

**City of Westfield
Minutes of the Council On Aging
September 11, 2023**



I. The Meeting was called to order by the Board Chair, James Liptak at 12:35 p.m.

Board Members Present: James Liptak, Eileen Rockwal, Elizabeth Boucher, Barbara Taylor, Ed Ekmalian, and John Greaney. Also present was Tina Gorman, Executive Director of the Council On Aging.

II. Approval of Minutes of August 14, 2023 Meeting:

Upon a Motion duly made by John Greaney and seconded by Barbara Taylor, it was VOTED unanimously: To approve the Minutes of the August 14, 2023 meeting.

III. Public Participation:

No public participation.

IV: Items for Discussion/Information:

A. COA Executive Director Search, Update:

Mrs. Gorman advised the Board that at its September 7, 2023 meeting, the City Council unanimously approved the appointment of Michael Squindo as the new Executive Director of the Westfield Council On Aging. Mr. Squindo is scheduled to begin his duties as Director on October 10, 2023. Mrs. Gorman told the Board that Mr. Squindo brings a new perspective to the Senior Center. The two will work together during a transition period. John Greaney participated in the interviewing process and stated that Mr. Squindo rated the highest of all applicants interviewed by the Committee for the position. Mr. Squindo has a lot of grant-writing experience as well as experience as the Director of the Agawam Council On Aging. Mr. Squindo will sign a three-year contract.

B. Ward 2 Polling Location

The Westfield Senior Center will once again be used as the Ward 2 election polling location. During the Covid pandemic, the polling location was changed to the Middle School. There will be two elections this fall: the preliminary election on September 19, 2023 (to narrow the field of School Committee candidates) and the general local election on November 7, 2023.

C. Political Activity Policy, Review

Mrs. Gorman reviewed the Senior Center Political Activity Policy, which was written by the Westfield Council On Aging Board of Directors in 2014. The policy was established, with input from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, so that COA staff members have written guidelines on campaign activities at the Senior Center. A letter and a copy of the policy were e-mailed and snail-mailed to all candidates running for Mayor, City Council, Gas & Electric Light Board, Athenaeum Trustee and School Committee. In the past, the COA has hosted a 'Meet and Great' for all candidates running for the offices listed above. Most recently, that type of event is not well-attended. During the last

several election cycles, Mrs. Gorman and Ken Stomsky, both cable Channel 15 morning hosts, have conducted candidate interviews throughout the month of October. That has been highly successful and will be repeated this year.

D. Footcare Update

Mrs. Gorman reported that the newly established footcare program is going very well. Evelyn Bristol, BSN, RN is booked through October. Participants must pre-register. The cost is \$30. Currently, footcare is offered two mornings per month. The appointment schedule can be increased in the future, based on demand.

E. Renovation: Ribbon-Cutting and Open House

Mrs. Gorman reported that the second-floor office suite renovation is complete, with just minor tasks to be done. The window shades have been ordered, but have not come in yet. The locks on the doors are temporary. The permanent locks, which will complement the current lock system, will be in at the end of the month. Staff have been relocated to their former or new offices. All medical equipment is back in the storage room. The Multipurpose Room and Learning Center are once again functional for their intended purposes. All seasonal decorations are in storage. A plaque recognizing ARPA funding secured by Senator Velis with additional funding from the Friends of the Westfield Senior Center has been ordered. A ribbon-cutting and open house will be held on Wednesday, October 18 from 10 a.m. to noon. No lunch will be served that day.

V. Items for Action:

The Board voted to hold next month's meeting on Monday, October 16, 2023 because the regularly scheduled meeting date falls on the Columbus Day holiday. At the suggestion of Mrs. Gorman to postpone the meeting one week so that the new Director can be present, John Greaney made a motion to hold the meeting on October 16, 2023. Ed Ekmalian seconded the motion and the change was unanimously approved. Mrs. Rockwal abstained because she will be unavailable to attend October's meeting.

Now that the Multipurpose Room is available for the monthly Board meetings, Mrs. Gorman asked the Board if it would like to return to the regularly scheduled start time of 1 p.m. or permanently change the start time to 12:30 p.m. The earlier start was necessary when the Board was temporarily meeting in the Creativity Center because of afternoon programming in that room. After discussion, Ed Ekmalian made a motion to permanently change the meeting start time to 12:30 p.m. The motioned was seconded by John Greaney and the Board unanimously voted to make the change.

VI. Director's Report Review of Programs

- *Cops for a Cause Chili Luncheon*
 - o Indoor party on Thursday, September 7
 - o Entertainment: *Richie Mitnick and Retired Police Offer, Ethel Lee*
 - o Sold out at 100 participants
 - o Successful in every way
 - Entertainers received rave reviews
 - Food was delicious

- Five members of the WPD assisted with serving chili and making the ice cream sundaes (on the stage)
 - 50/50 drawing: \$267 each for winner and Alzheimer's Association
 - Forget-Me-Not flower sales
 - Representative from the Alzheimer's Association was in attendance (first time)
- *September 'Westfield Council On Aging Presents' Series*
 - 'Who Knew? Senior Center Offerings'
 - Tina Gorman, COA Executive Director, outlined the many services and programs offered through the COA
 - Aired Tuesdays and Thursdays at 2:45 throughout the month of September
- *Senior Theater*
 - Offered by local actor, Steve Henderson through a Cultural Council grant
 - 'The Funeral of Mortimer Stiffler'
 - Organizational meeting was last week
 - Two shows in late October
 - Theater for anyone who wants to participate
 - Looking for additional participants
- *Cribbage*
 - Organized by Bruce Cortis
 - Every Tuesday from 9 to 11:30 a.m.
 - No sign-ups; No teams; No long-term commitment

