

**TOWN OF ENFIELD COMMISSION ON AGING
MINUTES FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2024 – 2:00 P.M.
DSS, ALCORN SCHOOL, 1010 ENFIELD STREET**

Attendance

Present: Pauline Devino, Howard Florian, Dave Goyette, Cynthia Guerrerri, Staff Liaison, Marlene Hoginski, Justin Lopez, Elderly Care Services Coordinator, Marie Pynzar, Council Liaison, Tim Slade, Kay Tallarita and Will. St. George.

Absent (Excused): Mike Arnone Jr., Mayor Bob Cressotti, Council Liaison, Alice Egan, Mary Ann Harris, Mary Keller, Enfield Senior Center Manager and Patricia Linehan.

I. Welcome

In Chairman Alice Egan's absence, Vice Chairman, Marlene Hoginski opened the meeting at 2:05 p.m. and welcomed everyone including guests, Michelle Puzzo of U Community Cares, and Councilman John Santanello. Marie Pynzar explained that Michelle Puzzo was invited to explain the U Community Cares program and see if U Community Cares can help to assist Enfield seniors affected by the cancellation of the Senior Minor Repair program. Michelle explained how U Community Cares received a grant from the Town of Enfield to sign up volunteers and market the program to older adults and the disabled. She explained the four categories from which volunteers assist those in need including companionship, housework, transportation and yardwork. Dave Goyette explained to Michelle how SMRP had worked over the last ten years. He and Tim Slade spoke about how volunteers worked in pairs to address the minor repairs (anything that does not require a license) requested and performed jobs as assigned. They spoke about the management process from the request being placed by phone to the number listed with Social Services through the completion process. When asked, Michelle confirmed that volunteers are vetted under this program and are insured for liability under the U Community Cares insurance. After a lengthy discussion about the \$5,000 to about \$7,500 of tools, supplies and other resources needed to complete the minor repairs requested it became apparent that the current U Community Cares program volunteer categories do not meet the criteria for the discontinued SMR program so it was asked if another category can be added to better address the services needed. Michelle replied that this can be done. John Santanello explained that he had interest from a local church in possibly being able to assist with staff and willing to store tools for a new program. Michelle explained that U Community Cares cannot buy the tools, but could be a hub for phone number requests and match requests with volunteers. Cindy Guerrerri explained that Social Service has been educating seniors requesting minor repair services with the U Community Cares program as a vehicle to connect requestors with volunteers. Michelle said that her program has a willingness to partner with churches to store the tools which they might acquire and provide a hub for the management of requests. Marie Pynzar and John Santanello explained that their interest in promoting this program is to match senior requests with volunteers who can continue to provide assistance to the seniors and disabled previously helped through the SMRP program which has been cancelled. Many commented on how the program requires a number of available volunteers, management of requests from their inception through completion, specific tools and supplies and the timely matching of volunteers with requests (requests cannot wait until a volunteer is found). John Santanello suggested that perhaps Boy Scout troops or others requiring community service can become volunteers. Michelle Puzzo confirmed that those 15 years or older with supervision can volunteer. After over an hour of discussion and concern for those who need services provided by the summer, it was agreed to have U Community Cares advertise for volunteers to assist specifically for air conditioner installations by communication through the Senior Center newsletter, Social Service and other social media. Further discussion with churches will continue so that the mechanism for running a non-Town sponsored minor repair service to older adults and the disabled can continue, however, Dave Goyette and Tim Slade who initiated and managed the SMRP program for over 10 years indicated that they will not be participating in the management of a new program. The issue of tool purchase remains unresolved.

II. Secretary's Report:

Marlene Hoginski asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. Kay Tallarita asked for a clarification of the verbiage to "she is very appreciative to Cindy Guerreri who recently gave a wonderful presentation to the Women's Club of Enfield". With no further corrections needed, Dave Goyette made a motion to accept the minutes with the correction noted and Kay Tallarita seconded. The motion was carried (7,0,4).

III. Treasurer's Report:

Tim Slade provided the treasurer's report. He noted that with the continued budget freeze, the only expense incurred was \$11.08 for Verizon phone service for the Choices program. He also reminded Kay Tallarita that only \$58.75 remains on the purchase order for Danny's Pizza for the Grandparents program. Kay Tallarita made a motion to accept the report as submitted and Howard Florian seconded. All approved with a show of hands.

