

**City of Westfield
Minutes of the Council On Aging
October 16, 2023**

I. The Meeting was called to order by the Board Chair, James Liptak at 12:29 p.m.

Board Members Present: James Liptak, Elizabeth Boucher, Ed Ekmalian, John Greaney, and Trudy Knowles. Also present were Michael Squindo, Executive Director of the Council On Aging, and Tina Gorman, Temporary Mentor to the Executive Director.

II. Approval of Minutes of September 11, 2023 Meeting:

Upon a Motion duly made by Ed Ekmalian and seconded by John Greaney, it was

VOTED unanimously: To approve the Minutes of the September 11, 2023 meeting.

III. Public Participation:

No public participation.

IV: Items for Discussion/Information:

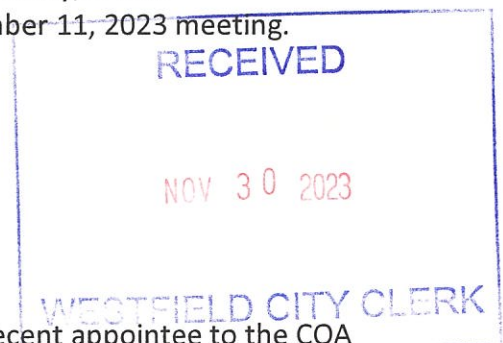
A. Introduction of New Board Member, Trudy Knowles:

Mrs. Gorman introduced Trudy Knowles as Mayor McCabe's most recent appointee to the COA Board. She replaced Kerry Kielbasa, who left the Board in January 2022. Ms. Knowles was approved by the City Council to begin in October 2023. Ms. Knowles provided some background. She is a retired Westfield State University professor and prior to that was a public-school teacher. She is an author and in the spring of 2023 was the guest author for the Senior Center's *Novel Ideas Book Group*. When asked about her desire to serve on the Board, Ms. Knowles said she loves the programs at our Senior Center. She feels that it will be both interesting and powerful to help create programs in the future. Mr. Liptak has known Ms. Knowles for many years and has a great deal of respect for her. He welcomed her to the Board.

B. Introduction of New Executive Director, Michael Squindo

Mrs. Gorman introduced Michael Squindo as Mayor McCabe's selection for the Executive Director position. Mr. Squindo officially began working in his new position on October 10, 2023. Mr. Squindo served as the Director of the Agawam Council On Aging/Senior Center for six years prior to coming to Westfield. He did his graduate internship (Springfield College, Social Work) at the East Longmeadow COA and served as Outreach Coordinator at the Longmeadow COA. He has worked with both younger and older populations.

Mrs. Gorman told the Board that she has applied for the Special Projects Coordinator position. She is hopeful that a decision will be made by late November. In the meantime, her title is Temporary Mentor.' She is working closely with Mr. Squindo during the transition, and will cover for him when is on family leave after the birth of his second child, this month.



C. Highland Valley Elder Services (HVES) Report

Mr. Liptak was unable to attend the HVES Board meeting in October. That meeting is typically an annual review. Mr. Liptak will update the COA Board next month. Mr. Liptak serves on the Nutrition Committee and provided an update. They are seeking a new member. HVES is currently preparing 800 meals per day for distribution. They also prepare emergency meals for impending inclement weather. At this time, meals prepared at Salvo have been canceled because of a bed bug issue.

D. Senior Center Flu Clinics, Review

Mrs. Gorman reported that three flu clinics were held at the Senior Center in partnership with the City's Health Department. A total of 110 older adults participated, 60 on the first day and 35 on the second day. A third (nonscheduled) day was added for 15 participants because not all of the vaccine ordered arrived in time. All participants had pre-registered with Evelyn Bristol, BSN, RN so all paperwork was completed. Participants were scheduled for exact times. There was a backup almost immediately on the first day and participants were very frustrated. Mrs. Bristol checked participants in, another nurse from the Health Department did a brief health screening, and Deb Mulvenna was the only nurse actually giving the shots. COA staff tried to sooth ruffled feathers. The second day ran much smoother, presumably because there were far fewer participants. Mrs. Gorman also explained to Board members that for the past two years, the COA has loaned the Health Department the money to purchase the vaccine because the Health Department doesn't have enough in its Revolving Gift Account to cover the cost. The Health Department receives reimbursement from the State in the spring (last year in two installments) and then in turn, has to reimburse the COA. And this year, Mrs. Bristol learned the week before the flu clinics that the vaccine would arrive in two shipments, so we were short for the original two clinics and had to add a third one. Considering the challenges with this year's clinics and last year's financial reimbursement, Mrs. Gorman met with Mark Butera, Pharmacist at Westfield's Stop & Shop to plan for next year. Mr. Butera had partnered with the COA to conduct three flu clinics at the Senior Center in 2021. They were seamless. Additionally, he can give both the flu vaccine and a Covid booster at the same clinic. He did that at the Blandford COA this year. If Mr. Squindo opts to pursue this avenue for next year, he'll need to begin the process with Mr. Butera in June 2024.

