

TOWN OF ENFIELD COMMISSION ON AGING
MINUTES FOR WEDNESDAY, April 10, 2024– 2:00 P.M.
DSS, ALCORN SCHOOL, 1010 ENFIELD STREET, LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM

Attendance

Present: Pauline Devino, Alice Egan, Howard Florian, Dave Goyette, Cynthia Guerreri, Mary Ann Harris, Marlene Hoginski, Mary Keller, Enfield Senior Center Manager, Patricia Linehan, Justin Lopez, Elderly Care Services Coordinator, Tim Slade, Kay Tallarita and Will St. George.

Absent (Excused): Mike Arnone, Jr., Bob Cressotti, Council Liaison and Marie Pyznar, Council Liaison and Deputy Mayor.

I. Welcome

Dave Goyette convened the meeting at 2:10 p.m. He announced that as the first order of business we need to appoint a new Chairman of the Commission since he is resigning. Dave reported that Alice Egan has indicated that she would like to assume the Chairman position and that Marlene Hoginski would like to become Vice Chairman. Everyone was delighted with this announcement. Mary Ann Harris made a motion to accept Alice Egan as the new Chairman and Marlene Hoginski as the new Vice Chairman. Will St. George seconded the motion and all approved through a show of hands and with congratulations.

II. Secretary's Report:

Madame Chairman Alice Egan asked if everyone had an opportunity to review the March meeting minutes and if there were any corrections needed. With no corrections needed, Will St. George made a motion to accept the minutes as presented and Marlene Hoginski seconded the motion. All approved through a show of hands.

IV. Treasurer's Report:

Tim Slade provided the treasurer's report for March 2024 and noted that there were two expenses for the month. One was a monthly charge for a Verizon telephone in the amount of \$11.06 for SMHRP use and the other for a monthly Verizon telephone charge for the use of the Choices program. The telephone previously used for the SMHRP project will be returned to the Town since the program is cancelled. Alice Egan asked if there are any corrections needed to the Financial Report. With no corrections needed, Mary Ann Harris made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented and Kay Tallarita seconded. All approved through a show of hands. Tim Slade inquired about the disposition of the SMHRP private donations in the amount of \$10,041.20. Mary Ann Harris responded that she had spoken to John Wilcox the Financial Director, who indicated that these are not Town Funds as they came from private donations. Cindy Guerreri concurred that the intent of these funds was to be used for the SMHRP program and cannot be used to fund any other projects through COA. These donations can be forwarded to any new non-profit program which takes on the function of the old SMHRP program if desired. She indicated that the donations exist in a separate account in the Social Services budget apart from the town funding for SMHRP and can only be used for continuation of this service. If it is desired to move these donations to another town funded COA project, Town Council approval would be needed.

V. Committee Reports

A. SMHR – Senior Minor Repair Program

Various members expressed thoughts about how to move forward after the discontinuation of this program and its impact on the Enfield Senior Community. Mary Ann Harris and Michael Arnone Jr. are co-chairing a SMHRP Study Committee to determine how the program began in 2013 and if there is any way that this invaluable program can continue. Other individuals have been contacted by non-profits to understand how the program operates and how they may be able to assist. Kay Tallarita indicated that Town Councilman John Santanella has had contact from the Enfield Congregational Church since in the past they had a similar program for their parishioners. In regards to the Home Front program, Dave Goyette noted that this program is very specific to large once a year, housing improvements and only open to very low income recipients. Tim Slade and Dave Goyette indicated that they are willing to advise any non-profit who may have an interest, but noted that we should just not hand over donations to that group without fully understanding how they will help.

A. SMHR – Senior Minor Repair Program (continued)

Tim Slade spoke about his discussion with Michelle Puzzo of UR Community Cares about their initiative and how they are having difficulty getting volunteers. With four specific tasks for matching of volunteers with seniors in need, none of the tasks entail the types of repairs that encompass the SMHRP program. Tim indicated that Michelle asked for the names of the volunteers for the discontinued SMHRP program, but Tim said that the volunteers asked that their names not be divulged since these volunteers said that they may not be willing to volunteer with UR Community Cares. Through an email, Deputy Mayor Marie Pynar has indicated that she would like to have a further discussion with UR Community Cares.

