
Commissioners: Blake Spears (Vice-Chair) — **PRESENT**; Suzi Kalmus — **PRESENT**; Jacqueline Johnson — **EXCUSED ABSENT**; Leslie Smith — **PRESENT**; Car-Lette Garrett — **PRESENT**; Sharawn Tipton — **EXCUSED LATE**; Kevin Beachem — **PRESENT**; Gwendolyn Thomas-Knight — **PRESENT**; Rhonda Ramirez — **PRESENT**. (*Robert “Bob” Scott — resigned; Brandon Hemphill — resigned.*)

Human Services Department (HSD) Commission Staff: Ana Bagtas, Aging and Adult Services Manager; Greg Elliott, Interim HSD Director (introduction during Item 10); Jessi Cutter, Outreach Developer; Marshay Boyd, Commission Clerk

MAYOR'S COMMISSION ON AGING

Wednesday, July 1, 2026

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Oakland City Hall, Hearing Room 1 - One Frank H. Ogawa Plaza

Meeting Minutes

1. Call To Order

Vice-Chair Blake Spears called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. and reviewed the agenda and meeting flow.

2. Roll Call/Determination of Quorum

Present at roll call: Blake Spears; Suzi Kalmus; Leslie Smith; Car-Lette Garrett; Kevin Beachem; Gwendolyn Thomas-Knight; Rhonda Ramirez.

Excused Absent: Jacqueline Johnson.

Late Arrival (Excused): Sharawn Tipton (10:12am).

Quorum: Established, seven commissioners present at roll call.

3. Adoption of Agenda

ACTION ITEM: Leslie Smith / Car-Lette Garrett / Moved — Approved.

4. Approval of May 6, 2026, and June 3, 2026, Meeting Minutes

Discussion (May 6 minutes):

- Kevin Beachem requested the record show: during approval of April minutes at the May meeting, a parliamentary point raised by Car-Lette Garrett was dismissed by the Chair; and the

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final vote included one nay and one abstention. Commissioners emphasized that minutes should reflect vote counts (ayes/nays/abstentions).

- Gwendolyn Thomas-Knight asked that minutes continue to be sent directly by email (not via Outlook calendar invites), noting receipt issues. Vice-Chair Spears asked the Clerk to follow up to confirm email address and delivery method.
- Commissioners reviewed Robert's Rules flow (motion → second → discussion → call the question → vote) to ensure future approvals follow consistent procedure.

ACTION ITEM (Approve May 6, 2026, minutes, with corrections): Leslie Smith / Car-Lette Garrett / Moved — Approved.

ACTION ITEM (Approve June 3, 2026, minutes): Leslie Smith / Suzi Kalmus / Moved — Approved.

5. Public Comment (Specific Agenda Items, limit of two minutes)

No speaker cards were submitted for agenda-item public comment.

6. Vice-Chair's Announcements/Reports – *Blake Spears, MCOA Vice-Chairperson*

• **Nomination of MCOA Chair**

ACTION ITEM: Leslie Smith / Car-Lette Garrett / Moved — Approved.

- Leslie Smith nominated Blake Spears; Blake declined due to schedule constraints.
- Blake Spears nominated Car-Lette Garrett; Car-Lette declined, offering support but not to serve as Chair at this time.
- Kevin Beachem self-nominated to serve as Chair, initially proposing a limited term through September; commissioners discussed bylaws and agreed the Chair would be elected without a time caveat, with the understanding that the Chair may resign later if needed.

Result: Kevin Beachem elected Chair.

7. Discussion Items:

• **MCOA By-Laws Revision**

Formed an ad hoc bylaws committee composed of commissioners only; monthly updates requested; report-back in September; final recommendations for vote in October before routing to City Attorney, Mayor's Office, and City Council. Volunteers: Kevin Beachem, Rhonda Ramirez, Gwendolyn Thomas-Knight, Sharawn Tipton.

ACTION ITEM: Leslie Smith / Car-Lette Garrett / Moved – Approved.

• **Code of Conduct**

Commissioners discussed whether to adopt a commission-specific code of conduct or rely on the City's ethics/oath framework; consensus: explore adding clarifying language within updated bylaws rather than creating a separate code; ensure respectful engagement among commissioners and with the public.

• **Staff involvement in Agenda Planning**

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Reviewed historical practice (Chair/Vice-Chair coordinating with Aging & Adult Services Manager) and Brown Act constraints; agreed to solicit topic input in public session and to consider an annual topic list; commissioners underscored need for advance materials from presenters.

- **Solicitation of input on presentation topics**

Commissioners proposed briefings from Mercy Brown Bag, Meals on Wheels, violence prevention/MACRO, and health access partners; Sharawn Tipton suggested a shared Google Doc (non-Brown Act-violating approach) to collect who/what/why and help prioritize agendas.

