

CORRECTED
TOWN OF ENFIELD COMMISSION ON AGING
MINUTES FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2021
Enfield Senior Center, 299 Elm Street

Attendance

Present: Mike Arnone Jr.; Pauline Devino; Alice Egan, Howard Florian, David Goyette; Cynthia Guerreri, Staff Liaison; Mary Ann Harris, Marlene Hoginski, Marie Pyznar, Council Liaison; Tim Slade and Kay Tallarita.

Absent: Mayor Bob Cressotti, Council Liaison; Priscilla Linehan and Will St. George.

Guests: Mary Keller, Senior Center Manager and Jennifer Switalski, LMSW, Elderly Services Care Coordinator – Enfield.

I. Welcome

David Goyette, Chairman, opened the meeting at 2:00 p.m. Dave welcomed Mary Ann Harris as the latest alternative member, replacing Judy Kilty, and Marie Pyznar as the new Council Liaison replacing Lori Unghire. He commented at how pleased we are that Tim Slade has returned after his hospitalization and rehab. Tim thanked everyone for their support and well wishes during his hospitalization and recovery.

II. Secretary's Report:

Dave Goyette asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. With no corrections requested, Kay Tallarita made a motion to accept the minutes as presented and Marlene Hoginski seconded the motion. The motion passed (10, 3, 1) with Tim Slade abstaining.

III. Treasurer's Report:

Tim Slade commented that he has a little more work to do on the treasurer's report and will provide an update at the next meeting so there was not a new report to present.

IV. Committee Reports

A. SMHR - Senior Minor Home Repair Program

Tim Slade provided an overview of the SMHR program to the new members. He thanked Dave Goyette for his assistance with completing the program while he recuperated from his surgery. Tim noted that he is in the process of working on written program guidelines for the volunteers so that there can be minimal interruption in the program in the event that the coordinator is unable to perform duties. He also reported that yesterday an annual "thank you" breakfast was held for the SMHRP volunteers. The cost for the breakfast was minimal.

B. Symposium

In Pat Linehan's absence, Dave Goyette reported that after the holidays, Pat will get the volunteers together to begin planning. **It was mentioned by Mary Ann Harris that the Asnuntuck Conference Center that had been used in the past to hold the symposiums will be unavailable on Saturdays only until after April 15th since it is being used for tax preparation purposes.** Dave mentioned that this will need to be considered when planning for a presentation site.

C. Senior Living TV Program

In Pat Linehan's absence, Dave Goyette explained the program to the new members. He noted that the TV interviews continue to be virtual. On December 9th, Marilyn Cresotti will discuss Adult Educational Recreation, and in January Jennifer Switalski of DSS will be interviewed on Helping Neighbors and Making Connections. The next meeting of volunteers for the program will be on January 12th. Dave commented that Mark Warnock of Cox Cable has been great in facilitating, but he prefers to do the telecast in person.

D. Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Kay Tallarita reported that this week there was a special meeting with the State Commissioner of DCF, Representative Tom Arnone also attended. 10 angry grandparents spoke about how judges do not come to court to deliberate. She stated that this was a good meeting and was pleased that the State Commissioner took the time to come to the meeting and listen to concerns. Kay reported that on December 13th the Little Sisters of the Poor will be providing a turkey dinner and gifts for the group. In addition, the Enfield Women's club will be providing poinsettias. She reiterated that even with wonderful social services support there is still the need for further outreach with about 1,400 documented grandparents raising grandchildren in town, but probably even more unidentified. There was discussion about how many grandparents are still working and struggling to raise their grandchildren. Mary Ann Harris commented that unfortunately there is no child tax credit for anyone over 65 years of age who is raising grandchildren.

E. Triad

Marlene Hoginski explained to new members that Triad is a national program of fire and police whose mission is to educate seniors on how to keep safe. Triad members provide documents like the File of Life and fire and police personnel provide safety presentations to seniors. In February, Officer Mark Rochette of the Enfield Police Department will be presenting a defensive driving discussion at the Enfield Senior Center (date to be announced). The Triad committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month. In the past, the Triad group along with Don Ellis of the Enfield Fire Department, has provided a fire safety program and pancake breakfast which the group would like to present again.

F. Choices

Jennifer Switalski reported that she and Will St. George have continued to provide Medicare counseling for those looking for enrollment in a traditional Medicare savings plan or Advantage plan. Jennifer also counsels those on Medicaid who need to sign up for a Choices advocacy plan. Cindy Guerreri suggested that an educational program for seniors be set up through the Enfield Senior Center for those about to become Medicare eligible or for those who want to have a better understanding of what Choices options are available. Jennifer reported that 22 people have been signed up on plans that help people save money. She also mentioned that it is helpful to have family members present for those seniors who have difficulty understanding their choices.

