free, indoor Caregiver Summer Social on June 18th to combat caregiver isolation with a meal, games, and a "Utah Elvis" performance. Additionally, to bridge information gaps in rural areas, the department is launching a direct-mail campaign in mid-June, sending 2,000 comprehensive senior service guides directly to the homes of older adults in rural Summit and Wasatch Counties. To support memory care, free "Dementia Live" kits featuring practical, adaptive daily living items—such as a specialized cup, textured grippers, sensory fidget toys, and appetite-stimulating red plates—will be distributed next month to families participating in the dementia simulation classes. Finally, senior centers are encouraged to host watch parties for Adult Protective Services' upcoming two-hour Elder Abuse Awareness Day webinar, and Linda noted that the Aging Advisory Council will take its annual summer recess until September 17th.

4-Year Plan Presentation

Linda Cole, MAG Aging Co-Director; Jimmy Golding, MAG Aging Co-Director

Linda presented the final year of the current state four-year plan, which outlines senior funding and innovative resource allocation to federal and state aging boards. Despite post-pandemic funding shifts, MAG has successfully hit its stride, celebrating major milestones across its specialized programs. Notably, the Senior Education Series grew to offer popular, free virtual community resource classes that served 154 unduplicated participants. Additionally, the annual caregiver conference hit a record 295 attendees at its new BYU location, and the "Caregiver at the Movies" event expanded its outreach by 150% to host 125 participants. Regionally, the expansion of the Summit and Wasatch Caregiver Coalition introduced highly popular memory-friendly activities in partnership with Jewish Family Services.

The report also highlighted immense productivity within MAG's essential community wellness and support divisions. Operating at minimum staffing capacity due to budget constraints, two veteran ombudsmen managed to resolve 366 care complaints and conduct 581 visits across 62 long-term care facilities. Social connection programs flourished as well, with the Friendly Callers volunteer initiative coordinating weekly check-ins for 62 isolated seniors. The department also filled a critical financial and health gap by supplying 828 packages of incontinence briefs to seniors experiencing monthly supply shortages. Finally, MAG's "Aging So Cool" promotional buttons generated unexpected national buzz; the campaign caught the attention of federal policy leaders at US Aging, successfully securing the agency an advocacy meeting with U.S. Senator John Curtis to discuss senior social security initiatives.

Jimmy then shared updates on the MAG Aging non-profit initiatives, which focus on overcoming flat funding to serve a growing senior population. Through its non-profit arm, the Meals on Wheels program has raised $510,000 year-to-date, shrinking its waiting list from 550 individuals to under 200, with a goal for total elimination by the end of fiscal year 2028. To support these efforts, MAG ramped up social media outreach to boost brand awareness and encourage community volunteerism. Additionally, the SHIP counseling program is actively targeting 64-year-olds to promote timely Medicare enrollment and prevent coverage penalties, while a successful "Silver Wolves" cyber scam presentation series, created in partnership with Arctic Wolf, is now being scaled for a nationwide rollout.

Jimmy also highlighted several successful community campaigns and food security efforts. The annual "March for Meals" event engaged elected officials and local mascots for home deliveries, while restaurant and grocery "round-up" partnerships successfully doubled the campaign's donations from last year. For emergency preparedness, MAG distributed warm socks for the holidays and partnered with Empire Foods to provide two-week freeze-dried meal kits to all active and waitlisted clients, supplementing the 72-hour kits packed by staff during the 9/11 Day of Service. Furthermore, Jimmy emphasized that these programs rely heavily on community support, noting that volunteers and interns contributed a monumental 51,500 in-kind hours this past year, which includes delivering over 70% of all Meals on Wheels.

MOTION: Tonja Hanson made a motion to approve the 4-year plan as presented. Seconded by Claudia Barillas, motion carried.

Caregiver Talking Points Social Media Initiatives

Ann Humpherys, MAG Aging Caregiver Talking Points Trainer

This agenda item was postponed until the next council meeting due to time constraints.

Councilmember Roundtable

Chairperson Crittenden shared news that an individual in Charleston provided funds in his will that will be used to assist in funding for the Senior Center and ensure the Meals on Wheels waitlist remains at zero in Wasatch County.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held Thursday, September 17, 2026 in Park City.

Adjourned at 3:00pm.