

**City of Westfield
Minutes of the Council On Aging
March 14, 2022**

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

Board Members Present: Elizabeth Boucher, Ed Ekmalian, John Greaney, 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 February 14, 2022 Meeting:

Upon Motion duly made by Ed Ekmalian and seconded by Barbara Taylor, it was
VOTED unanimously: To approve the Minutes of the February 14, 2022 Meeting.

III. **Public Participation:** None

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

A. Highland Valley Elder Services Report - Jim Liptak

Mr. Liptak reported on the following:

At the February meeting, Mrs. Gorman questioned the confidentiality of the type of information that was discussed at the HVES Board meetings. It's important for the Councils On Aging to have a clear understanding of the services currently available through the ASAPs and the eligibility requirements. Mr. Liptak advised today that everything discussed at the HVES Board meetings is open to our COA Board with the exception of HVES staff salaries and certain information regarding their employees.

The Protective Services presentation that Mr. Liptak e-mailed to Mrs. Gorman will be forwarded to the COA Board members.

Kelly Slattery is the new HVES Food Services Coordinator/Dietician. She replaced Nancy Mathers who had been at HVES for many years. During her presentation to the HVES Board, Ms. Slattery reported that all meal drivers are being given a laptop to assist with communication to the Home Delivered Meals (HDM) staff during meal delivery. New insulated bags have been purchased to help keep the food hot during transport. HVES is currently serving of a combination of approximately 650 home

delivered meals and congregate meals per day. Westfield has the largest number of HDM recipients in the HVES catchment area.

The HIVES Board discussed returning to in-person meetings in the near future. Mrs. Gorman questioned the HVES Board attendance at virtual versus pre-COVID in-person meetings. Mr. Liptak said that it's about the same number. Mrs. Gorman suggested that considering the travel time for Board members to Florence as well as the surging price of gas, HVES may want to keep the meetings virtual.

The Southampton COA is looking to hire a part-time Program Coordinator. In addition, the town received a \$2 million donation to begin a new Senior Center project.

B. Board Member Introduction, Judge John Greaney

Mrs. Gorman introduced retired Judge John Greaney as the newest COA Board member. Judge Greaney continues to practice law in Springfield on a part-time basis. He was born and raised in Westfield. During his long legal career, he served as the presiding Judge of the Hampden County Housing Court, a Justice of the Massachusetts Superior Court, and as Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Appeals Court. Judge Greaney has served on numerous civic and charitable boards as well as on special government commissions. Mrs. Gorman said that she is delighted to have someone with legal expertise on our COA Board.

C. ARPA Renovation Funding Update

Senator Velis secured ARPA funding in the amount of \$100,000 for renovation of the Westfield Senior Center second floor storage area into three offices. Lucy Colon, Senior Contract Specialist with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, would like the ARPA money distributed as quickly as possible. Before the Mayor can sign the contract, he needs approval from the City Council. Mrs. Gorman has submitted a letter to the Mayor asking for immediate approval by the City Council because of the time-sensitive nature of the funding allocation. Hopefully the Council will approve acceptance of the funding at Thursday's meeting (March 17, 2022) and Tina will forward all signed documents to Lucy Colon for processing.

D. Overview of COA City Budget

Mrs. Gorman met with Mayor McCabe and Vicki Moro, City Auditor, to review the FY23 COA budget. Staff salaries were submitted (temporarily) with FY22 rates because the union contracts are being negotiated. Four COA staff are members of unions. The rest have a Personal Service Agreement (PSA) and all of those expire on June 30, 2022. Salaries in the new PSAs have yet to be determined. The new Assistant Director position was added to the FY23 budget with a salary

of approximately \$68,000 which is the appropriate grade and level in the WPMEA union wage scale. The Mayor is doubtful there will be funding available for such a position. Overall, the budget is similar to FY22 regarding supplies and Purchase of Service (POS). One major increase was the line item for the Gas & Electric bill. In past years, we overestimated the G & E bill so we have been slowly scaling back over the past two years to make the budget more reflective of the actual costs. With the increase in the price of fuel this year, we will be short of cash for the last quarter of the year.

E. COA Staffing Update

Karen Noblit, Senior Benefits Coordinator, has tendered her resignation. Her last day of employment with the City will be June 30, 2022 which is the day her PSA expires. Mrs. Noblit is an extremely valuable asset to the COA, but after almost 20 years of employment, she has decided to retire. Mrs. Gorman is working with the City's Personnel Director on the best course of action to fill Mrs. Noblit's position in July. This is currently not a union position.

