

APRC Ad Hoc Senior Advisory Meeting, March 12, 2018

The recommendations are out and you have reached the end. What have you done? You built a big bureaucracy that costs almost twice as much to start and achieves no more than the prior program did in its low budget way. In fact it does away with crucial outreach services by senior center staff and allows the outsourcing of information and referral services to a regional agency.

The standard and practice criteria downloaded from the internet and used to develop your recommendations are only met by two cities in Oregon - Salem which has 7.5 times more people, and Lake Oswego which has almost twice as many people and twice the median household income. Implementing such an organizational structure with a far lower budget than those centers means increasing administration costs at the sacrifice of direct services to seniors.

Jackie Bachman, on August 9, 2017 spoke out in strong support of the prior senior program saying "what a jewel we have in our community right now." What made it special, what few other senior centers had, was its highly skilled staff with its institutional knowledge of 43 years and the local social services it could perform.

The senior manager ran the whole senior program. She had over 28 years experience in conducting senior social services. A part time employee who had 16 years experience in senior social services performed most of the outreach services to Ashland seniors. Three other part time employees, who had over 30 years combined experience helping seniors, assisted in the senior center operations including information and referrals. All staff were long time Ashland residents ... they knew the community and its resources well.

The staff gave personal customized local service that a regional phone system and website could never come close to. Nowhere do you recommend a staff position to have social services experience to be able to provide local outreach to Ashland seniors. It is evident that APRC did not value the local services that made Ashland's senior program special, and neither do you.

The prior qualified staff also made daily judgments in the center operations and activities that made seniors feel safe and comfortable. This is not happening with the current staff who have no experience in social services. Core services have not been maintained. Outreach services are no longer conducted and skilled information and referral services are limited to one day a week by a non-local contract individual. The current staff have had instances where seniors' confidentiality and privacy have been violated. A senior has fallen and broken his hip at the center. Accidents like this never happened while Christine Dodson was manager. A center employee offered a senior over the counter medicine which the prior staff would never do because of liability issues. A center employee offer a senior a space heater ... another liability issue.

Your long laundry list of job and program descriptions allow APRC to select ones that fit its original plans, and still claim that it is consistent with your recommendations.

Ashland's "jewel" has been tossed away by APRC and the committee has buried it.

Sue Wilson, Ashland