

**City of Westfield
Council On Aging
Annual Meeting, May 11, 2020
Video/Conference Call
Westfield, Massachusetts**



I. The Meeting was called to order by the Chair, James V. Liptak at 1:01 p.m.

Board Members present were: Elizabeth Boucher, KerryAnn Kielbasa, James V. Liptak, Alan Sudentas, Barbara Taylor, and Eileen Rockwal. William Brown was absent from the call. Tina Gorman, our Executive Director was also present on the call. There were no guests. The COA meeting was recorded and broadcast on Cable Channel 15 by the City's Media Specialist, Peter Cowles.

II. Approval of Minutes of the April 13, 2020 Meeting:

Upon Motion duly made by KerryAnn Kielbasa and seconded by Eileen Rockwal, it was unanimously VOTED: To approve the Minutes of the April 13, 2020 Meeting.

III. Public Participation:

None.

IV. Items for Discussion/Information:

A. Highland Valley Elder Services (HVES):

Mr. Liptak provided the following report of the HVES monthly Board meeting:

- HVES met virtually last week. Mr. Liptak advised that even though there are some changes resulting from COVID-19, the organization's services have continued and some services have actually increased. There is approximately a 25% increase in off-site meals. The community congregate meal sites are providing "take-away meals" and Westfield Middle School is one of those sites. The Home Delivered Meals program provides volunteers an opportunity to do a check on the people serviced as they are mostly people who cannot get out of their homes. Some of the HVES staff members are still working from home. There are about 100 new volunteers who have come on board in the last month according to HVES Director, Alan Ouimette. The 'Keys to Aging Well' program scheduled for October, 2020 has been cancelled.

B. Update: Conference Calls – Westfield Emergency Management; Personnel; MCOA; Western Massachusetts COA Directors

Mrs. Gorman reported on these regularly scheduled conference calls.

- Westfield Emergency Management: Jim Wiggs, Director, conducts these calls on Wednesday afternoons. Those providing reports are from the following departments: Health, Fire, Police, Dispatch, Purchasing, Auditing, COA, Baystate Noble Hospital, Barnes Airport, and various community organizations. The City Councilors may listen and ask questions after all reports are given.

- Personnel: These weekly conference calls involve City staffing and payroll issues. Discussions are ongoing regarding the reopening of City Hall, employee health and safety, and COVID-19 protocol.
- MCOA: The Massachusetts Councils On Aging Association in conjunction with the Executive Office of Elder Affairs conducts weekly conference calls on Thursday afternoons. Directors may submit questions via e-mail prior to the call. Best practices are reviewed, clarification of the State Grant is an ongoing topic, as is interpretation of the Governor's mandates for reopening. The expectation is that Senior Centers will remain closed to the public for the foreseeable future, while COA services will continue.
- Western Massachusetts COA Directors: This Zoom meeting/conference call is held every other week and includes Directors as far west as Westfield and as far east as Brimfield. Directors brainstorm various concerns and share ideas. These meetings are highly interactive.

C. Update: Current COA Services and Programs

Mrs. Gorman provided an update as follows:

- The medical equipment loan program continues robustly. All paperwork is completed in advance over the phone. When the person comes to collect the item, that person is met outside the building for a signature and collection of the item(s). The building is currently closed to the public.
- Karen Noblit – All SHINE consultations are via telephone.
- Joanne Ortegás - Continues with crisis intervention through phone and limited home visits.
- Joyce Peregrin, Companion Program Coordinator: Is in contact with clients and seniors requesting services via telephone. Joyce has been assisting clients and families with setting up grocery and pharmacy delivery. She continues to make telephone reassurance calls. The COA is not accepting new referrals into the program at this time because volunteers are unable to visit clients in their homes.
- Sandra Fisher, Greeter: She is currently making 'friendly chat' phone calls with people who regularly come to programs at the Senior Center to be sure they are well. She has made more than 300 phone calls to date. Referral is made to Joanne Ortegás if any special problems are discussed during the call with Sandra.
- Mary Cohutt, Front Desk Clerk: Mary returned to work at the Senior Center on May 11, 2020. She is handling all information and referral calls and any other phone calls which come in to the Senior Center, easing the burden on other staff members.

D. City and State Grant Budgets:

- City: The City is heading into the next Fiscal Year and at end of the current Fiscal Year. Mrs. Gorman advised that the majority of the COA's budget is for staff and purchase of services.
- State Formula Allocation: The State Grant is already paid for the current Fiscal Year and is used to pay for six staff salaries. The question that all COA Directors have been asking is for the 'per senior' rate for FY21. That rate was \$12 in FY20 and was supposed to remain the same for FY21. However, given the shortfall in State revenues, that rate will likely drop, maybe drastically. The COAs will probably not be notified until late summer or early fall.

Mrs. Taylor asked if staff has been paid for all their work and is there a concern that some staff may have to be furloughed. Mrs. Gorman responded by stating that all COA staff members are being paid in full as the City is currently utilizing a 'default' payroll system. That means that all City employees are being paid based on the usual number of hours that they work. The possibility of furloughs is not being considered by City administration at this time but Mrs. Gorman will advise the Board of Directors if circumstances change.