V. Items for Action: None

VI. Director's Report

Review of Programs

- *AARP Tax Assistance Update*
 - o To date, 135 appointments have been completed (not including today)
 - o There are 294 appointments that have been booked
 - o One appointment left to be filled on April 7

- *March 'Westfield Council On Aging Presents' Series*
 - o 'Fire Safety for Seniors'
 - o Aired Tuesdays at 2:45 throughout the month of March
 - o Presenter: Westfield Deputy Fire Chief and Fire Prevention Officer Ben Warren
 - o A wide variety of fire safety topics are discussed

- *March Performance*
 - o Shown on cable Channel 15 on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday evenings throughout the month of March
 - o Entertainment: *Katie McD and the Cross County Band* Irish music

- *Senator John Velis Office Hours*
 - o Monday, February 28 from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. p.m.
 - o Senator Velis and a Legislative Aide met with visitors
 - o Senator Velis welcomed the Chair Yoga class, the Do Re Mi Singers, and some picking up their taxes

- *Retire the Fire!*
 - o Focusing on Safety Checklist: detectors on each level of the home, updated *File of*

Life, visible house numbers, completion of a FRIEND form, clutter-free environment, electrical outlets free from overload

- o *File of Life*
 - available at the Greeter's Desk to those who do not have one
 - encouraging those who have a *File of Life* to update it (medications, medical providers, vaccine information)

Upcoming Programs

Viewpoints Low Vision Support Group

- o Will resume on March 15 (third Tuesday of the month)
- o Group does not meet in January and February
- o Facilitator: Agnes Fleming, Activities Aide

'Lucky Leprechaun' Curbside Luncheon

- o Wednesday, March 16: Corned beef, cabbage, carrots, potatoes, rye bread, dessert
- o Sold out at 200 participants

- *Diabetes Dialogue ~ Nutritional Buzzwords, Part I*

- o Diabetes support group offered the third Wednesday of the month during the *Wake Up Wednesday* cable Channel 15/WSKB radio show
- o Facilitator: Jennifer Giffune, Registered Dietician and Licensed Nutritionist
- o March 16 from 7:15 to 8 a.m.
- o Discussion will center on an explanation of the most common nutritional buzzwords such as probiotic, antioxidant, Omega-3, gluten-free, vegan, organic, and GMO, to name a few
- o Part II will air in April

Representative Kelly Pease Office Hours

- o Monday, April 4 from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
- o Beginning in May, will be the third Monday of the month from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

- *April 'Westfield Council On Aging Presents' Series*

- o Session Title: ***Navigating Senior Living Options***
- o Guest: Eric Aasheim, Owner of Oasis Senior Advisors, Western Massachusetts

- *April WCPC Performance*

- o Shown on cable Channel 15 on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday evenings throughout the month of April
- o Entertainment: *Whiskey Traveler* (Part of the Studio 120 Session series)
 - An alternative country/Americana family band from western Massachusetts
 - Father ~ Bernie Dion; daughter ~ Jessica Dion; son ~ Jon Dion

- 'My Life Story' Writing Group
 - o Will be facilitated by volunteer, Donna Herman
 - o Mondays, 1:30 to 3 p.m., beginning on April 25
 - o No writing experience necessary
 - o Write a little bit each week and share with the group
 - o No criticism Corrections upon request. Creativity is encouraged.
 - o Ideal group size: 3 to 10 members

Miscellaneous

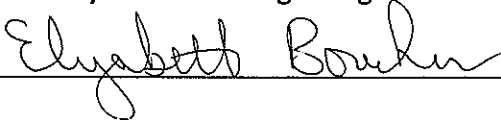
- *Weekly Indoor Dining*
 - o Thursdays at noon, beginning April 14
 - o Reservation process will be the same as Curbside Cuisine
 - Call that morning between 8:30 and 9:15
 - Must speak with a staff member; no voicemails accepted
 - o Payment will be made at a designated station in the Great Room between 11:30 and noon, \$3
 - o All tables and chairs must remain in their exact place

VII: The Chair reminded the Board that our next meeting is to be held on Monday, April 11, 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 John Greaney and seconded by Ed Ekmalian, it was unanimously VOTED to adjourn the meeting at 2:01 p.m.

List of Exhibits:

- Director's Report
- Letter to Mayor McCabe regarding the ARPA funding secured through Senator John Velis



Elizabeth Boucher, Secretary