

Theresa Utton

Subject: FW: VIT Hearing-Meals On Wheels

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From: John D. Shullenberger

Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2014 3:40 PM

Subject: VIT Hearing-Meals On Wheels

Below is a response to the request for information concerning testimony by Susan Fox concerning meals on wheels in Bennington County

John Shullenberger

Date: February 11, 2014

To: Rep. Martha Heath, Chair
House Committee On Appropriations

From: John Shullenberger

Re: VIT Hearing-Susan Fox Request for \$133,000 for Meals on Wheels

David Mickenberg relayed to me your question about whether the Area Agency on Aging is requesting \$133,000 to support meals on wheels in Manchester and Bennington. I understand that Susan Fox was making such a request and may have implied that the AAA supports it.

I called Sandy Conrad, the executive director of the SW Vermont Area Agency on Aging to ask if she knew of this. Sandy said that Susan Fox runs a non-profit organization named Bennington County Meals on Wheels, which has a contract with Sandy's AAA to provide 58,000 meals at a price of \$4.07/meal to elders in Bennington and Manchester. Fox's organization uses volunteers to deliver the meals and pays the volunteers a mileage reimbursement—this mileage is covered by a separate contract in the amount of \$25,000. The source of the funds paid to Bennington County Meals on Wheels are federal funds under the Older Americans Act and state appropriations administered by the AAA's.

Susan Fox is not an employee of the AAA. Sandy Conrad and Susan Fox have a fundamental disagreement over the amount of the signed meal contract, as Ms. Fox believes the meal payments are inadequate to fully cover her costs. Sandy Conrad reports that Ms Fox has been stating that her organization needs \$133,000 more; but as noted, Sandy disagrees. They have a prescheduled meeting tomorrow to discuss the issues.

It should be clear that the AAA neither authorized Ms. Fox to state or to suggest that the AAA supports her request to your committee; nor does it agree with any amount she suggests.

As a group, the Area Agencies on Aging believe that the actions of DAIL and the joint fiscal committee and the Appropriations Committees to replace over \$200,000 in nutrition program funds lost to federal sequestration were timely and appreciated deeply. They have worked with DAIL to address other needs as well in the context of Choices for Care savings and the rollout of the FY15 budget and will continue to do so. There are areas of need that the AAA's will attempt to continue to make the case for and do have some questions about the adequacy of parts of the choices for care budget that they will address in the upcoming public hearing.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this matter. If you require further information please let me know.