E. Strategic Plan: Review of Draft

Mrs. Kielbasa, Chair of the Strategic Plan Subcommittee, advised that COA Board members did not suggest any changes, additions, or deletions to the draft that was e-mailed to them prior to the meeting. Mrs. Rockwal commended Mrs. Kielbasa on her excellent work on the Strategic Plan. Mrs. Gorman mentioned that during the pandemic crisis, other COA Directors are dealing with issues related to use of their vans. Although the need for expanded transportation options is in our Strategic Plan, Mrs. Gorman is glad that our Center does not have to worry about that issue right now. Mrs. Kielbasa suggested that the timeframe for expanded transportation be extended in the Strategic Plan because of the pandemic. The Board agreed. Mrs. Kielbasa asked if any of our Board members wanted to make additional changes to the plan before a vote was taken. The Board members said that they did not.

Therefore, upon motion duly made by Barbara Taylor and Seconded by Elizabeth Boucher, it was unanimously **VOTED** to accept the COA three-year Strategic Plan draft with the exception of the start date for the expanded transportation issue being moved from the first to the second year.

V. Items for Action:

The Nominating Committee of Eileen Rockwal and Alan Sudentas brought forward the names of those COA Board members willing to accept positions as Officers for FY21 as follows:

Chair: James Liptak
Vice Chair: KerryAnn Kielbasa
Secretary: Elizabeth Boucher
Treasurer: Barbara Taylor

Upon a Motion duly made by Elizabeth Boucher and seconded by Alan Sudentas, it was unanimously **VOTED** to accept the slate of Officers as listed above.

VI. Executive Director, Tina Gorman, then presented the **Director's Report**, copy attached.

Review of Programs

- *Brown Bag Program*
 - o Drive-through pick-up on the Wednesday after the second Tuesday of the month
 - o Went relatively smoothly
 - o All participants received a reminder phone call with the date change and logistics explained on the Monday before Brown Bag
 - o Set-up will be altered slightly for May with one extra staff for traffic flow
 - o Masks will be mandatory in May when participants get out of the car to retrieve their bag off of the table

- *'Kitchen Crew Appreciation Day'*
 - o Impromptu morale booster for Joann Spear and George Skakios on April 29
 - o Joann and George stood curbside during meal pickup
 - o Seniors decorated their cars with signs and balloons, gave them notes of appreciation, waved, honked, and shouted words of praise
 - o It was uplifting for everyone, including the lunch participants

- *May Exercise Sessions*
 - o Beginning May 4, televised at specified times on local cable Channel 15
 - Dr. Gary Gorman: *Let's Quit Sitting*
 - Teri Somers: *Chair Yoga*
 - o Feedback from participants has been extremely positive

- *'Getting Your Will, Health Care Proxy, and Durable Power of Attorney Done While Social Distancing'*
 - o Legal presentation by local Attorney Rock Palmer
 - o Televised at specified times on local cable Channel 15
 - o Awaiting feedback from seniors

- *Curbside meal service Monday through Friday*
 - o Numbers continue to expand
 - o Sold out at 150 (in 15 minutes) on May 7 for meatloaf dinner

Upcoming Programs

- *Mother's Day 'Parade of Hats' Curbside/Television Luncheon*
 - o Ham dinner on Thursday, May 14
 - o Advance reservations are necessary (110 reservations thus far; cap is 150)
 - o Entertainment at 1 p.m. on Channel 15: Noah Lis
 - o Each female will receive a handmade card

- *Volunteer Recognition Curbside Brunch*
 - o Thursday, May 28
 - o Invitations and Certificates of Appreciation will be mailed this week
 - o Time of brunch pickup will be 11 to 12:00
 - o Entertainment at 1 p.m. on Channel 15: Ed Bentley

- *June Programming*
 - o Working on:
 - revising the plans for Father's Day Friday night concert
 - Bingo participant 'games care packages' to be delivered to their doorsteps
 - Additional exercise sessions on Channel 15
 - Educational programming on Channel 15


VII. The Chair reminded the Board that our next meeting is scheduled to be held on Monday, June 8, 2020. It will be determined at a later date if it is necessary for this meeting to be a Conference Call rather than City Hall Meeting. At this time, Mr. Liptak announced that he wished to commend Mrs. Gorman and her staff for their ingenuity and flexibility in operating the Senior Center at this very difficult time. They are doing a tremendous job. Mrs. Gorman stated that all COA's are concerned about the older adults in their cities/towns being able to access COA services and all staff members are working harder than ever to help these people during this COVID-19 crisis. Mrs. Gorman also advised that she appreciates our Board of Directors as not all COA's receive as much support.

VIII. There being no further business to come before the Board, upon Motion Duly made by Elizabeth Boucher and seconded by Alan Sudentas, it was unanimously

VOTED to adjourn at 1:50 p.m.

List of Exhibits:

1. Strategic Plan Draft
2. Director's Report



Elizabeth Boucher, Secretary