8. MCOA Member Report Outs - Senior Center Advisory Council Meetings

- **Downtown Oakland Senior Center (DOSC)** — Commissioner Rhonda Ramirez

Asked for best ways to disseminate budget outcomes (e.g., FAQ) to general membership; Vice-Chair noted an FAQ model used elsewhere that could be adapted.

- **North Oakland Senior Center (NOSC)** — Commissioner Leslie Smith

Reported group trips resuming; positive response to classes/activities; highlighted need to coordinate advisory-council engagement and ensure liaison scripts/introductions are clear.

- **East Oakland Senior Center (EOSC)** — Commissioner Car-Lette Garrett

Noted advisory council's strong budget advocacy (support for policy directive to expand hours); celebrated a successful Juneteenth event and community food-bank collaboration; continuing priorities: restore five-day hours, janitorial staffing, facility rentals, and on-site services (e.g., notary).

- **West Oakland Senior Center (WOSC)** — Liaison Assignment

No update at this time.

Discussion: Commissioners discussed standardizing liaison introductions, agenda placement (5-minute standing item), and expectations (primarily listening mode with Q&A at chair's discretion). Staff confirmed orientation had been delivered to advisory councils, and that liaison roles can be further clarified via bylaws updates and council-bylaws alignment.

9. Advocacy Updates – Blake Spears, MCOA Vice-Chairperson

Lenore Gunst commended commissioners and seniors for a strong budget presence, postcard campaigns, and a productive meeting with Councilmember Carroll Fife; suggested quarterly council updates and noted her SSC fellowship concluded (SSC remains available for support). Commissioners reflected on being present through the end of hearings and the importance of specific dollar asks in future advocacy.

10. Human Services Department/Aging & Adult Services Report – Ana Bagtas, Aging and Adult Services Manager, HSD and introduction of Interim HSD Director Greg Elliott

Budget Outcomes & Operations (FAQ highlights):

- Council approved \$200,000 in Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Tax funding for senior centers; staff estimate \$800,000 annually would be needed to open all centers five days/week with extended hours. Added staffing: four Administrative Assistant II (one per center) and 1.0 FTE Admin Assistant

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II dedicated to centralized rentals; custodial 3.0 FTE (part-time) to support expanded activities/rentals. Membership increased from \$12 to \$15 (scholarships available). POS credit-card payments now available (transaction fee about 2.8%; minimum \$2 up to \$80 then percentage).

West Oakland Senior Center (WOSC) Reopening:

- Alarm system installed (final testing pending); locks changed; furniture return scheduled upon final invoices to the storage vendor; new furniture ordered (lead time 7–9 weeks). Plan for soft opening (volunteers to reset rooms, post programming) before grand opening.

Technology/Access Grant:

- IT-led state grant will enable broadcast of center classes (exercise/dance) to seniors at home via secure platforms (requires Wi-Fi; exploring KTOP integration).

11. Open Forum (Limit of two minutes)

- Philip (Public Member): Asked for clarity on commissioners' roles at advisory-council meetings and welcomed their attendance at center events; raised concern about sunset of Administrative Assistant I positions in October ("stealth layoffs"), urging experience weighting in civil-service hiring for new Administrative Assistant II roles to preserve institutional knowledge; flagged Measure BB constraints (if BB funds used, centers must document transit-related duties proportion for admin staff).

12. Closing Remarks & Adjournment

Vice-Chair Spears summarized next steps: launch Bylaws Ad Hoc Committee, continue councilmember outreach, and support WOSC reopening milestones.

ACTION ITEM: Leslie Smith / Suzi Kalmus / Moved — Approved.

Meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

City of Oakland Midcycle Budget FY 2026-2027
Frequently Asked Questions on
City-Run Senior Centers

Are the City-run senior centers getting more staff?

The FY 2026–27 midcycle budget includes four (4) Administrative Assistant II positions, one for each senior center. In addition, 1.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) custodial positions were added, bringing total custodial staffing to 3.0 FTE. These positions are intended to strengthen day-to-day operations, improve customer service, support programming, and help prepare for future service expansions.

How are the additional senior center staff funded?

The additional staffing was made possible through budget reallocations and a combination of funding sources. For example, 5.0 vacant Senior Aide positions in the ASSETS on-the-job training program for low-income seniors were eliminated to fund 1.0 FTE Administrative Assistant II position. The Administrative Assistant II positions are funded through a combination of City General Purpose Funds, Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Tax revenues, Measure BB funds, and Medi-Cal Administrative Activities funding. The additional custodial positions are funded through the City's General Purpose Fund.

What are the current senior center operating hours?

The City's four senior centers are currently open Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and are closed on Fridays.

What would it cost to expand senior center hours?

