

**TOWN OF ENFIELD COMMISSION ON AGING  
MINUTES FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 2023 – 2:00 P.M.  
DSS, ALCORN SCHOOL, 1010 ENFIELD STREET**

**Attendance**

**Present:** Mike Arnone Jr., Pauline Devino, Alice Egan, Howard Florian, Dave Goyette, Cynthia Guerreri, Staff Liaison, Marlene Hoginski, Mary Ann Harris, Justin Lopez, Elderly Care Services Coordinator, Marie Pyznar, Council Liaison, Tim Slade, Kay Tallarita and Will. St. George.

**Absent (Excused):** Mayor Bob Cressotti, Council Liaison, Mary Keller, Enfield Senior Center Manager and Patricia Linehan.

**I. Welcome**

David Goyette opened the meeting at 2:05 p.m. and welcomed everyone. He again expressed his appreciation to the commissioners and other participants in their efforts to make things better for seniors in our community.

**II. Secretary's Report:**

Dave Goyette asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. With no corrections needed, Will St. George made a motion to accept the minutes as presented and Marlene Hoginski seconded. The motion was carried (10,1,0).

**III. Treasurer's Report:**

Tim Slade provided the treasurer's report. He noted that expenses for pens and magnets reduced the Missions and Outreach account to \$775.00. With no further questions or discussion about the report, Marlene Hoginski made a motion to approve it and Howard Florian seconded. The motion passed through a show of hands.

**IV. Committee Reports**

**A. SMHR - Senior Minor Home Repair Program**

Tim Slade reported that since the beginning of this year's program on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 27 repairs for 13 residents have been completed. He indicated that the team is handling 2 requests per day per person. A new volunteer is being added who is retired from DPW and has ambulance and dispatcher experience. After a background check, two shirts (cost of \$75-\$80) and a badge will be ordered for him. Tim noted that a generous donation in the amount of \$150 was received from the Women's Club. With this program in its 10<sup>th</sup> year of service, Tim Slade again reiterated his appreciation to the Town for its generous support and appreciation for resident donations. Dave Goyette reported that he spoke to the eligible volunteers about the Tax Relief program and the necessity to keep track of volunteer hours.

**B. Symposium**

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

**C. Senior Living TV Program**

In Pat Linehan's absence, Dave Goyette reported that as of the 20<sup>th</sup> of April, taping will be switched from Tuesdays to Wednesdays to better accommodate Tim Slade's SMHRP schedule. Volunteers would like to continue taping 2 shows per month. When asked about whether Dr. Martha McLeod will continue to interview, Dave Goyette commented that she is experiencing a medical issue so at the last taping Mike Helechu conducted the interview.

#### **D. Grandparents Raising Grandchildren**

Kay Tallarita reported that there are some new changes to the program and provided a document explaining what will be happening. Cindy Guerrerri assisted by noting that changes are being made to better identify what are the needs of the group and what staff is needed to provide better confidentiality to participants. She explained that parts of this program are being morphed into a closed support group with another portion becoming a resource meeting. Social Worker staff are being reassigned for Angelica to run the support group and Amy Morales from the Family Resource Center running informational resource meetings which will be open to all grandparents and those who want to attend every other month. Cindy commented that the longevity of the members is acknowledgeable and hopes that with this change it remains as good as it has been. Kay commented that fundraising will continue through the group and that the Women's Club will continue to offer support only, not fundraising assistance.

#### **E. Triad**

Marlene Hoginski reported that another Safety Day is being planned for September 20<sup>th</sup>. There will be presentations and informational sessions. More information to follow.

#### **F. Choices**

Will St. George reported that things are quieting down with fewer requests. He discussed a case that he escalated which involved an individual who was recently released from incarceration. Will noted that Medicare has created a special exemption for individuals on Medicare who are incarcerated. Cindy Guerrerri commented that this was great advocacy and Kay Tallarita complimented Will on his great work. Jason Lopez reported that not much is happening with Medicare, but a lot with Medicaid due to changing wording and broader definitions. He discussed changes in the transportation allowance and long term care coverage.

#### **G. VITA/AARP**

Mary Ann Harris reported that 334 returns have been completed through the AARP tax preparation program at the Senior Center which has ended. To date, 154 VITA returns have been completed with this Saturday being the last day for VITA tax preparation. She commented that the tax preparation staffs at each site this year have been wonderful. Mary Ann noted that recently Representative Joe Courtney visited the VITA preparation site. She discussed with Mr. Courtney the necessity to increase local IRS staff which was reduced from 3 to 2 agents. With new Federal approval of 87,000 new IRS jobs, it is hoped that the one reduced position will be restored. Mary Ann noted that one of the changes to State taxes this year and going forward, is the provision that most pensions are no longer taxable; this has amounted to some tax payers receiving refunds although most refunds this year were lower over returns for 2020-2021.

