



City of Westfield
Council On Aging
Monthly Meeting
September 16, 2019
City Hall, Room 201

59 Court Street, Westfield, Massachusetts

- I. The meeting was called to order by the Chair, James V. Liptak, at 12:58 p.m.

Board Members present were: Elizabeth Boucher, James V. Liptak, Eileen Rockwal, Alan Sudentas and Barbara Taylor. Also present was our Executive Director, Tina Gorman. William Brown, KerryAnn Kielbasa, and City Council Liaison Ralph Figy were absent. The one guest at the meeting was Ed Ekmalian.

II. Approval of the Minutes of the August 12, 2019 meeting:

Upon Motion duly made by Eileen Rockwal and seconded by Barbara Taylor, it was unanimously:

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the August 12, 2019 minutes.

III. Public Participation: Mr. Ekmalian asked Mrs. Gorman about the possibility of showing movies at the Senior Center. Mrs. Gorman advised that she has to obtain a license to do so. She will follow through with completion and submission of the application.

IV. Items for Discussion/Information:

- A. **Highland Valley Elder Services (HVES):** Mr. Liptak provided an update from the previous week's HVES Board meeting. The agency's finances are in good shape. Job satisfaction is high among the employees. They are satisfied with their offices and working conditions. The manual for the Home Delivered Meals drivers has been updated. Policies and procedures have been revised. Mrs. Gorman was given an updated manual for review. On October 1, 2019, HVES is sponsoring an event in Hadley entitled, 'Keys to Aging Well.' The idea is to showcase HVES's programs to the public. The focus of the event is on home care services. This is separate from the HVES Annual Meeting which is targeted toward HVES Board members and staff.
- B. **Preliminary Election:** On September 24, 2019 the City will hold a preliminary election to narrow down the Mayoral candidates from four to two. That is all that will be on the ballot. The Senior Center is the Ward 2 polling station. On the date, there will be no food service, but all other programs will run as scheduled.

Mrs. Gorman advised the Board that she, among others, had received an e-mail from Councilor Allie asking if a forum with the four Mayoral candidates had been scheduled before the preliminary election. Mrs. Gorman responded to all in the e-mail chain that she was not aware of any such event. No one had approached her about use of the Senior

Center for a forum in September. Others in the e-mail chain clarified that there was not enough time to coordinate such an event because two of the candidates had entered the race just prior to the deadline to submit papers. Several forums had already been planned for October, before the November 5 election and that had taken several weeks to arrange. Councilor Allie wrote a letter to the editor of the Westfield News which was published the following day, expressing his disappointment. Mrs. Gorman wanted the COA Board to understand that with Patrick Berry no longer the owner of the Westfield News, the process of obtaining permission for the paper's involvement in such an event is much slower.

C. Candidate Lunches:

Mrs. Gorman advised the Board that traditionally an informal Meet and Greet was held at the Senior Center and all candidates running for all offices were invited to a continental breakfast. Two years ago, very few older adults participated. This year, Program Director Mary Lou Niedzielski, polled the lunch participants to see if they would like to have the candidates invited to lunch. They responded positively to the idea. All forty candidates were sent an invitation to attend lunch on one of three designated days at the Senior Center. The Center can accommodate up to twelve candidates per lunch. Thus far, twelve candidates have rsvp'd that they will attend and have provided their preferred date.

D. Candidate Forums

Forums will be held at the Senior Center as follows:

School Committee: October 22

Wards 1, 2, 3: October 23

Wards 4, 5, 6: October 28

The forums for at-large and Mayoral candidates will occur in larger venues. Arrangements for dates and times are in process.

E. LGBT Focus Groups

Mrs. Gorman passed out a Research Report completed by Rachel Tynan, a Sociology major at Westfield State University (WSU) and her faculty supervisor, Dr. Tamara Smith. Mrs. Gorman asked the Board to review the findings of the report and be prepared to discuss them at next month's Board meeting. Dennis Akins is working with Mrs. Gorman and Ms. Tynan to help with their understanding of the needs of this group. Mrs. Taylor asked who is being targeted in the report. Mrs. Gorman advised that it is the older Westfield LGBT community.

