

**City of Westfield
Minutes of the Council On Aging
September 20, 2021**

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2:45 PM

WESTFIELD CITY CLERK

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

Board Members Present: Elizabeth Boucher, Ed Ekmalian, James V. Liptak, and Barbara Taylor. Also present was Tina Gorman, Director of the Westfield Council On Aging.

II. Approval of Minutes of August 9, 2021 Meeting:
Upon a Motion duly made by Ed Ekmalian and seconded by Elizabeth Boucher, it was
unanimously VOTED: To approve the Minutes of the August 9, 2021 Meeting.

III. Public Participation:
None

IV: Items for Discussion/Information:

A. Highland Valley Elder Services (HVES) Report - Jim Liptak:

All HVES employees are back in the office. No one is working remotely at this time. Per a vote of the HVES Board, all incumbent officers were re-elected. Mrs. Gorman asked which towns were represented: Mr. Liptak advised that the towns were: Hatfield, Easthampton, Southampton and Northampton.

Kathy Twiss retired and Gretchen Parker has been hired as the new Human Resources Director.

HVES has a number of vacancies, especially in home-care services. The Nutrition Program is going well.

Kelly McCarthy, Director of PQI, Performance Quality Investigations, conducted a survey. She used an unofficial 2020 census number for Westfield of 10,165 older adults. Mrs. Gorman questioned where that number came from. The Westfield City Clerk's office does not yet have an official number of adults 60+ for the City. Mr. Liptak will ask Kelly McCarthy where she obtained her figures.

B. FY21 Senior Safe Grant, Update:

Mrs. Gorman purchased 19 lock boxes for the Residential Lock Box Program. There is overtime money in the FY21 Senior Safe Grant to pay firefighters and EMT's to participate in the Senior Options event. Because that event was cancelled, the extra money was used to purchase additional lock boxes. Tina has worked with Joyce Peregrin to determine those older adults who are most at risk and would benefit from the program.

Seniors who receive lockboxes need to understand that these boxes are permanent fixtures. There are volunteers from ELM Electric who will be installing the lockboxes. Mrs. Gorman is hopeful that the lock boxes will be installed by the end of October.

There is \$500 in the grant available to purchase buckets, lids, and sand scoopers for the new *Sand for Seniors* program.

Buckets of sand will be delivered to seniors who have few family supports in the area to help with slippery sidewalks and front stoops during the winter months. Joyce Peregrin, Joanne Ortega, and Julie Barnes have targeted seniors who are most vulnerable. The current list of sand recipients includes 39 older adults. More names will be added to the list. The DPW is providing the sand for the buckets. Tina has arranged with Westfield Technical Academy students to fill and deliver the buckets of sand. There is a maximum of 50 buckets available.

The sand will be delivered during the last two weeks of October.

C. Fall Flu Clinics, Update

Mrs. Gorman reported that because of staff shortages at the Westfield Health Department, she asked James Root from Stop & Shop Pharmacy if they could accommodate all three flu clinics at the Senior Center this year. Stop & Shop is happy to do so. The flu clinics will be held on October 5, 6, and 8 in the afternoon. A total of 135 older adults will be given flu shots. In the last two years, that number increased from 80 to 100 and this year, to 135. The clinics will be set up in the Great Room.

Karen Noblit is completing all of the preliminary paperwork for each participant and participants must provide copies of all insurance before an appointment is scheduled.

D. Tax Work-Off Program

This program will allow 25 older adults to volunteer and receive \$800 off of their City property taxes. None of the City Departments opted to participate in the program this year. So all of the volunteers will be placed in the public schools or the animal shelter. Mrs. Gorman is coordinating the school placements with Matt Garlo and the shelter placements with Margaret Terkelson. In addition to the usual eligibility requirements, all volunteers must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Tina is unsure what the volunteer response will be following last year's program hiatus. Barbara Taylor asked about the income guidelines for the program. Mrs. Gorman responded that they are \$38,640 for a single person and \$52,260 for a couple.

E. New COA Position and Hire

Mrs. Gorman reported that Carol Palmer has been hired under the State Grant as a Group Exercise Instructor. Beginning on September 28, she will teach two fitness classes twice a week.