IV. Committee Reports

A. SMHR - Senior Minor Home Repair Program – Study Committee

Due to the absence of Mary Ann Harris and Mike Arnone, there was no report, however, Mike Arnone asked that his letter be included as an attachment.

B. Symposium Work Group

Pat Linehan was absent so there was no report this month.

C. Senior Living TV Program

In Pat Linehan's absence, Dave Goyette and Tim Slade reported that there were two 15 minute tapings with Maya Mathews of Loaves and Fishes, and the Ex Director of the Trolley Museum with a trolley volunteer. Mary Keller, Manager of the Enfield Senior Center and Taylor Moreno, Enfield Senior Center Program Coordinator were taped for 30 minutes. Dave Goyette reported that the next show will tentatively be on June 5th and that Mike Helechu of Cox Communications is working on scheduling. The plan is to have 2 more shows then end production until September. Dave also remarked that the next production meeting will be on May 22nd.

D. Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Kay Tallarita reported that the program is going well with some new participants. She remarked that the recent magician show was wonderful with the children thoroughly enjoying the magician's stunts and that she would highly recommend this magician for performances. Kay again extended her appreciation to Amy Morales and Angelica for their professional and caring participation with the program. When reminded that she only has \$58.75 remaining on the purchase order for Danny's Pizza, she replied that perhaps she can order some cookies for the next meeting.

IV. Committee Reports

E. Triad

Marlene Hoginski reported that the Fire Safety program on April 11th went well with the children meeting with the firemen 1-on-1 and getting to explore the firehouse and equipment. She noted that more programs are coming.

F. Choices

Will St. George reported that things are slow with the Choices program since the bulk of requests come during the months of October to December consequently, he is counseling only two days a week. He mentioned that fraud is a serious problem for seniors, however, it frequently goes unreported, due to the reluctance of victims to report the fraud. Will suggested that perhaps a type of citizenship award could be awarded to encourage victims to come forward.

G. VITA/AARP Tax Program

Mary Ann Harris was absent so there was no report.

H. Senior Tax Relief

Marlene Hoginski asked Council Liaison Marie Pyznar if there has been discussion about extending the program to next year since a number of senior volunteers have been inquiring. Marie replied that she has not heard anything from the Town Council. Marlene said that she will advise seniors to keep track of their volunteer hours should the program be repeated for the upcoming year.

V. Old Business

A. Social Services Update

Cindy Guerrieri reported that on May 15th the grant was finalized for the Dial-A-Ride program and that work continues for the NCAAA Grant. She mentioned that she is still looking for someone from the Commission to work on the Enfield Coalition Leadership Group which meets monthly on the last Friday of the month. Commissioner Will St. George said he would consider representing after getting some additional information. Justin Lopez reported that he attended a meeting of the Age Well Collaborative which has its own program for elaborating community conversation and by being “politically correct” regarding senior issues. When asked about the Gatekeeper program, Justin indicated that Gatekeeper training is being offered, but not scheduled.

B. Friends of the Senior Center

Marlene Hoginski reported that the annual Police Picnic will be held on June 7th from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Enfield Senior Center to Enfield residents only. Tickets are required, but as yet it has not been determined where the tickets will be obtained. A concert by The Elderly Brothers will be held during the picnic.

C. Senior Center Focus

In Mary Keller’s absence, Marlene Hoginski reported that work continues on the planning for a week of Senior Olympic games to celebrate the Senior Center’s 21th anniversary. During the week there will be Senior Lawn Games including men and women’s bocce and corn hole tournaments, jeopardy contests and opportunities to take free exercise classes. The celebration week begins on June 3rd through June 7th.

VI. New Business

A. COA Initiatives

There are no new initiatives to report due to lack of a budget.

VII. Announcements

Dave Goyette asked Council Liaison Marie Pyznar if she could report on anything that is happening with the Town Council. Marie began by stating that a final budget for the upcoming budget year needs to be approved by May 20, 2024.

VIII. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Dave Goyette and seconded by Howard Florian. It passed unanimously and Marlene Hoginski adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

Next Meeting Wednesday, July 10, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. at the DSS Alcorn School.

Respectfully Submitted by Pauline Devino, Secretary

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