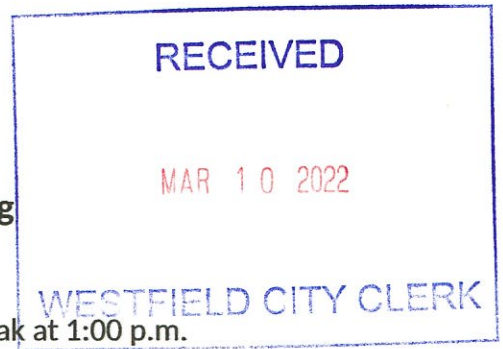


**City of Westfield
Minutes of the Council On Aging
January 10, 2022**



- I. The Meeting was called to order by the Chair, James V. Liptak at 1:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: Elizabeth Boucher, Ed Ekmalian, KerryAnn Kielbasa, James Liptak, Eileen Rockwal, and Barbara Taylor. Also present was Tina Gorman, Executive Director of the Council On Aging. Ralph Figy, City Council Liaison, was absent.

II. Approval of Minutes of December 13, 2021 Meeting:

Upon Motion duly made by Ed Ekmalian and seconded by Eileen Rockwal, it was VOTED unanimously: To approve the Minutes of the December 13, 2021 Meeting.

- III. **Public Participation:**
None

IV: **Items for Discussion/Information:**

A. HVES Report - Jim Liptak:

Mr. Liptak reported on the following:

The January meeting of HVES is being held at 2:00 p.m. today (1/10/22) and Mr. Liptak will report on that meeting at our February COA Meeting.

Mr. Liptak spoke of a new program called CARE COORDINATE that will begin at HVES. Care Coordinate, LLC, is a statewide network that promotes the efficient delivery of high-quality, cost-effective home and community-based services and serves as a centralized hub for 24 nonprofit agencies dedicated to helping older adults and individuals with disabilities to maintain their independence and live with dignity in their homes and Massachusetts communities. Care Coordinate is a single entry point for reducing burden related to claims administration, care coordination, and social determinants of health. Both Mr. Liptak and Mrs. Gorman question the effectiveness of a statewide single entry access point. Mr. Liptak will get more specific information at the HVES Board meeting.

B. COVID Protocols and Programming

Mrs. Gorman advised that in-house programming continues to be altered as the COVID numbers surge. Line dancing and the Do Re Mi Singing group are suspended for the month of January. Most of the groups that have facilitators are abiding by Westfield's mask mandate, the Senior Center room capacities, and the strategic placement of furniture with physical distancing in mind. However, many utilizing the Games Room for pool and cards are not compliant with the COVID protocols. Mrs. Gorman asked the Board for their thoughts about the Games Room dilemma. The Board agreed that if the participants don't follow the protocols as established by the Board of Health and the Health Department, then the Games Room should be temporarily closed.

Preparations for the AARP Tax Assistance Program are underway. All calls are being

forwarded to the tax assistance voicemail. There were 110 messages left on the first day that the phone line opened. The staff anticipates a leveling off of tax assistance requests. If all goes as planned, 300 tax returns will be processed through the program this year. The entire west wing of the second floor will be utilized on Mondays and Thursdays, beginning in mid-February, for the Taxaide volunteers. That will include the Learning Center, the Games Room, and the Multipurpose Room. The Council On Aging will be following the AARP COVID protocols for keeping the Taxaide volunteers safe. Using all three rooms will allow for physical distancing and additionally will facilitate the noise level, because all of the tax returns will be done via telephone.

Mrs. Gorman and Health Department Director, Joe Rouse have been collaborating on stationing a Health Department nurse at the Senior Center. This partnership will be much like the one with the Police Department for the Senior Safety Officer. Evelyn Bristol will be housed at the Senior Center in the Wellness Office. She will maintain her status of working for the Health Department, but will be available, by appointment, to see Senior Center participants for wellness checks. Evelyn will likely move into the Senior Center office within the next few weeks.

C. Second Floor Renovation Project

Mrs. Gorman has secured ARPA money through Senator John Velis to renovate one of the second floor storage rooms at the Senior Center to provide more office space.

Mrs. Gorman is working with the City's Director of Facilities, Bryan Forrette, on preliminary plans. She has contacted the Senator's office to inquire about any specific parameters of the funding within the scope of the renovation project.

D. FY23 City Budget

Mayor Mike McCabe is requiring all City Department Heads to enter their FY23 draft budget into the MUNIS system by February 1, 2022. Mrs. Gorman explained that her budget will be similar to FY22, taking into account increases in utilities and other Purchase of Order building services. One large additional request, will be the creation of an Assistant Director position. Across the Commonwealth, most Senior Centers the size of Westfield, and many smaller, have Assistant or Deputy Directors to assist with grant writing and follow-up, staff supervision, oversight of a variety of services, and the development of new services and programs. The Assistant Director position could be a stepping stone to the Executive Director position. Therefore, the educational qualifications and years of experience in the field working with older adults will be determined with that in mind. Mr. Liptak asked if the Assistant Director position will be hired from in-house staff. Mrs. Gorman is uncertain because the educational qualifications will likely be a Bachelor's level, minimum, Master's level, preferred. Mrs. Taylor asked if the position could be part-time at first and then transition to full time. Mrs. Kielbasa advised against that because of the caliber of candidates seeking part-time versus full-time employment. Mrs. Gorman also suggested that from a budgeting standpoint, it is more prudent to ask for a full-time position up front as a funding change from part-time to full time can be much more difficult to obtain.