B. Symposium

Pat Linehan reported that she is willing to pursue the possibility of scheduling a Fall symposium if there will be funding available to support it. Cindy Guerreri noted that she has requested in the 2024-2025 budget the same funding for COA as was approved for this fiscal year. Pat asked if a sub-committee or work group for the symposium is formed, does it need to follow the 24 hour meeting announcement under FOI regulations. Cindy explained that as long as a work group will function under a standing committee; they would be compliant with FOI regulations which all Boards and Commissions must follow.

C. Senior Living TV Program

Pat Linehan reported that this month there was an excellent taping with Fire Chief Deskis. Regarding future tapings, ideas include financing for funeral planning, cost of dental care for seniors and Dr. Epstein is still interested in presenting a program on eye care for seniors, however, he needs to be scheduled about 3 months out. Pat reiterated that there a number of professionals willing to participate, however, scheduling continues to be a problem since many are not available when the tapings need to occur. Mary Keller suggested that Audrey Cole of the West Central Agency on Aging be invited to interview to discuss the problem of fraud investigation as it affects seniors. Tim Slade mentioned that two volunteers will not be available for the May 1st taping so could Pat check with Mark Warnock of COX about moving the taping to April 30th or May 2nd.

D. Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Kay Tallarita reported that the program continues to grow. She mentioned that she is very appreciative to Cindy Guerreri who recently gave a wonderful presentation with great information. Kay also

mentioned that a speaker from UCONN Health discussed adoption assistance to those raising adoptive children. Of those grandparents participating, 5 of the 20 attending chose to speak with UCONN. Kay was pleased to hear that there is still a little money left in this program's budget to offer a meal during one of the meetings especially since there is a magician performing at the end of April.

E. Triad

Marlene Hoginski reported that the Triad group will be hosting a family fire safety program over the school vacation with the Enfield Fire Department at the Phoenix Avenue Firehouse on April 11th from 11 a.m. to

1:00 p.m. with refreshments. On April 26th the Friends of the Enfield Senior Center will be presenting a Cake Social at 1:30 p.m. with entertainment. On June 7th the annual Police Picnic will be held for Enfield residents only. The Elderly Brothers band will be performing for the picnic. Enfield residents will have to pick up tickets at the Police Station with proper ID. The next meeting of the Triad group will be on May 7th.

F. Choices

Will St. George reported that he received recent Counselor Training from Medicare, the ACT and advocacy organizations like the Center for Medicare Advocacy (CMA) which focus on abuses such as Medicare Fraud, Marketing Violations by Advantage Plans and Scams. He stated that Choices counseling in Enfield has witnessed cases of marking violations of which the most egregious can be initiated by phone, a door knock or by email. The Sister program to Medicare Choices is SMP (the Senior Medicare Patrol) whose mission is to fight Medicare fraud and abuses with public outreach/education and victim counseling. Will mentioned that Audrey Cole of the West Central Agency on Aging will be presenting a program at the Enfield Senior Center on June 13th at 1:30 p.m. on Medicare fraud investigation. He also noted that increasing Advantage Plan membership has put price pressure on Original Medicare, particularly for Medicare Supplemental (Medigap) plan premiums. Residents are coming in for counseling on this issue.

G. Senior Tax Relief

Mary Keller reported that 192 applications for the tax relief program have been delivered to the Town for final approval; only 1 application was denied since the applicant was not old enough to qualify for the program. Mary Keller sent an email to each applicant indicating that their application is being reviewed by the Tax Assessor. For this year, the Town has lifted the limits and all applications will be honored as long as they meet program qualifications. If approved a credit annotation will appear on an applicant's tax bill. Mary also mentioned that there has been a change in the Tax Department with split responsibility between the Tax Office and the Tax Assessor's Office.