City staff estimate that approximately \$800,000 in additional annual funding would be needed to expand all four senior centers from their current schedule to five days per week with longer operating hours. The estimate includes additional staffing, custodial services, security, programming support, and operating expenses needed to support expanded service levels.

Did the City Council approve additional funding to increase senior center operating days or hours?

On June 17, the City Council approved the FY 2026–27 midcycle budget, which included an additional \$200,000 in Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Tax funding for senior centers. While this funding will help expand senior center services, it is not sufficient to support opening all four senior centers five days per week with extended hours. Staff estimate that approximately \$800,000 is required annually to fully implement that level of service. City

staff will develop recommendations on how the additional \$200,000 can best be used to enhance programs, services, and operations.

Why can't the senior centers immediately expand to five days per week given the additional \$200,000 approved in the budget?

In addition to funding limitations, staff identified several operational challenges that must be addressed before extended services can be implemented, including:

- Recruiting, hiring, and training additional staff.
- Developing programming and activity schedules for longer operating hours.
- Evaluating facility operations, room assignments, and support services.
- Identifying sustainable funding sources for ongoing operating costs.
- Communicating service changes to members and program participants.

What operational challenges are associated with longer hours?

Senior center staff perform important administrative and financial responsibilities at the end of each day, including accounting, revenue reconciliation, cash handling, and preparing deposits. Extending public hours later into the day may require adjustments to staffing schedules and operational procedures to ensure these responsibilities can continue to be completed accurately and securely.

How will the City determine future senior center hours and services?

Conducting a survey of senior center members may be necessary to better understand preferred operating hours, program interests, and service needs. Survey results, staffing levels, operational capacity, and available funding will help guide future recommendations for expanding services.



WOSC Update for the June 25, 2026 Advisory Council meeting

Background

In June 2024, the West Oakland Senior Center (WOSC) closed to the public to allow for the completion of the Capital Improvement Project (CIP). At that time, all furniture, equipment, and other building contents were placed in storage with West Coast Moving. The contractor completed the major CIP work and formally turned the building over to the City's Public Works Department in November 2025. Although the City has regained possession of the facility, several pending items must be completed by Public Works and Facility Services Department before the center can safely open to the public.

Requirements for Soft Opening

Three critical requirements must be completed before the WOSC can proceed with a soft opening.

1. Return and Installation of Furniture

The City has experienced several issues with West Coast Moving that have delayed the return of the furniture and other items placed in storage during construction. Staff is working to resolve these issues and anticipates that the stored contents will be returned and installed at the center within the next few weeks.

To supplement the existing furnishings, staff has also placed an order with Blaisdell's for new furniture for the downstairs area. The order has been placed, with an estimated delivery timeline of 7–9 weeks from June 17. Blaisdell's has informed staff that the West Oakland Senior Center order will be prioritized.

2. Alarm System

During the CIP, the facility experienced a break-in that resulted in significant damage to the building's alarm system. As a result, the alarm system must be replaced and successfully tested before the WOSC can safely reopen to the public. The system has been replaced, but additional work is needed to be done by City Information Technology (IT) and the alarm company. Date of completion is TBD but is soon.

3. Building Rekeying

During the break-in, a set of building keys was stolen, creating a security risk. To ensure the safety of the facility and maintain controlled access, the building must be fully rekeyed and new keys issued before the center can reopen to the public. Although some doors have already been rekeyed, several entry points remain boarded to prevent break-in until the alarm system is fully functional. These doors cannot be rekeyed until the protective boards are removed. Once the alarm system is activated, the boards can be removed and the remaining doors rekeyed. Staff anticipates that both tasks can be completed within one day.

Re-Opening Plan

Once all reopening requirements have been completed, including the return and installation of furniture, activation of the alarm system, and completion of the building rekeying, staff will meet with leadership to discuss and plan for reopening.

Additional Operational Considerations

The following items are being addressed as part of the transition back to normal operations but will not delay the reopening of the West Oakland Senior Center unless otherwise noted.

1. Kitchen Operations

During the break-in, several kitchen appliances were stolen. The construction company has agreed to replace the stolen items. The replacement of these appliances is being coordinated by Public Works. The kitchen will remain closed until the replacement appliances have been installed and the Senior Center Director has completed the required Kitchen Manager training. All other center operations and programming may proceed while the kitchen remains temporarily unavailable.

2. Point of Sale System (POS)

Installation and software updates for POS are underway. Completion of the POS system is not required for the center to reopen and will be finalized as part of ongoing operational improvements.

3. Internal Security Camera Installation

As part of the City's response to the senior center audit and recommendations from the City Auditor's Office, security cameras will be installed in areas where financial transactions are conducted. This enhancement is intended to strengthen internal controls and improve accountability related to cash handling and other financial activities. Installation of the security cameras is being coordinated separately and is not required for the WOSC to reopen.