

City of Westfield  
Council On Aging  
Monthly Meeting  
March 12, 2018

City Hall, Room 201

59 Court Street, Westfield, Massachusetts



- I. The meeting was called to order by the Chair, James V. Liptak, at 1:04 p.m.

All Board Members were present: Cynthia Lee Andersen, Elizabeth Boucher, KerryAnn Kielbasa, James V. Liptak, Eileen Rockwal, Alan Sudentas, and Barbara Taylor. Also present were our Program Director, Mary Lou Niedzielski and Councilman Figy, our City Council liaison.

- II. **Approval of minutes of February 12, 2018 meeting:**

Upon Motion duly made by Elizabeth Boucher and seconded by Barbara Taylor, it was unanimously:

**VOTED:** "To approve the minutes of February 12, 2018, Board Meeting with the following changes: on Page 1 change the date of the minutes approved from "December 11, 2017" to "January 8, 2018", on Page 3, "Captain" Camerota should be "Chief" Camerota and on Page 7 last sentence should read "Cindy Ouellette from the Fire Marshal's office has talked to Ms. Gorman about speaking with her at the national..."

- III. **Public Participation:** There was no public participation.

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

- a. **Highland Valley Elder Services (HVES) Report:**

i. Mr. Liptak reported that HVES finance report showed that they are currently facing a \$7000 deficit. Considering they were at a \$300,000 deficit 3 years ago they feel good about the small deficit. Also, if they have a surplus at the end of the fiscal year, the state "takes" it.

This is the first deficit they have had in 3 years and it is due to the changes in state payment for protective services. Allan Ouimet, the Executive Director, will figure it out.

- ii. Currently, they have \$600,000 in investments. They will shift some of the investments on the advice of their financial advisor.
- iii. The marketing committee will be working on fundraising as well as marketing. They will be doing a big project in October at the Annual Meeting. The Marketing Committee was looking into how Highland Valley was named. It appears that one of the Board members at the time was fond of Scotland.

**b. Update on Retire the Fire!**

The Program is getting great publicity. Ms. Niedzielski distributed handouts to the Board members which included Retire the Fire! Update, a Disability Indicator Form (green), and an Emergency Information Form (gold), copies attached. These forms are available at our front desk. The green form is for your landline. For the gold information sheet, no landline is required. Even if a person is not a senior but has a disability they want those people to fill the forms out. The information on these forms provides vital information for the first responders about the person in need before they arrive at the scene.

- c. House Number Visibility Project:** We still have some numbers left and the COA staff is taking the information for those seniors who need them. Rotary will install the numbers in May or June of this year when the weather is consistently above 50 degrees. We do not have money available this year for free smoke detectors. However, if a senior tells the staff that he or she does not have any or that they are very old then the staff will take down their information in case the Red Cross does a detector "blitz". Seniors are encouraged to have family or friends help with changing their smoke detector batteries. If they don't have anyone to help the staff will take their information and Rotary will once again help with

changing the batteries.

d. **Residential Lock Box Program:** We have a limited number of residential lock boxes available. Next month, the Rotary Club members will be installing 15 of them on the homes of our Companion Program clients who are most at risk. COA staff members are taking information for the seniors who are interested in the Lock Box Program. The staff is prioritizing those most at risk for calling 911 and least likely to be able to get to the door for the first responders. Also, people should be aware that you can purchase one yourself directly through the Fire Department. One of the Board members asked what the price would be for the lock box. Ms. Kielbasa reported that she paid \$100 for one in Granby, Connecticut. Another Board member asked if they allowed them to be recycled if someone passes away. It was reported that the lock boxes are easy to take off the house and reuse. Mr. Liptak asked where the green and gold forms were supposed to go. Ms. Niedzielski explained that the forms themselves go to the dispatchers. Certain information will pop up when the dispatcher plugs in the information regarding the address involved in the emergency. Ms. Taylor asked if the seniors fill them out at the Senior Center do they then leave them with the Senior Center? Ms. Niedzielski said the forms indicate that they are supposed to be mailed in, but the Senior Center staff could do that for the seniors.

e. **Update on Senior Safety Office (see written report attached):** Ms. Niedzielski reported that our Senior Center Helper, Kim Saffer, cleaned out the space on Friday. The Friends Group approved the purchase of a work station for Officer Mark Carbonneau. Originally the furniture was not supposed to be available for a month, however, they were just notified it is scheduled to be delivered tomorrow. They will ask for it to be rescheduled due to the impending snow storm. Bryan Forrette, Director of Facilities for the City of Westfield, had the door company come out to the Senior Center. We are now waiting for their estimate. The Friends Group would have to approve that estimate. Shades are needed to provide privacy for the Safety Office. The staff looked at all sorts of shades. They have to be sure that the public can't see through the

ones they put in the Safety Office. The staff also assessed the need for shades in other parts of the Senior Center. The Bingo players are having trouble seeing and the glare is terrible in the lobby area especially at the front desk. There are tiny windows above the stage but the shades can't be opened without someone getting on a ladder. They would like a remote for those shades. CMC Shades and Specialties will be providing estimates for 4 jobs: Senior Safety Office, Great Room Doors, Upper Lobby (with remote), and Great room upper windows (with remote). What we are able to get is dependent on the cost. We may not be able to get all of shades we would like. The top priorities are the Senior Safety Office and the Great Room doors. One of the Board members asked if the Friends Group will be paying for everything. Ms. Niedzielski replied yes, once Ms. Gorman gets the estimates and gives them to the Friends Group, the Friends Group will decide what they can afford.