E. Medicare Open Enrollment

The Medicare Open Enrollment for Part D began on October 15 and will run through December 7, 2023. Lynn Hills, Senior Benefits Coordinator, is completely booked. Seniors were encouraged to complete a 'Medicare Open Enrollment Pre-Appointment Form,' which was available beginning September 18. Appointments with Mrs. Hills were scheduled in the order of the returned forms, completed in full. New callers are being referred to the Regional SHINE Office for telephone appointments.

F. Saturday Hours

Mrs. Gorman asked the Board to begin exploring the idea of Saturday hours at the Senior Center. The issue was raised by Councilor Brent Bean at the October 5, 2023 City Council meeting. There are a number of considerations:

1. Is the goal to have specific programs offered or to have the Center open for pool, cards, games, and craft activities without any instructors or facilitators?

2. Staffing: Two COA staff are needed on site in case of a 9-1-1 emergency or an issue with the building. Almost all current staff are contracted for a Monday through Friday work week, within specified time parameters. Until those contracts expire, those staff members cannot be forced to work weekends.

3. Finances: Finances need to be considered both in terms of staffing as well as building utilities.

A brief discussion ensued. COA Board members pointed out that many attend their grandchildren's sporting events and other extracurricular activities on the weekends and therefore would not utilize the Senior Center. Mr. Squindo will meet with the Mayor to prioritize COA goals, including additional hours, as well as a review of the Strategic Plan developed by the Board, pre-Covid.

V. Items for Action:

The Board of Directors was advised by Mrs. Gorman that each member must sign a new *Signature of Authorization Form* because the COA has a new Director. Mr. Squindo will be listed with Mary Lou Niedzielski, Program Director, as backup. Those Board members present signed the form. Mrs. Gorman will contact Eileen Rockwal for her signature prior to the next Board meeting.

VI. Director's Report Review of Programs

- *Sand for Seniors*
 - o Funded through the Senior Safe grant
 - o Twenty-one seniors have signed up
 - o Press Release in The Westfield News resulted in many additional calls
 - o Five-gallon bucket of sand/salt combination will be delivered by WTA Allied Health students late October/early November

- *City Clerk*
 - o Kaitlyn Bruce, Westfield City Clerk, set up an informational table at the Senior Center on Thursday, October 12 (meatloaf day)
 - o Provided information regarding the upcoming November 7 local election
 - o Had people waiting for her before she arrived

- *Turkey Dinner*
 - o Thursday, November 9 (indoor dining only)
 - o Tickets will go on sale October 25
 - o No curbside turkey dinner for Thanksgiving this year
 - o Anticipate 125 to 150 turkey dinners delivered on Thanksgiving day
 - Dinners prepared by COA kitchen crew
 - No meal offered on Wednesday, November 22

- *October 'Westfield Council On Aging Presents' Series*
 - o 'Bank Fraud' - Jason Hosey, Local Bank Manager
 - o Discussion: how to protect against consumer fraud and how victims of fraudulent behavior should react
 - o Aired Tuesdays and Thursdays at 2:45 throughout the month of October

Upcoming Programs

- *Open House and Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony*
 - o Elder Service Office Suite
 - o Ribbon-Cutting: Wednesday, October 18 at 10 a.m.
 - o Open House: 10 a.m. to Noon
 - o Dignitaries, Press have been invited

- *Financial Wellness Course*
 - o Facilitated by Jen Fernandes, Program Manager with the Thrive program
 - o Six-week interactive program with topics to include banking, budgeting, savings, credit, the 'Cliff Effect'
 - o Dates: October 26; November 2, 9, 16, 30; and December 7 from 9 to 10:30 a.m.
 - o No signups to date

- *AARP Tax Aide Program Preparation*
 - o Meeting with Regional Coordinator, Dan Welch to discuss logistics
 - o All Tax Aides for Westfield site are returning
 - May have one or two new volunteers
 - o Westfield Senior Center was offered as a training site
 - o Protocol will be the same as last year
 - o Program will be set up in the Learning Center and Multipurpose Room
 - o Reviews will be done in the Great Room later in the day


- *Miscellaneous*
 - o Staff Changes:
 - Happy Daley has left and has been replaced by Eileen Collins (retired from Barnes Airport last year)
 - Mary Cohutt has left and has been replaced by Fran St. Peter-Sanft (retired Franklin Elementary School Principal)

VII: Next Meeting:

The Chair reminded the Board that our next meeting will be held on **Monday November 13, 2023 at 12:30 p.m.** at the Westfield Senior Center.

VIII. Adjourn:

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


Elizabeth Boucher, Secretary