E. September, October (2022) Meeting Date Changes

The meetings for those months will now be: September 19 and October 17, 2022 (third Monday of the month) due to Monday holidays and the HVES Board schedule.

V. Items for Action

Authorization for COA Executive Director to submit Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application

Mrs. Gorman explained that the Council On Aging applies for the grant every year for the Companion Program. Mrs. Gorman needs the approval of the Board in order to submit the CDBG application.

The following motion was made by Barbara Taylor and seconded by Eileen Rockwal:

To authorize Tina Gorman, Executive Director of the Westfield Council on Aging to submit the 2022 Community Development Block Grant application.

A roll-call vote was requested and the results of the vote were as follows:

James Liptak - YES	Barbara Taylor - YES
KerryAnn Kielbasa - YES	Elizabeth Boucher - YES
Eileen Rockwal - YES	Edward Ekmalian - YES

VI. Director's Report

Review of Programs

- *Holiday Meals*
 - o 'Jingle Bell Lunch'
 - Served 221 pot roast dinners on December 22
 - o Complementary 'Holiday Curbside Cheer'
 - Served 76 breakfasts on December 23
- *'Westfield Council On Aging Presents' Series, January*
 - o Robin Putnam, Outreach Manager for the Massachusetts Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation
 - o Presentation: 'Shopping Rights'
 - Topics include expressed and implied warranties, return policies, defective merchandise, pricing discrepancies as well as shopping online, through the mail, or television advertisements.
 - o Airing Tuesdays at 2:45 p.m. on Channel 15
- *January Performance*
 - o Shown on cable Channel 15 on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday evenings throughout the month of January
 - o Performance by 'Jolly Duetto Duo,' Teresa Lorenzo and Christopher Haynes

- o Shown on cable Channel 15 Wednesday afternoons and Saturday evenings as well as Christmas Eve at 2 and 6 p.m.
- *'Beating the Winter Blahs' Friends Fundraiser*
 - o During the month of January, the Friends group is selling a special February calendar with a gift card prize for each day of the month
 - o Most gift cards are worth \$25
 - o 28 opportunities to win
 - o Tickets are being sold curbside and at the Greeter's Desk

Upcoming Programs

- *Senator John Velis Office Hours*
 - o Monday, January 24 at 12:30 p.m.
 - o Senator Velis and/or his Legislative Aide (Baby Velis is due close to that date)
- *Rollator Walker Give-Away*
 - o Week of January 17, giving away fifteen rollator walkers on a first-come, first served basis
 - o Walkers may be picked up Tuesday, January 18 through Friday, January 21, between 2 and 4 p.m., while supplies last
 - o Those who have borrowed rollators and wish to keep them, may do so. Several borrowers have already notified COA staff that they have decided to keep their rollators.
- *AARP Tax Assistance*
 - o 'TAXES' telephone line is up and running
 - o Received 138 requests on the tax voicemail during the first three days of accepting calls
 - o Mary Cohutt has the spreadsheet set up and will begin scheduling appointments this week
 - o Participants will have the option of picking up their tax packet at the Greeter's Desk, in advance of their appointment, or having it mailed to them
 - o Tax appointments are scheduled to begin in mid-February

- 'Westfield Council On Aging Presents' Series, February
 - o Nina Barszcz, Dispatch Administrator, Westfield Public Safety
 - o Presentation: 'Text to 9-1-1'
 - Nina will explain that Text-to-911 is available in Massachusetts and she will educate viewers on the Silent Call Procedure. She'll also discuss tips from the Dispatch Department for helping first responders during an emergency.

- February Performance
 - o Shown on cable Channel 15 on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday evenings throughout the month of January
 - o Entertainment: TBD

Miscellaneous

- All finish work on the contactless sliding glass front doors has been completed
 - o Thanks to Eric Forish (Forish Construction) for completing the job
 - o To date, the Friends group has not received an invoice from Forish Construction


- No meal service January 18 through 21
 - o Kitchen grease traps must be rebuilt and then the kitchen will need to be thoroughly cleaned

VII: The Chair reminded the Board that our next meeting is to be held on Monday, February 14, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. at the Westfield Senior Center.

VIII. There being no further business to come before the Board, upon Motion duly made by Ed Ekmalian and seconded by KerryAnn Kielbasa, it was unanimously VOTED to adjourn the meeting at 2:15 p.m.

List of Exhibits:

- Director's Report



 Elizabeth Boucher, Secretary