

## Lewis County Seniors Update

August 22, 2023

3:32 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Swope, Commissioner Brummer, Commissioner Pollock, Becky Butler, Rudy Rodriguez, Judy Barr, Erin Frazier, Carol Brock, Usha Brooks, Colonel Ron Averill, Nicole Kiddoo

Guest(s): D. Dalton, Elizabeth Hicker, Owen Sexton, Patti Kennedy, Debbie Aust, Tom Hicker, Sheryl Nixon, Bob Bozarth, Christie Easter, Willie Merriman, Joan Norberg, Candy Warren, Elizabeth Rohr, Frank Corbin and others

Recorder: Rieva Lester

**Public comment:** The following individuals expressed concerns regarding the Lewis County Seniors group's stance on prayers and / or the discussion of politics:

- D. Dalton
- Elizabeth Hicker
- Patti Kennedy
- Debbie Aust
- Tom Hicker
- Sheryl Nixon
- Bob Bozarth
- Christie Easter
- Willie Merriman
- Joan Norberg
- Candy Warren
- Elizabeth Rohr
- Frank Corbin

Kylie Sexsmith donated her time to Elizabeth Hicker, and another individual who had signed up to provide public comment chose not to speak.

The Lewis County Seniors group discussed the number of meals the senior centers have served since January 2022.

Colonel Ron Averill said Catholic Community Services' rules are more restrictive because they only serve those who are home-bound.

Erin Frazier said the congregate meal program costs \$600,000.

Nicole Barr said the group needs \$1.4 million for operations and has only \$476,000.

Carol Brock noted that the Seniors group is waiting for the county to install its bingo board.

Usha Brooks discussed bullying that led to the statements in Senior Dynamics.

Judy Barr discussed the group's decision to do away with fundraising requirements.

Nicole Barr said the centers have a handful of vacancies.

Carol Brock said staff and some seniors had indicated they were feeling bullied and that they were feeling forced to participate in a church sermon, prompting her to write the article she wrote. She said the group also wanted to prohibit politicians grandstanding, not seniors discussing politics.

Carol said she was wrong to write the article as she had and that she has apologized.

Erin Frazier and others clarified that the group's policy prohibits corporate prayer, not individual or table prayer.

Commissioner Swope expressed concern regarding how the group has treated and responded to the concerned seniors.

Erin Frazier said the group has been reviewing options for an advisory committee for member selection.

Meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.