**V. Items For Action: None**

**VI. Our Program Director, Mary Lou Niedzielski, then presented the Director's Report, copy attached:**

**a. Review of Programs:**

- i. **Tax assistance:** The AARP Regional Coordinator, Linda Avery, did a site visit at the Senior Center at the end of February 2018. She was so impressed with the program coordination in Westfield that she asked for a copy of the letter that Carol Shannon, our Principal Clerk, developed to confirm appointments to use as a template for other AARP sites. Ms. Avery said that "Westfield is a model program". Ms. Shannon knows how much time people need based on previous experience. Ms. Shannon keeps on top of everything with program including snow day rescheduling. Ms. Boucher stated that "the program is fabulous. They will look at your itemized expenses and repeat clients are already in the computer. It is just the best."
  
- ii. **Beach Day Indoor Picnic:** The picnic luncheon was a sell-out and a huge success. Entertainment by Spunk N Sass was enjoyed by both the participants

and the staff. Several attendees got in the spirit by dressing in summer attire.

iii. **Veterans Town Hall Meeting:** The Town Hall Meeting was coordinated by VA Leeds, Boston, and Bourne. Seventy-five people attended on a tough weather night, so Regional and State VA leadership were happy with the turnout. All marketing for the program was done by the COA through flyers, press releases, and radio announcements. Councilman Figy asked if it would be repeated. Ms. Niedzielski indicated that she didn't know but the program was well received. Some people thought it would be "contentious" because they used the term Town Hall. She is not sure if they will do it again, but she will ask. A Board member asked if the local VA office helped. The VA staff talked to people coming in and out. People coming to the Senior enter were happy that the VA office was in the Senior Center.

iv. **Friends of the Senior Center "Lip Sync Battle":** Ms. Boucher commented that it was a fun event. It was held Sunday, March 4, 2018 at 2 p.m. There were 130 people in attendance and another 40 performers. The event was a huge success. There were 8 acts which spanned every generation. One family had 3 generations in 3 different acts. The winning act was the YMCA performing to the Village People's version of the song "YMCA". Their winnings are going to the YMCA Livestrong program. The "Senior Center Sisters" took second place with their performance of the Sister Act finale "I Will Follow Him". Their winnings will go to the Greater Springfield Alzheimer's Association. Next year the event will have to be held in a bigger venue, probably Westfield Technical Academy (WTA). They are mulling the idea of having the event include desserts and the show so that the culinary program at WTA could be included. The big question is whether we could draw enough of the public to pay for the extra expenses involved with the school such as the janitor.

b. **Upcoming Programs:**

- i. **Big Y Tour-Best tips for Weight Loss Success:** The Big Y tour will be held on Thursday, March 15, 2018 with Dietician Susan Mazrolle at the Big Y located at 1 East Silver Street in Westfield. Advanced signups are required as the tour is capped at 10 people and they already have 6 people signed up. Some of the members of the Weight Watcher Group have signed up. The Group is doing well. They have 20 people signed up. We do not run the program, we just provide the space.
  
- ii. **Valley Eye Radio - "I Remember When":** Valley Eye Radio of Springfield, Massachusetts has for 30 years provided a free radio broadcast service of readings of local newspapers, magazines, novels, etc. for those who are reading impaired. They are starting a new series entitled "I Remember When". They will be recording at the Senior Center on March 21, 2018 at 1 p.m. and the topic will be "My First Job". Sign-ups are available for those people who are willing to be interviewed and the rest will be the audience. Harold Anderson, programming coordinator for Valley Eye Radio is hoping it will be well received so he can do it again with a new subject.
  
- iii. **Luncheon Honoring Marion Kraus and Barbara Wojick:** A luncheon will be held in honor of Marion Kraus and Barbara Wojick on Thursday, March 29, 2018 at noon. Ms. Kraus and Ms. Wojick have been doing a spectacular job decorating our Christmas trees for years. The Mayor will be in attendance as well as Representative Velis or his Legislative Aide. Representatives from the Police Department and the Fire Department will also be in attendance. Tickets are on sale.
  
- iv. **Senior Safety Luncheon:** The Senior Safety Luncheon originally scheduled for Thursday, March 8, 2018 has been rescheduled due to a snow storm to Thursday, April 5, 2018. All seniors who purchased tickets were notified of the change by phone and most can make the April 5, 2018 date.

**c. Staff Vacation Schedule:**

Tina Gorman: March 9 through March 15, 2018

LGBT Elders Conference: March 16, 2018

Hoarding Conference: March 23, 2018

Karen Noblit: April 4 through April 9, 2018

Carol Shannon April 17 through April 20, 2018

Ms. Niedzielski shared that Ms. Gorman's mother-in-law passed away last night. Ms. Gorman is flying home tomorrow, and she may have to miss the LGBT Elder Conference.

**VII.** The Chair reminded us that our next meeting will be held on Monday, April 9, 2018 at 1:00 p.m. at City Hall in Room 201.

**VIII.** There being no further business to come before the Board, upon Motion duly made by Barbara Taylor and seconded by Alan Sudentas, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to adjourn at 1:53 p.m.

A true record.

**List of Exhibits:**

- a. Agenda
- b. Retire the Fire! Update (Report and green form and gold form)
- c. Senior Center Safety Office report
- d. Director's Report



Cynthia Lee Andersen-Secretary