

**TOWN OF ENFIELD COMMISSION ON AGING  
MINUTES FOR WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2023 – 2:00 P.M.  
DSS, ALCORN SCHOOL, 1010 ENFIELD STREET**

**Attendance**

**Present:** Pauline Devino, Alice Egan, Howard Florian, Dave Goyette, Cynthia Guerrerri, Staff Liaison, Marlene Hoginski, Mary Keller, Enfield Senior Center Manager, Patricia Linehan, Marie Pyznar, Council Liaison, Tim Slade, Will St. George and Kay Tallarita.

**Absent (Excused):** Mike Arnone Jr., Mayor Bob Cressotti, Council Liaison, Mary Ann Harris and Justin Lopez, Elderly Care Services Coordinator.

**I. Welcome**

David Goyette opened the meeting at 2:05 p.m. and wished everyone a Happy New Year. The first order of business was for the nomination of officers for the next two years. Since all the current officers have agreed to stay on and no one else has asked to be considered for a position, Marlene Hoginski made a motion to reelect Dave Goyette as President, Alice Egan as Vice President, Tim Slade as Treasurer and Pauline Devino as Secretary. Howard Florian seconded the motion and it was approved by everyone by a show of hands.

**II. Secretary's Report:**

Dave Goyette asked if there were any corrections to the minutes; with no corrections to be made, Marlene Hoginski made a motion to accept them and Will St. George seconded. The motion was carried (8,1,1).

**III. Treasurer's Report:**

Tim Slade provided the treasurer's report. With no questions or discussion about the report, Kay Tallarita made a motion to approve it and Will St. George seconded. The motion passed through a show of hands.

**IV. Committee Reports**

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

Tim Slade reported that the move to the new space is completed. The area is larger than the previous area and is more convenient for the volunteers with new keycard access. He wished to thank the Mayor, Town Manager and Jim O'Neil, the head custodian at the Annex, for their assistance in providing the new space. Tim noted that he is in the process of inventorying and reorganizing the new area for the 4 teams of 8 volunteers. Each team of 2 needs a tool bag for their repairs, however, due to the addition of a recent volunteer, there are only 3 tool bags available so it will be necessary to purchase tools for a 4<sup>th</sup> bag at a cost of about \$350.00. There was discussion about how to pay for the additional tool purchase. Marie Pyznar made a suggestion that perhaps Home Depot or Carrs, who are corporate partners, may be willing to donate some tools or donate a gift card for their purchase. Tim responded that this is an excellent idea and he would contact both companies in person with an official Town letter of request. He also mentioned that he would like to send a thank you note to Jim O'Neil for his outstanding assistance in providing more shelving and moving the old door knob to the new area eliminating the need for new keys.

**B. Symposium**

Pat Linehan reported that there is nothing new to report and that she needs to work on the necessary summary.

**C. Senior Living TV Program**

Pat Linehan reported that taping will be resuming on January 17<sup>th</sup> with an interview with Audra Laff from All American Assisted Living about how to determine if someone needs assisted living and an interview on January 24<sup>th</sup> with Thomas Burr on how to get assistance with mental health issues. She noted that 3 more interviews are being planned with one being with Mary Keller of the Enfield Senior Center regarding accreditation. Pat also noted that although 2 new volunteers have been acquired, more are needed and that she would like to hang some posters at the Senior Center and perhaps Town Hall seeking more volunteers.

## **D. Grandparents Raising Grandchildren**

Kay reported that this week a session was held regarding the suicide crisis. It was well done and successful. She indicated that several new people have joined the group and that outreach continues to reach more grandparents. Kay noted that she has been invited to speak at the April Lions Club meeting and that the Moose Lodge would also like her to speak to their group.

## **E. Triad**

Marlene Hoginski reported that the Triad group met yesterday, January 10, 2023 to discuss the planning for the Spring Health and Wellness Fair on Saturday March 25, 2023. The timing for this fair is good as it will be held in conjunction with a Rotary breakfast which attracts many. 12 companies have been asked to participate including Able Pharmacy, Connecticut Medial Supply, Eversource, Hartford Health Care, Enfield Senior Center, CHR and the Shaker Pines Fire Department who will offer child car seat checks. Dave Goyette will be publishing information about this event and Mary Keller will be offering support through the Senior Center.

## **F. Choices**

Will St. George reported that there has been on a short hiatus since the end of Open Enrollment which ended on December 7<sup>th</sup>, however, he is back providing counseling on Fridays and Mondays to those who will be enrolling in Medicare plans, would like to make changes to their current Medicare plans or are just enrolling in Medicare Pharmacy plans. Will added that this is a great opportunity to outreach to those eligible for Medicare saving plans and to add new Medicare recipients. Will commented that he wished to thank Mary Keller and her wonderful staff for assistance in scheduling for the Choices appointments. He also asked if there may be an opportunity to advertise the Choices program as the Senior Center advertises appointments for Ask the CPA, Ask the Lawyer or Ask the Realtor. Mary Keller mentioned that Nancy Darrah, Program Coordinator at the Senior Center has been approached by Shirleen Peabody, a Senior Specialist in Real Estate, who would like to provide magnets advertising the Ask the Realtor program so something similar could maybe be made available for the Choices program. Dave Goyette commented that Will is to be commended for doing a wonderful job.