V. Items for Action

NONE

VI. Director's Report

Review of Programs

- Meal Program

- Throughout the month of September, hybrid style
- Four days curbside and one day indoor congregate
 - Highest number to date for indoor dining is 35; average is 22
- Following a meeting with Joe Rouse, in assessing rising COVID cases and probable City building mask mandate, will return to curbside five days a week beginning on October 1

- Channel 15 fall entertainment: September/October

- Brad and Merrill Shepard singing Broadway show tunes
- Airing Wednesday afternoons at 2:40 and Saturday evenings at 6:00 throughout the months of September and October

- 'Westfield Council On Aging Presents' Series, September

- Kathi Catugno, CORE Coordinator

Greater Westfield Coalition for Outreach,
Recovery and Education

- ‘Addictions Across the Generations’
- Kathi discussed the consequences of addictive behavior on families as well as the improper use of prescription and over-the-counter medications by older adults

- *Seasoned Bombers Billiards League*

- The original Thursday group was split with no more than 18 on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons
- Thursday is full; Tuesday has room for more pool players

- *Side By Side support group*

- Returned to regular meeting day: fourth Friday of the month
- Time change: 9 to 10:30 to give facilitator time to prepare for curbside meal distribution

- *Do Re Mi Singers*

- Resumed rehearsals on Monday afternoons at 1 p.m.
- No performances scheduled at this time
- COA Director is working with Pete Cowles to tape a Do Re Mi concert for airing on Channel 15 in January

- *Bingo*

- Friday afternoons from 1 to 2:30
- Last Friday of the month is Gift Card Bingo
- Registration the previous day beginning at 10 a.m.

Upcoming Programs

- *Viewpoints Low Vision Support Group*

- Resumes this month
- Third Tuesday of the month, 10 to 11:30 a.m.
- Agnes Fleming, Facilitator

- *Curbside Chair Yoga Sign-Ups for late fall classes*

- Wednesday, October 6 at 9 a.m.
- Classes begin October 25 and end on December 2
- Will likely offer a two-week mini session in December before the holidays

- *Autumn Harvest Curbside Dinner*
 - Wednesday, October 20
 - Comfort food menu: Yankee pot roast with gravy, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables
 - Pre-registration required

- *'Westfield Council On Aging Presents' Series, October*
 - Ron Bryant, President, Baystate Noble Hospital
 - Topics:
 - programs and services that are helpful to the City's older adults
 - the reasons that a local hospital is important for the community
 - coordination of patient care
 - future additions and renovations in the planning stages

Miscellaneous

- Medicare open enrollment begins on October 15
 - As she did last year, Karen Noblit will be conducting all appointments over the phone
 - Karen has been effectively utilizing e-mail and the Senior Center drop box for fuel assistance applications

- New outside sliding glass door installation
 - Funded by the Friends group
 - Sizeable donation from the Barbara Zygarowski estate

VII: The Chair reminded the Board that our next meeting is to be held on

Monday, October 18, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. at the Westfield Senior Center. Because of the Columbus Day holiday, the meeting will be held on the third Monday of October.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

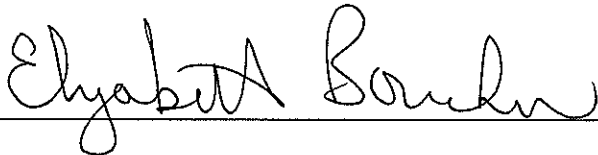
Mrs. Gorman announced to the Board that the new sliding glass door at the front entrance of the Senior Center is being installed today.

Mr. Liptak asked Mrs. Gorman if the books in the Fireside Lounge are available to be taken out by people. She advised that they are. They can either return the books or pass them on to other people. The Senior Center continues to get new book donations.

VIII. There being no further business to come before the Board, upon a Motion duly made by Ed Ekmalian and seconded by Barbara Taylor it was unanimously VOTED to adjourn the meeting at 2:10 p.m.

List of Exhibits:

- Director's Report

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Boucher". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Elizabeth Boucher, Secretary