#### **H. SENIOR TAX RELIEF PROGRAM**

Dave Goyette reported that tomorrow evening beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Senior Center, the Town Manager and members of the Senior Tax Relief Committee will be discussing the Senior Tax Relief program and answering questions from residents about eligibility and where to obtain application forms for participation. This program is being modeled after similar volunteer programs in towns like Manchester and Bristol. For this first year about 62 qualified volunteers will be eligible to receive a property tax credit of \$400 from a fund of \$26,000.

## **V. Old Business**

### **A. Social Services Update**

Cindy Guerreri reported that the department has been very busy with hiring and training. There have been increases in JRB (Juvenile Review Board) services. When asked about Warming Center referrals, Cindy responded that work continues with the homeless particularly with requests for permanent housing assistance. Homeless clients are reminded to contact 211 for temporary housing assistance since there are no longer COVID Federal funds available for this purpose.

### **B. Friends of the Senior Center**

Marlene Hoginski reported that recently the Friends purchased 100 new chairs for the Center and a new NuStep machine for the Fitness Center. Two new benches will be purchased for use at the new bocce court; one is being donated anonymously. She noted that most of the money for these purchases comes from the Enfield Senior Citizen's Association Bingo along with new fundraising through private donations. Marlene noted that there will be a Cornhole competition on Friday, April 16<sup>th</sup> with the Friends participating.

### **C. Senior Center Focus**

In Mary Keller's absence, Marlene Hoginski reported that work continues on the planning for the Senior Center's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration during the week of June 5<sup>th</sup> through June 9<sup>th</sup> with tours, free classes, games, a volunteer recognition program, a picnic and two concerts.

## **VI. New Business**

### **A. COA Sponsorship for the Senior Center 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

Dave Goyette reported that there has been discussion about COA sponsoring a concert for the anniversary celebration. He explained that the options are payment for the afternoon picnic band: Rock Solid Alibi at a cost of \$750 or the Friday evening band: Shaded Soul Band for a cost of \$1,800. After some discussion about how to fund, Marlene Hoginski made a motion to sponsor the evening band at a cost of \$1,800 and Will St. George seconded the motion. The motion was approved by nine members with one member abstaining. Dave Goyette asked Cindy Guerreri about the procedure for securing a check for payment of the band on the performing night. She indicated that the standard requisition process would be used as soon as the band is added to the approved vendor list. Regarding payment for the concert, the COA budget was reviewed for transfer possibilities. Treasurer Tim Slade reminded the members that the Town Council does not care how internal budgeting is conducted just that the approved budget is not exceeded. With this in mind, Mary Ann Harris made a motion to transfer \$726 from the Triad budget and \$300 from the Senior Living budget to the Missions and Outreach budget of \$774 for a total of \$1,800 to pay for the band. The motion was seconded by Marlene Hoginski and approved by nine members with one member abstaining.

## **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 she hopes that Town Council members can come together to find a solution to the growing problem of increased tax assessment which is making some taxpayers very angry and leading to the posting of embarrassing signs around town critical of town government. She explained that there is an investigation underway into how property taxes were recently assessed and she noted that frankly the Town Council members were not privy to the assessment procedures used. On another note, Marie reported that there is bipartisan discussion about returning to the Kindergarten through Fifth Grade model for elementary schools in town and an evaluation of the aging structure of many of the schools which are as old as 65 years. Marie also commented that she is serving on the DEI committee and hopes that its mission will come to be protective of all classes of people regardless of race, sex, disability or senior status.

### **VIII. Adjournment**

Before adjourning, Marlene Hoginski asked if there can be some consideration to conducting Gateway training for this committee and if there can be further explanation of the “My Hello” program. With no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Marlene Hoginski; and seconded Howard Florian. It passed unanimously and Dave Goyette adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

**Next Meeting** Wednesday, May 10, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. at the DSS Alcorn School.

Respectfully Submitted by Pauline Devino, Secretary

Cc:

Mayor Bob Cressotti, Council Liaison

Cindy Guerreri, Staff Liaison & Director of Social Services

Mary Keller, Enfield Senior Center Manager

Marie Pyznar, Council Liaison

Ellen Zoppo-Sassu, Town Manager