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

Human Services Department (HSD) Commission Staff: Ana Bagtas, Aging and Adult Services Manager; Jessi Cutter, Outreach Developer; Marshay Boyd, Commission Clerk

MAYOR'S COMMISSION ON AGING

SPECIAL MEETING

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

10:00 a.m. — 11:30 a.m.

North Oakland Senior Center (NOSC) - 5714 Martin Luther King Jr Way, Oakland, CA 94609

***This meeting was noticed as a Special Meeting due to a change in regular location/time and was followed by the Older Americans Month kickoff luncheon.*

Meeting Minutes

1. Call To Order

Chair Robert “Bob” Scott called the meeting to order at 10:16 a.m., noted the meeting was being recorded, and reviewed public-comment protocols: speaker cards; public speaks first after each item/presentation; Open Forum at Item 10.

Discussion: Seating was theater-style in the community room; Chair asked commissioners to raise hands before speaking and reminded the public to submit speaker cards at the green table.

2. Roll Call/Determination of Quorum

Present at roll call: Chair Robert “Bob” Scott; Vice-Chair Blake Spears; Jacqueline Johnson; Leslie Smith; Car-Lette Garrett; Sharawn Tipton; Kevin Beachem; Gwendolyn Thomas-Knight; Rhonda Ramirez.

Absent: Suzi Kalmus (excused); Brandon Hemphill.

Quorum: Established, nine commissioners present at roll call.

3. Adoption of Agenda

ACTION ITEM: Leslie Smith / Blake Spears / Moved — Approved.

Discussion: Chair noted the meeting’s abbreviated format to accommodate the Older Americans Month program.

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4. Approval of April 1, 2026, Meeting Minutes

ACTION ITEM: Blake Spears / Rhonda Ramirez / Moved — Approved (with corrections).

Discussion & Corrections to record: Commissioner Thomas-Knight submitted the following corrections:

- Commissioner's name signage:
Please revise to read:
"Commissioner Gwendolyn Thomas Knight prefers to be recorded as Gwendolyn, not Gwen. Future minutes will reflect this."
- Custodial overtime clarification:
Please revise to read:
"Discussion of West Oakland Senior Center operations referencing contractors working weekends should be corrected to reflect that part-time custodial staff, not contractors, performed the work on weekends."

Parliamentary point (minutes accuracy): Commissioner Car-Lette Garrett noted minutes should reflect what was actually said at the prior meeting; future clarifications may be added separately.

Associated motions captured:

- Motion to amend March 2026 meeting minutes reference (center name corrected to "Palo Vista") — Leslie Smith / Jacqueline Johnson / Moved — Approved.
- Motion to accept minutes as amended and changed — Blake Spears / Rhonda Ramirez / Moved — Approved.

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

- Philip (Public Member): Raised concerns about the Group Trip (JTP) policy that restricts commissioners/participants from physically assisting seniors on and off buses due to City liability; urged a re-review of the policy with City Attorney and Risk Management. He cited California's Good Samaritan law and ADA Title II obligations (even for locally funded trips) and shared a building-evacuation example to underscore safety needs—asking that Oakland's Age-Friendly commitments guide a balance between risk and basic care. (Comment pertained to Item 9.)

6. Chair's Announcements/Reports – Robert Scott, MCOA Chairperson

Main points:

- Commission fully seated; strategic plan moving to action. Commissioners are aligned to subject teams and senior-center advisory councils; the plan developed over the last year is entering implementation.
- Advocacy context and need. Oakland has 60,000 residents age 65+; 30% live under 200% FPL; 12,000 older Oaklanders face nutrition insecurity; 19% of Oakland's homeless are 60+—underscoring the urgency of reopening centers to pre-COVID hours.

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Discussion: Chair affirmed commissioners' advisory-council liaison role and the intent to carry center-level issues back to the Commission for one community voice.

