

**TOWN OF ENFIELD COMMISSION ON AGING  
MINUTES FOR WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 2022 – 2:00 P.M.  
DSS, ALCORN SCHOOL, 1010 ENFIELD STREET**

**Attendance**

**Present:** Mike Arnone Jr., Pauline Devino, Alice Egan; Cynthia Guerreri, Staff Liaison; Dave Goyette, Marlene Hoginski, Priscilla Linehan, Justin Lopez, Elderly Care Services Coordinator, Tim Slade and Kay Tallarita.

**Absent (Excused):** Howard Florian, Mary Ann Harris and Will St. George.

**Guests:** Heather Benyak, Town of Enfield Family Resource Center Social Worker; Mayor Bob Cressotti, Council Liaison; Mary Keller, Senior Center Manager; Amy Morales, Town of Enfield Child, Youth and Family Operations Manager and Marie Pyznar, Council Liaison.

**I. Welcome**

David Goyette opened the meeting at 2:10 p.m. and introduced guests Heather Benyak, Amy Morales and Mayor Bob Cressotti.

Mayor Cressotti commented that his reason for coming was to extend an invitation to COA members to join a 5 member Senior Tax Credit Committee being formed to help develop a Tax Relief Program for Enfield Seniors and for those volunteering in non-profit organizations. He noted that this initiative is in the planning stage and will follow all State guidelines using State and Town funds in the amount of \$600,000 to fund the program. He indicated that the town of Bristol and some other towns have similar programs from which this program can be modeled. Pat Linehan asked if this is a long term commitment. Mayor Cressotti responded that it would be a one year commitment. Mayor Cressotti commented that the Town Council has passed a resolution to move forward with this program and that the new committee will be working with the DSS department and with seniors on the committee for decision making. Dave Goyette, Marlene Hoginski and Kay Tallarita expressed an interest in volunteering; the Mayor said that if anyone else may be interested to please call him or send an email.

**II. Secretary's Report:**

Dave Goyette asked if there were any corrections to the minutes; with none needed Marlene Hoginski made a motion to accept and Tim Slade seconded the motion. The motion passed (08,0,0).

**III. Treasurer's Report:**

In reviewing the financial report, Tim Slade commented that some recent SMHRP purchases have not as yet been posted to the remaining balance of \$364.57. For the Symposium budget, Pat Linehan noted that she will need to spend part of the remaining \$200 in the budget for postage expenses. Funds for the Isolated Seniors program in the amount of \$1,000 were transferred to the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren program leaving a zero balance. Funds in the amount of \$675.25 will be used for the purchase of additional vaccine sleeves from the Mission and Outreach budget and two invoices in the amount of \$1,160.00 for the File of Life magnets will leave a balance of \$280.00 in the Triad budget. Pat Linehan made a motion to accept the report as presented and Marlene Hoginski seconded. The motion passed (08,0,0).

**IV. Committee Reports**

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

Tim Slade reported that as of April 5th, 64 residences have been visited with a total of 110 tasks completed with one request completed by Telecom. All completed jobs are referred to Justin Lopez for follow up. The schedule is full through July 19, 2022 with no others scheduled until September. Tim noted that donations in the amount of \$445.00 have been made to the SMHRP program. He related how one task was troubleshooted for a running toilet over the phone. Tim acknowledged that outstanding scheduling and miscellaneous support continues to be received from Melissa Torres-Newman of DSS.

## **B. Symposium**

Pat Linehan reported that the committee has decided to present the topic of mental health in older adults which had been fully prepared in 2019, but not presented due to COVID. The same speakers will be invited to present from 9 am to 12 p.m. with a continental breakfast served and breakout sessions. She indicated that the committee is trying to confirm an October 20<sup>th</sup> date using the Asnuntuck facilities. In June, a Save the Date mailing will be made. Pat commented that Bill Kiner has assumed the task of planning the catering. Members of the Symposium committee will be meeting on June 27<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. for further planning.

## **C. Senior Living TV Program**

Pat Linehan reported that the program is currently in a hiatus due to the death of a family member of COX representative Mike Warnoc. When the program resumes, a representative from All American Assisted Living will be interviewed regarding their facilities including Adult Day Care. Mary Keller commented that two representatives: Jamie and Macy from All American have been very helpful in presenting and supporting programs at the Senior Center.