## **G. Holiday Nursing Home Project**

Alice Egan indicated that everything went well with this project. The St. Joseph residents received \$25.00 gift cards and that the residents at Parkway Pavilion received the gifts requested. She noted that she and Dave Goyette delivered the gift bags to facilities who were very grateful for the donations. The gifts to residents were to be distributed at preplanned holiday events by their respective facilities. 35 gift bags were distributed and Alice mentioned that use of the Town credit card made shopping much easier. Dave Goyette thanked Alice for her efforts spreading some happiness for the holidays through this program.

## **H. VITA/AARP**

In Mary Ann Harris' absence, Mary Keller reported that booking of appointments for AARP Tax preparation will begin tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. by calling the Senior Center or coming in person for appointments starting on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Appointments will be held on Mondays with a few Wednesdays being built in for possible snow days. Appointments for VITA tax preparation get scheduled by calling 211 for a convenient appointment. There was an AARP Tax Preparation Information Session held on January 5<sup>th</sup> at the Senior Center explaining what tax materials are needed for preparation; about 35 people attended and had an opportunity to book an appointment after the session.

## **V. Old Business**

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

Cindy Guerreri reported that the current challenge is that there has been an increased demand for energy assistance and additional dollars are needed. A CRT worker has been assigned to the DSS office to help to look at how to utilize eligibility resources, but appointments to request energy assistance continues to be required by calling CRT; no appointments will be scheduled in the Enfield DSS office. In the past resources were available to replace oil tanks and furnaces, however, there is no longer funding for these projects, however, Rockville Bank is helping to provide some resources for energy assistance.

The Cold Weather Task Force is in force. The current warming center has capacity for 30 with only 16 beds available. Previously, hoteling was available through ARPA funds, however, this is no longer possible.

Howard Florian asked to report on a problem he recently had with Eversource when he went to change to a new carrier, Constellation. Howard was told that he could not switch carriers because his account was blocked. Howard knew of no reason to block his account and when he called Eversource he was told that the block had been removed, however, his account was blocked as part of a Protection Plan. Howard asked that we convey this information to anyone who is contemplating an energy carrier change to be aware of the possibility of a blocked account.

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

Marlene Hoginski reported that the Friends will be meeting tomorrow and will be discussing a 20 year anniversary celebration of the Enfield Senior Center. This may be a week-long event ending with a picnic in June. More information will be forth coming.

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

Mary Keller reported that 85% of the documents required have been submitted for the Accreditation and that the final task would be a peer review. However, as of 1/1/23 the formal Accreditation process is being disbanded in lieu of a new program. As of 1/1/23, 300 of 10,000 senior centers have been accredited. Enfield has been accredited 3 times since the program began in 1999. The new Preprogram will require senior centers to review standards one at a time and submit them at no cost. Mary indicated that this should help in the long run and that the past exercise for Accreditation was not in vain since it provided some helpful information. She commented that the National Council on Aging is moving toward the goal of standardizing with model standards to modernize the process. In addition, Mary reported that she is working to fill an upcoming position being vacated by an employee who is moving and she is planning for when Nancy Darrah, Program Coordinator decides to retire. In addition, work continues on trip planning for the upcoming year.

## **VI. New Business**

### **Volunteer Tax Relief**

Dave Goyette reported that the committee developing a plan for volunteer tax relief is almost done and has finalized a proposal to present to the Town Council on February 8<sup>th</sup>. The plan consists of providing an exemption of \$400 for a minimum of 50 volunteer hours in a year. The hours must be verified. This exemption would apply to town property taxes and would not be exclusive to any other exemption such as for Veterans, etc. More information about this initiative will follow.

## **VII. Announcements ARPA Grant Awards**

Marie Pyznar, Council Liaison, discussed how ARPA grant award money from the American Rescue Plan has been distributed. The Economic Development Commission recommended that 21 small businesses receive over \$250,000 and 14 nonprofits received \$200,000. Marie noted that the Town Council was not privileged to how the money was awarded for one-time items, but there is now a recommendation that the process be reopened to determine why some businesses or nonprofits were denied. Of the 51 applicants for grant money, only 21 were approved. Marie reiterated that if we do not use the total \$800,000 as appropriated the town could lose it. It was suggested that perhaps some of the grant money could be used for fuel assistance. A formal vote by the Town Council will be needed to award additional grant money for one time expenses..

## **VIII. Adjournment**

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

**Next Meeting** Wednesday, February 8, 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