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

Main points:

- Seniors' voting power: Seniors are 20% of Oakland's population and 25% of the voting-age population—urged attendees to contact their councilmembers (as allies) and press for restoring senior-center hours to pre-COVID levels.
- Commissioner engagement: Ongoing meetings with advisory councils; emphasis on respectful, relationship-building advocacy and coordinated talking points.

Discussion: Commissioners and public affirmed outreach to district offices and requested advance materials for any future presentations to allow thoughtful feedback.

8. MCOA Member Report Outs – on Senior Center Advisory Council Meetings

Downtown Oakland Senior Center (DOSC) — Commissioner Rhonda Ramirez

- Advocacy group forming with partners (Senior Services Coalition; Meals on Wheels; Mercy Brown Bag); council meets third Friday; purpose is to organize seniors' voices during budget season.

North Oakland Senior Center (NOSC) — Commissioner Leslie Smith

- Bathroom railings installed following March report; advisory board has vacancies; public invited to attend third-Thursday meetings and consider serving.

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

- Council is fully staffed and active; priorities: restore hours, janitorial staffing, resume rentals (including Saturdays), and re-establish onsite notary/legal services. Commissioner exploring a dedicated local notary (pending confirmation of scope).

9. Human Services Department/Aging & Adult Services Report – Ana Bagtas, Aging and Adult Services Manager, HSD

Main points:

- West Oakland Senior Center (WOSC) status: Center remains closed pending rekeying (keys stolen during a break-in), alarm system replacement (contractor responsibility), and furniture return/procurement (storage-access dispute; adult-furniture bidders being re-solicited). Soft launch planned when these three are resolved; ribbon-cutting will be scheduled through Public Works and the Mayor's Office.
- Subcommittees & data: USF public-health students are conducting equity analysis by zip code; subcommittees (Transportation, Safety & Violence Prevention, Health & Nutrition) will be working committees with quarterly/mid-year reporting on measurable projects.
- CalAIM & integrated supports: HSD described movement toward an integrated health & human services model for vulnerable residents; long-term goal to contract with Kaiser and Alameda Alliance following the City's CalAIM work.

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Discussion: Questions on security cameras, vendor liability, and procurement practices were taken; staff committed to follow-up with Public Works and City Attorney/Risk Management

10. Open Forum (Limit of two minutes)

Public Comments (selected):

- Scott Means (East Bay Foundation on Aging): Announced the foundation will be independent as of July 1, focused on Oakland seniors (expanding from food programs into mental health, case management, and adult day care). Urged full restoration of senior-center hours/days and faster capital projects.
- Melvin (Public Member, NOSC): Requested better meeting organization and advance copies for large community meetings; encouraged continued advocacy for seniors.
- Barbara (Public Member, DOSC): Shared personal experience of homelessness and the essential role of senior centers (five-day access, social workers, craft fairs) in stabilization; urged expanded hours and more center activities/fundraising.
- Sue (Public Member): Called for extended days/times and affirmed senior centers' role in combating isolation; noted positive experiences with MACRO response.
- Mary (card read into record): Asked about increased funding this fiscal year to expand hours.

Theme across speakers: Restore pre-COVID hours; address sidewalk safety and accessibility; prioritize adult day care; maintain senior-center meals/luncheons and craft fairs; improve communication and data transparency.

11. Closing Remarks & Adjournment

Mayor's Remarks — Mayor Barbara Lee

Summary of key points:

- Priority on seniors in the mid-cycle budget; commitment to work with Council on restoring center hours and to expand programs that allow seniors to age in place.
- Safety & infrastructure: Focus on public safety, sidewalks and accessible transportation; City completed a \$334M bond sale to fund affordable housing, transportation, and infrastructure (including sidewalks/potholes).
- Intergenerational engagement: Seniors must have a seat at every policy table; encouraged bringing young people into senior-center life for mentorship and community building.

Chair's Closing: Reiterated advocacy asks (contact Council; support budget restoration), liaison report-outs at future meetings, and upcoming subcommittee work.

ACTION ITEM: Jacqueline Johnson / Sharawn Tipton / Moved — Approved.

Meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

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