## **D. Grandparents Raising Grandchildren**

Guests Amy Morales and Heather Benyak of DSS thanked the COA for their generous donation of \$1,000 toward the program. They stated that the money will be used for various fun summer activities. Dave Goyette asked them to let us know in the Fall how the money was used. Amy spoke about the program. She noted that there are approximately 165 grandparents raising grandchildren from families where parents are struggling with issues like substance abuse, domestic violence/child abuse, incarceration and the death of a parent. With many of the children traumatized, challenges to the grandparents include lifestyle changes, financial hardships, health concerns, maintaining relationships with adult children and legal issues. Amy discussed how the program began in 2005 through the efforts of Kay Tallarita and seniors who took care of the kids and cooked for the families and has evolved into a monthly support group with assistance from town social services, public schools, COA, NCAA on Aging and the Woman's Club of Enfield. Heather explained that the group meets monthly on the first Monday of each month often with speakers and with linkage to outside support services which provide donations for recreational activities, summer camps and family activities and with support, love and humor from the participants. Heather is always checking in on families and is a liaison to schools; managing technology pieces if necessary. Kay Tallarita commented that positive things come from the program and that it is fortunate that the Town provides support from marvelous social workers to manage the program. Few towns have this arrangement. She noted that it was difficult to start the program and continues to be a challenge to outreach to families in need. When the State Commissioner of Social Services was a recent guest at one of the meetings, she commented on how impressed she was with Enfield's current program.

Marie Pyznar explained that she has been asked to distribute about 1,600 each of free tickets to non-profit groups for Premier Lacrosse games at Foxboro stadium and in Fairfield CT on July 16<sup>th</sup>. Tickets will be given to Heather for distribution. She commented that this might be a fun field trip for the Grandparents group. Tickets will also be distributed to the Library and Senior Center.

## **E. Triad**

Marlene Hoginski explained that Triad sponsored a presentation by UCONN Health concerning the Connecticut Poison Control Center. During the presentation Files of Life and Important town phone number magnets were distributed along with safety sheets and Blue Books. The presenter discussed how to receive a free medication lock box. Friends of the Senior Center provided refreshments. Marlene indicated that there were approximately 300 people in attendance for the Policemen's Picnic on June 3<sup>rd</sup> and that the weather was perfect, the food and band were good and that the police did a great job. Enfield seniors were offered safety sheets, Blue Books and File of Life/Phone Number magnets and cookies. The group will meet again in July with Macy from All American serving as a member.

## **F. Choices**

Will St. George was absent so there was no report.

## **V. Old Business**

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

Justin Lopez stated that there is no update on the grant approval as yet, however, there is optimism. He indicated that he is currently attending training sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays for Choices Counseling and that other social workers are helping with his responsibilities as he trains.

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

Marlene Hoginski reported that a Friends meeting will be held tomorrow to discuss current projects. The bocce court build may be put on hold due to the loss of summer help building and maintenance staff due to budget cuts, however, in its place cornholes have been ordered for play.

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

Mary Keller reported that Choices counseling continues on Monday evenings and Friday morning by Will St. George. The focus for play this summer will be on Cornhole. She indicated that if the requested new sound system is approved in the Capital budget, movement on this initiative will be immediate. Mary also commented that we have applied for accreditation of the senior center. There will be a self-evaluation portion by Thanksgiving until March to review. The COA in addition to others will be contacted to help with the accreditation. Of the 119 senior centers in CT, only 6 are meeting National Standards. We are in the Top 10.

## **VI. New Business**

### **A. COA Initiatives**

Dave Goyette indicated that discussion of the initiatives is postponed at this time.

### **B. Business Spending Plan for 2022-2023**

Dave Goyette indicated that discussion of the initiatives is postponed at this time.

## **VII. Announcements**

Dave Goyette announced that on June 19<sup>th</sup> from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. there will be a Juneteenth Celebration on the Town Green. He also commented that he has been advised that there have been a number of seniors being served at daily Loaves and Fishes meals. Kay Tallarita commented that perhaps we should try to investigate if there are other issues for seniors and work with Maya Mathews to evaluate. Marlene Hoginski asked if anyone might be interested in sponsoring for the Wreaths Across America annual event which places wreaths on the graves of service men and women. She noted that we are 300 wreaths short for graves at St. Patrick's cemetery.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Marlene Hoginski and Mike Arnone Jr. It passed unanimously. Dave Goyette adjourned the meeting at 3:25 pm.

**Next Meeting** Wednesday, July 13, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. at the DSS Alcorn School.

Respectfully Submitted by Pauline Devino, Secretary

Cc:

Ellen Zappo, 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

