

**TOWN OF ENFIELD COMMISSION ON AGING
MINUTES FOR WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2022 – 2:00 P.M.
DSS, ALCORN SCHOOL, 1010 ENFIELD STREET**

Attendance

Present: Mike Arnone Jr., Mayor Bob Cressotti, Council Liaison, Pauline Devino, Alice Egan, Howard Florian, Dave Goyette, Cynthia Guerrieri, Staff Liaison, Mary Ann Harris, Marlene Hoginski, Priscilla Linehan, Justin Lopez, Elderly Care Services Coordinator, Marie Pyznar, Council Liaison, Tim Slade and Kay Tallarita.

Absent (Excused): Mary Keller, Enfield Senior Center Manager. and Will St. George. Guest: Ellen Zappo-Sasso, Town Manager

I. Welcome

David Goyette opened the meeting at 2:05 p.m. and welcomed Ellen Zappo-Sasso, Enfield Town Manager to the meeting.

II. Secretary's Report:

Dave Goyette asked if there were any corrections to the minutes; Marlene Hoginski asked for a correction to the date of the Health/Wellness event reported under Triad from April 5, 2023 to April 1, 2023. With this correction to be made, Mary Ann Harris made a motion to accept them and Marlene Hoginski seconded. The motion was carried (11,01,00).

III. Treasurer's Report:

Tim Slade provided the treasurer's report and mentioned that this was a good month for donations. He explained the expenses for the Symposium, the Triad Senior Safety Day and for food for the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren program. With no corrections needed to the report, Marlene Hoginski made a motion to approve it and Mary Ann Harris seconded. The motion passed through a show of hands.

IV. Committee Reports

1. SMHR - Senior Minor Home Repair Program

Tim Slade reported that since the start of the program on April 5th through November 1st, 248 tasks were completed by 8 volunteers for 160 residences. 44 of the tasks were for the removal of air conditioners. There were 12 residents on a wait list of which 9 were addressed. Tim reported that he will be planning a recognition breakfast for the SMHR volunteers and invited the Mayor to attend. Mayor Bob Cressotti commented that after about a year, finally he and Town Manager, Ellen Zappo-Sasso have been successful in finding available space with keycard access for the program's equipment and volunteers. Dave Goyette and Tim Slade thanked them for their efforts and said that they will be evaluating the new space which seems to offer twice the area currently being used. Dave Goyette extended a thank you to Tim and the volunteers for their efforts. Tim said that we will start up again in March or April depending on the weather for the eleventh year of this program.

2. Symposium

Pat Linehan reported that 24 guests were in attendance for this year's Symposium on Mental Health and Seniors which is the 8th presented by COA. She said that two of the speakers said that they were wowed at the great COA that we have. Pat noted that we had excellent speakers from Social Service including Cindy, Justin and Hillary who presented material on the Gatekeeper program and an excellent speaker from NAMI. Harold Grimes from the National Alliance of Veterans was not able to attend due to COVID and was missed. She reported that the evaluations were excellent indicating being impressed with the material presented and social networking enabled through the common experiences of the participants. Pat indicated that the facility was great, the tech support excellent, the resource table good and the food was fine, but could have been better. For the next steps, Pat noted that we need to thank the participants and meet to determine how to implement the ideas presented by the focus groups. She said that Bill Kiner will write up a press release. Dave Goyette thanked Pat for a great job in planning this excellent event. She replied that it takes a team of which Dave Goyette, Michael Arnone, Jr., Howard Florian and Bill Kiner were instrumental to its success.

3. Senior Living TV Program

Pat Linehan reported that the last taping for this year has been completed with work starting again in January with an interview with ophthalmologist, Dr. Andrew Epstein of North Central Connecticut Eye Associates regarding cataracts. Once taping resumes more volunteers will be needed to help with production since there are a minimum of volunteers at this time. Two groups of volunteers would be helpful for coverage.

4. Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Kay indicated that Heather Benyak, who has been invaluable to the program is leaving, but Cindy Guerreri has assured that there will be a replacement. New brochures are ready and will be distributed throughout town. In addition, advertisement has been placed in bulletins for the four Catholic churches in town; there have been several responses from the advertisement.

5. Triad

Marlene Hoginski reported that the Triad group will not be meeting again until January 2023 when they will begin planning for the next Senior Wellness program on April 1st.

6. Choices

Will St. George was absent so there was no report on CHOICES, however, Justin Lopez reported that a lot of people have been calling Will for assistance with making a choice by the end of enrollment on December 7th.

7. Holiday Nursing Home Project

Alice Egan indicated that she plans to begin preparations for this program next week by obtaining a Wish List from St. Joseph's Residence and ideas for some small gifts from staff at Parkway. She hopes that she will again this year be able to use the same credit card for purchases.

V. Old Business

A. Social Services Update

Cindy Guerreri reported that there is a posting for the position vacated by Heather Benyak who is taking a position as a social worker at Prudence Crandall school. She also indicated that in planning for the addition at the Public Safety complex, space is being allocated for a training area for Social Service, Police and EMS which could provide an opportunity for Gatekeeper training. Justin Lopez reported that he met with some people from Oregon to discuss approaches to the Gatekeeper program. Once developed, Justin will work with the Health Department to set up the program. He also discussed how many clients are having landlord problems and are looking for housing. Repair problems are being referred to the Building Department to hold landlords to code. Social Service is trying to help people with quality of life issues post COVID with issues such as raised rents which is a Statewide problem.

B. Friends of the Senior Center

Marlene Hoginski reported that there is a meeting tomorrow to discuss what is needed at the Senior Center. Mary Keller is requesting 8 new chairs for the Technology Room and a new treadmill and NuStep machine. She also mentioned that in 2023 the Senior Center will be celebrating 20 years since it was built. At that time, Alice Egan was a Liaison and Marlene Hoginski was on the Building Committee.

C. Senior Center Focus

Mary Keller was absent so there was no report as Mary continues to work on Accreditation details.

VI. New Business

Cindy Guerreri explained that she has a new resource available to help coordinate and connect people to non-profits for programs such as the holiday ones. This new initiative will help to keep track of referrals and connections. Currently a coat drive is underway to collect new coats, socks and boots. A press release about this program will be going out. She also mentioned that the Safe Harbor warming center will be opening on 12/1/22 instead of 1/23/2023. A Cold Weather Coordination Committee consisting of Police, EMS, Fire, Loaves and Fishes and others is underway to coordinate services since federal funding for the 211 24/7 program is expiring.

VII. Announcements

- A. Mayor Bob Cressoti made a few comments before he left the meeting. He said how sorry he was to have missed the Symposium due to having COVID. He complimented Pat on a successful symposium, and indicated that Senior TV Living is a great program, thanked Marlene Hoginski for a recent successful Safety Event and in general complimented the Commission for a great job. He apologized for not always being able to attend the meetings, but said that he is always available if needed. He thanked Marie Pyznar for representing the Town Council and noted that the Grandparents program and CHOICES initiative are second to none. He said that members of Police department are very anxious to break ground for the addition to the Public Safety Complex. He also noted that starting today, work is beginning to look at guidelines for the Senior Tax Relief program which needs to be ready to present to the Town Council before April.
- B. Dave Goyette asked that the following comment be inserted: The terms of Commission members Howard Florian, Alice Egan and Will St. George will end in December 2023. These commissioners need to reapply to continue their terms for another three years.

VIII. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Mary Ann Harris and seconded by Kay Tallarita, it passed unanimously. Dave Goyette adjourned the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

Next Meeting Wednesday, December 14, 2022 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 Zappo-Sasso, Town Manager