Upcoming Programs

- *Flu Clinics*
 - Mary Cohutt handling scheduling; Evelyn Bristol handling registration
 - Flu Clinics to be held on September 27 and 28, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
 - All slots are full and a waiting list is being maintained
 - Offered in partnership with the Westfield Department of Health
- *City Clerk*
 - Kaitlyn Bruce, Westfield City Clerk, will be at the Senior Center **in October**
 - Date and time TBD
 - Will provide information regarding the upcoming November 7 local election
 - Senior Center participants will have an opportunity to register to vote, apply for an absentee ballot, or ask Kaitlyn election-related questions as well as questions about the services offered to Westfield residents through her department
- *Financial Wellness Course*
 - Facilitated by Jen Fernandes, Program Manager with the Thrive program
 - Six-week interactive program with topics to include banking, budgeting, savings, credit, the 'Cliff Effect'
 - Dates: October 26; November 2, 9, 16, 30; and December 7 from 9 to 10:30 a.m.

- Miscellaneous
 - o Staff Changes:
 - Happy Daley has left and will be replaced by Eileen Collins (retired from Barnes Airport last year)
 - Mary Cohutt's last day will be September 29, 2023
 - o Board Update:
 - Mayor has submitted the name of Trudy Knowles to the City Council for appointment to the COA Board

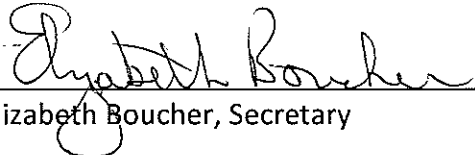
Mr. Liptak commented that Board Treasurer Barbara Taylor will resign from the COA Board of Directors, effective September 30, 2023. The Board Chair thanked Mrs. Taylor for her service during her two terms on the Board.

VII: The Chair reminded the Board that our next meeting will be held on **Monday, October 16, 2023 at 12:30 p.m.** at the Westfield Senior Center.

VIII. There being no further business to come before the Board, upon Motion duly made by Ed Ekmailian and seconded by John Greaney, it was unanimously VOTED to adjourn the meeting at 1:35 p.m.

List of Exhibits:

- Letter to Political Candidates
- Political Activity Policy
- Director's Report



Elizabeth Boucher, Secretary



Westfield Council On Aging

45 Noble Street, Westfield, MA 01085

Telephone: 413-562-6435

Fax: 413-562-1109

August 22, 2023

Name

Address

Westfield, Massachusetts 01085

Dear Name,

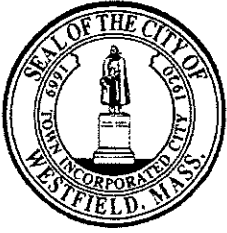
On behalf of the City's older adults, thank you for choosing to run for office. Your dedication and motivation for making Westfield a better City in which to live and work are greatly appreciated. Please know that this letter is being sent to each candidate running for Mayor, City Council, School Committee, Municipal Light Board, and Athenaeum Trustee.

For those candidates who currently hold office, the enclosed policy will serve as a reminder of the guidelines regarding political activity at the Senior Center. For those who have not run for office or served in the past, please review the policy carefully. It was established nine years ago at the urging of the Executive Office of Elder Affairs and has been posted on the window of the vestibule since the day the Senior Center opened on Noble Street.

Feel free to contact me if you have questions about the Council On Aging department, our services, programs, and goals, or some of the challenges facing Westfield's older adults. I would be happy to schedule a meeting with you. I am frequently at the Center evenings and weekends, catching up on my work, if that is most convenient for you.

Sincerely,

Tina Gorman
Executive Director
t.gorman@cityofwestfield.org
(413) 562-6435



Westfield Council On Aging

45 Noble Street, Westfield, MA 01085

Telephone: 413-562-6435

Fax: 413-562-1109

City of Westfield, Massachusetts Council On Aging / Senior Center Policy Political Activity

Persons running for political office may not campaign inside the Senior Center or on the surrounding grounds. No campaign materials, including, but not limited to, brochures, flyers, petitions, signs, and buttons may be distributed in the Senior Center or on the surrounding grounds. Absolutely no campaign contributions may be solicited or tickets to campaign events sold within the Senior Center or on the surrounding grounds. These prohibitions also apply to any events or activities sponsored by the Council On Aging, regardless of where the event or activity is held.

At the request of the older adults living in Westfield, a public forum to which all candidates are invited will be scheduled at the Senior Center. Ballot questions will receive representation from both sides of the issue.

Nothing stated above is intended to restrict an older adult's regular use of the Senior Center, even though he or she may be running for office or sponsoring a ballot question. The final determination of behavior and activities that constitute "campaigning" will be determined at the discretion of the Executive Director.

March 2014

Review of Programs

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