F. FY2020 Senior Citizen Property Tax Work-Off Program: The deadline submission of applications is September 26, 2019. To date, 31 people have inquired about the program; 21 have completed the application and been interviewed; 20 are eligible to participate in the program. One candidate was over-income. As it stands, the program eligibility requirements and \$500 maximum tax credit cannot be changed because they are embedded in the City Ordinance. Mrs. Gorman discussed the possibility of changing the income guidelines and/or increasing the \$500 maximum. As the minimum wage increases, the number of required volunteer hours decreases. Mrs. Rockwal suggested

opening the program up to those who are above the income eligibility requirement if slots remain unfilled. Mrs. Gorman will consider that option. Any changes must be approved by the City Council.

V. Items For Action: None

VI. Our Executive Director, Tina Gorman, then presented the Director's Report, copy attached. Review of Programs

- *Lunch & Learn: Healthy Hydration*
 - o Presenter from the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts
 - o Discussed various complications from dehydration and healthy hydration habits
 - o A full house and very well received

- *(Annual) Big Chill Bingo Party*
 - o Root beer floats; 50/50 drawing; door prizes
 - o The Bingo participants were very appreciative and we had some 'non-regulars' participate

- *Financial Fraud*
 - o Evening program; 75 participants
 - o Sponsored by Polish National Credit Union and Hampden County District Attorney's Office
 - o Light supper provided
 - o Presenter: Assistant District Joan O'Brien provided a number of case scenarios
 - o Positive feedback from participants

Upcoming Programs

- *'Cops for a Cause' Luncheon (a COA/WPD Partnership)*
 - o Thursday, September 19
 - o Fundraising event for local chapter of the Alzheimer's Association; Bianca Walker from the Alzheimer's Association will be in attendance
 - o Entertainment: The Keepers – Marion Dunk and Chip Arnold (no charge)
 - o Chili: Mark Carboneau; Servers: Members of the Westfield Police Department
 - o The event is sold out

- *Friends 'Free FALLing' Turkey Dinner (Fall Fundraiser)*
 - o Sunday, September 22
 - o Entertainment (Noah Lis) begins at 2 p.m.
 - o Turkey dinner at 3 p.m.
 - o Lottery bouquet; 50/50 drawing; Friends tee shirt sale
 - o The event is sold out

- *Hydration Continued... Making Smart Beverage Choices*
 - o Thursday, September 26 from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.
 - o Presenter: Kristen Lussier, SNAP Education Coordinator
 - o Will discuss healthy beverage options and reading nutrition labels

- *Lunch & Learn: Westfield Recycling*
 - o Thursday, September 26
 - o Presenter: Joe Rouse, Director, Westfield Health Department
 - o Will discuss what should and should not go into Westfield's recycle barrels
 - o Will have two tables with samples
 - o Tickets may be purchased in advance and more than half have been sold to date

- *Flu Shots*
 - o October 1 and 2; 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
 - o Westfield Health Department and Medical Reserve Corps
 - o No cost; participants must sign up in advance and must bring insurance card
 - o Slots are filling quickly

- *AARP Tax Training*
 - o The Westfield Senior Center will be the host site for a Western Massachusetts AARP tax training
 - o October 10: all-day training

- *Think Pink! Breast Cancer Awareness Luncheon*
 - o Thursday, October 17
 - o Entertainment: Center Stage
 - o Tickets \$5 – Go on sale October 2 at 9 a.m.

VII: The Chair reminded us that our next meeting will be held on Monday, October 21, 2019, at 1:00 p.m. at City Hall in Room 201. This is a change from our regularly scheduled second Monday of the month because of the Columbus Day Holiday.

VIII: There being no further business to come before the Board, upon Motion duly made by Barbara Taylor and seconded by Eileen Rockwal, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 2:01 p.m.
A true record.

List of Exhibits:

Westfield State University Research Report: *Inclusive Aging: Determining the Needs, Strengths, and Preferences of the Older LGBTQ+ Population in Westfield, Massachusetts*; September 12, 2019
Director's Report

Elizabeth Boucher, Secretary