G. Nursing Home Project

Alice Egan gave an overview of this holiday project. She explained that the project has been ongoing for about 5 years. Alice stated that everything is ready for delivery to about 40 residents from Parkway and Saint Joseph's Residence who have no families. She reported that it was marvelous to have the town credit card to Walmart to complete the purchases. Residents from Parkway will be gifted from a list of items they indicated are needed and Saint Joseph residences will be given a \$25.00 gift card which the recreational director will present. Receipts from the Dollar Store will be given to Melissa for a final total. \$771.23 is the total expense for this year's project. Kudos to Alice for her tireless effort in shopping and to Dave who will help with delivery of the gifts which will provide some holiday cheer.

V. Old Business

A. Social Services Update

Cindy Guerreri offered thanks for her request to reorganize social services topics on the agenda. She reported that staff from 110 High Street will be moving tomorrow to their new space on the bottom floor at 1010 Enfield Street (Alcorn School). Staff from Lamagna will be moving in January. New signage is being prepared for the Department of Social Services and Community Center and for the Family Resource Center.

Cindy reported that the grant which includes funding for Enfield Cares, Choices, SMHRP became available on 10/1/21 since it is a federal program. The Apricot system is being built to interact with the electronic system. With the new system on line there will be more efficiency in tracking resources. When asked about how many people in town are being served by Social Services, Cindy replied that we have about 538 clients of which 25% are low income. She further explained that when applying for grants, staff have to project approximately how many service units are needed for each category. In most cases, actual numbers are higher than those projected.

Jennifer reported that regarding elderly services for those isolated, there are about 45 individuals on the at-risk registry which is shared with Police, EMS and Fire services staff. These at-risk management referrals come from the North Central District Health Department, State, Fire, ESC, Police, etc. and include cases for mental health screenings. The Social Services Department has been conducting in-service sessions with the ESC staff to help identify cases that need referral. Mary Ann Harris asked Cindy if we need more social workers to handle the referrals. Cindy responded that there is a growing need and we are well beyond capacity, but with the new electronic systems the data will speak. Mike Arnone mentioned that regarding the "Friendly Visitor" program, the Enfield Food Shelf has a person ready to train volunteers to resume calls, but COVID has put the program in limbo right now.

B. Senior Groups

i. Friends of the Senior Center

Marlene provided information to the new members about the Friends group. She mentioned that the group is by invite. It has 10 members who meet on the 2nd Thursday of the month. The group raises funds through individual donations and the weekly Elm Street Bingo. Since its founding over \$400,000 has been raised to fund projects for the Enfield Senior Center that the town does not fund including new dining room chairs, handicapped accessible doors, repairs to the gazebo and many other worthwhile safety projects.

C. Senior Center Focus

Mary Keller explained to the new members that the mission of the Senior Center is to facilitate and host active, healthy, social activities and be a warehouse of information for the senior community. She reported that beginning on Mondays in February and continuing through April 15th, the AARP tax aide program will begin. Choices consulting at the Center and the Library have been completed, but perhaps if desired additional sessions can be held throughout the year to explain the program to interested seniors. Other presentations and educational sessions are welcomed and encouraged. The Center continues to offer congregate lunches through CRT, fitness classes, cards and games and technology classes within COVID guidelines, however, trips will not be considered until Spring if COVID protocols permit. The annual Craft Fair was held on December 4th earning over \$2,600 for Center needs. Since 2003, over \$110,000 has been raised for the Center through events like the Craft Fair. This year there was no Lions Club pancake breakfast accompanying the Craft Fair due to COVID concerns.

VI. New Business

A. Community Builder

Dave Goyette reported that last month, we met with members of Felician Sisters and Community Builders to discuss their project. Since then, Community Builders has withdrawn its original request to the town and plans to regroup with modified plans to present to the town in January. We will continue to follow development with this project as they directly affect senior services.

VII. Announcements

Chairman Dave Goyette announced that it will be time in January to elect new officers.

VIII. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Howard Florian and seconded by Mary Ann Harris. It passed unanimously. Dave Goyette adjourned the meeting at 3:35 pm.

Next Meeting Wednesday, January 12, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. at the Enfield Senior Center.

Respectfully Submitted by Pauline Devino, Secretary

Cc:

Ellen Zappo, Acting Town Manager

Mayor Bob Cressotti, Council Liaison

Cindy Guerreri, Staff Liaison & Director of Social Services

Mary Keller, Enfield Senior Center Manager

Marie Pyznar, Council Liaison

Jennifer Switalski, LMSW, Elderly Services Care Coordinator – Enfield.