H. AARP/VITA Tax Programs

Mary Ann Harris reported that over 500 tax returns have been processed for clients with about 380 AARP returns at the Senior Center and the remainder through VITA at Asnuntuck with the help of two uptake volunteers at the Senior Center and one volunteer at Asnuntuck. This year a global town ID was used for interchangeable sites making it easier for a client to get serviced at either location.

V. Old Business

A. Social Services Update

Cindy Guerrieri reported that a new secretary, Lisa Strom, is replacing Melissa Torres-Newman. Lisa has many years of secretarial service to the Town of Enfield and will be a welcomed addition to the Social Services staff in her assistance to the Commission on Aging. She also reported that funding has been restored and is fully operational for the CRT Lunch programs at the Senior Center and at Mark Twain. This is a welcomed relief since it would have meant cuts to the days lunches could be served and to the number of recipients eligible. Cindy also mentioned that the Hartford Transit System has a new initiative, the Micro Transit Service which is a ride sharing option similar to Uber. Like Uber, a rider calls and makes an appointment to be transported to a location within Enfield that generally follows the routes and hours of Magic Carpet, but a little bit farther into East Windsor. This service is being implemented through a multi-year grant. A presentation of this program is being offered today at the Library and will also be offered at Mark Twain. Cindy will be creating a website listing various transportation options in town.

B. Friends of the Senior Center

Marlene Hoginski reported that on April 2nd, a plaque was presented to Lena Bancroft in appreciation for her generous support of the Senior Center through donations from the Enfield Senior Citizen's weekly Bingo. On April 26th, the Friends will be sponsoring a Cake Social at 1:30 p.m. and on May 10th for Movie Day, snacks and an old 1938 movie called Bringing Up Baby will be shown. Plans are underway for the June 7th annual Police Picnic which will be open to Enfield residents only.

C. Senior Center Focus

Mary Keller reported that as of April 15th, funding for the CRT Lunch program has been restored with anticipated continuation through September, however, there has been planning with town agencies should the need arise to support this program in the event of lack of funding. She also reported that a Garden Committee is being formed to maintain the ESC Community Garden with the help of a Master Gardner from UCONN. The food grown in this garden is donated to the Enfield Food Shelf. A website is being created for tasks needed to maintain the garden and volunteers have offered to sign up to build birdhouses, bat housed and maintain the pollinator garden. The Garden Committee is delighted that they have received a grant from Home Depot to purchase a soaker hose to provide continuous crop watering in the garden. In celebration of Earth Day on April 22nd, Taylor the Project Coordinator, will be conducting a nature walk throughout the Center's property. Mary was also pleased to report that about 20 men and women spontaneously formed bocce teams for a competition. When asked about progress on finding a resource to provide Footcare at the Center, Mary responded that it has been difficult since the prices quoted are as much as \$55.00 per person with the Center having to guarantee a minimum of \$110.00 per session and if no one signs up the Center is liable to pay for the services regardless. Work continues to find a solution.

C. Senior Center Focus (continued)

Mary Keller also reported that a representative from JFS recently provided information on their Memory Lane TV and Care at Home by JF programs for seniors. This information will be made available at the Center.

VI. New Business

A. COA Initiatives

Pat Linehan made a motion to acknowledge the leadership and dedication by former COA Chairman Dave Goyette who has resigned. The motion was seconded by Will St. George and approved by all with gratitude and applause.

B. Town Council Report

Marie Pyznar and Bob Cressotti were absent so there was no report.

VII. Announcements

Tim Slade asked if Justin Lopez could kindly email again the link for the Google Drive established to maintain COA documentation.

VIII. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Mary Ann Harris and seconded by Howard Florian. It passed unanimously and Alice Egan adjourned the meeting at 4:15 p.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 8, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. at the DSS Alcorn School Large Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted by Pauline Devino, Secretary

Cc:
Ken Nelson, Mayor
Bob Cressotti, Council Liaison
Cindy Guerreri, Staff Liaison & Director of Social Services
Mary Keller, Enfield Senior Center Manager
Marie Pyznar, Council Liaison
Christopher Bromson, Town Manager

