

Commission on Aging
June 8, 2020 – Regular Meeting
ZOOM Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Marjorie Mlodzinski, Vice Chair Nan Wasniewski, Gerrie Transue, Linda Pasternak, Roberta Avery.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jean Stawicki, Sandra Gaetano.

OTHERS PRESENT: Senior Center Director Patty Watts, Board of Finance Liaison Mike Eagan, Board of Selectman Liaison Rosemary Coyle.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mlodzinski called this Zoom Regular Meeting to order at 8:32 am.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Mlodzinski led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

It was noted that the correct date for the March minutes to be reviewed is March 9, 2020 and that Item 9.1 slate of officers for nomination along with the Chair will include the Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

4. REVIEW OF MARCH 9, 2020 MINUTES

The minutes presented for review are for March 9, 2020.

Motion by: N. Wasniewski

to approve the March 9, 2020, minutes as read.

Second by: L. Pasternak.

Vote: R. Avery abstained (absent from meeting)

All others: In favor. Minutes approved.

5. FINANCIAL REPORT

5.1. CoA

R. Avery reported the amounts have not changed and stand at \$416.26 in the CoA budget and \$108 in the Town Printing and Publications line item.

5.2. Senior Center

Director Watts provided the following:

Transportation Report for February

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Transportation | 2/28/2020 | \$151.00 |
| (In town daily trips) | | |
| Trips | 2/28/2020 | 175.00 |
| (Lunch Bunch, shopping trips, etc.) | | |
| Combined Total | | 326.00 |
| Year to Date Total | | \$2554.11 |

Transportation Report for March

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Transportation | 5/8/2020 | \$69.00 |
| (In town daily trips) | | |
| Trips | 5/8/2020 | 0.00 |
| (Lunch Bunch, shopping trips, etc.) | | |
| Combined Total | | 69.00 |
| Year to Date Total | | \$2623.11 |

RECEIVED
COLCHESTER, CT
2020 JUN 10 PM 1:24
Rosemary Coyle
Mike Eagan
Nan Wasniewski
Gerrie Transue
Linda Pasternak
Jean Stawicki
Sandra Gaetano

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March, April and May reports merged into one due to closure
No trips were held.
TOTAL year to date \$2623.11

6. CHAIR REPORT

Chair Mlodzinski noted this is a trying time and we need to keep hope and faith. M. Mlodzinski received a thank you note from P. Watts for the basket donated to the Senior Holiday Fair from this Commission noting a \$2600 income. The Annual Report is being worked on and should be complete by July 1.

Cragin Library is holding a book sale this month. It was suggested to call the library as they are working to confirm the dates of the sale. The staff has been delivering books and providing curbside pickup. The library is slated to open on June 17, 2020.

M. Mlodzinski has asked that the budget for CoA be increased from \$300 to \$500, however, it did not make it in the budget but First Selectman Bylone noted support may be available in other ways.

A Long Term Recovery Committee has been formed to help citizens and businesses with recovery, how to assist in the recovery, possible changes in zoning to help citizens and businesses move forward.

Colchester is scheduled to host the Commission on Aging Roundtable in July. This may have to be rescheduled.

S. Gaetano had brought information to the Commission regarding a medical closet for the public needing various medical equipment. This item will be on a future agenda.

R. Avery stated elections for local AARP were held by email and no meetings are normally held during the summer months.

7. DIRECTOR OF SENIOR SERVICES REPORT

Report attached.

8. OLD BUSINESS

8.1. Senior Center Building Committee

In February, the Board of Selectmen authorized \$46,991 to the architect to move forward. In May, three design options were presented to the committee. Members requested some additional options for the June 9, 2020 meeting. Proposals for the project manager are being reviewed.

8.2 Norton Park Committee

N. Wasniewski stated there is a meeting this Wednesday, June 10. The committee has a formal plan in place, fundraising will be ongoing and at this time, they are still waiting for the site to be cleaned up.

8.3. Missed Programs – Bacon Academy, Alzheimer's Association

This program will be revisited for presentation in late summer or fall.

8.4. Senior Resource Guide

The Guide is being revised and will be ready for review soon.

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1. Nominating Committee for June Vote for Commission Positions.

R. Avery and M. Mlodzinski volunteered to present a slate of officers for the July meeting.

9.2. Reopening the Senior Center

Director Watts has been in touch with various officials concerning reopening. June 17 is the beginning of Phase 2 but it is possible the Senior Center may not open until September. There are many obstacles to overcome with distancing, programs being limited in the number who may attend, etc.

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10. COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

At this time, the commission has a full membership with two alternate positions still vacant.

11. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

No citizen comments were received.

M. Egan noted that there is a Board of Finance (BOF) meeting on June 8, with a vote on the budget by the Board of Finance on June 15. Input is welcome. The BOF is planning to post the entire budget online. Comments may be sent by email to townbudget@ct.gov.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by: R. Avery to adjourn this meeting.

Second by: N. Wasniewski.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

Chair Mlodzinski adjourned this meeting at 9:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jane Slade
Clerk

COA Meeting-June 8, 2020

The Colchester Senior Center closed to the public, effective March 16th. As of right now, we do not have a reopening date. There have been services provided all along, which will continue and be increased, as it is deemed safe to do so. Current services include:

- In-town transportation for groceries, pharmacies, local medical appointments, beauty/barber appointments, retail shopping. Seats are assigned to passengers and disinfected after use, mask wearing is required. Capacity per bus is limited to allow for social distancing.
- Medical transportation is ongoing. Capacity is limited. Mask wearing is mandatory and disinfection protocols are in place.
- Nutrition-Community Café has become a once weekly meal delivery of 5 frozen meals, milk, bread and fruit. These deliveries happen every Tuesday through our drivers. MOW deliveries are taking place daily Tuesday through Friday. These are no-contact deliveries with a prepared meal, milk, bread and fruit and a wellness check. These are made by dedicated volunteers and senior center staff.
- Staff have maintained a daily presence at the senior center, answering phones, emails and daily operations. Beginning on March 23rd, office staff began working from home on a rotational basis with 2 office staff in and 1-2 office staff. Drivers and site server have been on premises daily. All staff will be working in the building again effective, June 15th.
- Wellness Check calls have gone out to every registered members beginning March 16th and about every 1.5-2 weeks. The response to those calls have been overwhelmingly positive and have provided an unbroken link of connection during this time of (building) closure.
- Missy Bauman has been doing a lot of outreach for the Making Memories Program participants, who are particularly hard hit during this time. She has been in weekly contact with them and their loved ones, developed a monthly newsletter just for them, created a video of each of them greeting each other and found other ways to keep them connected.
- We've cleaned up our database, archiving people who had moved or passed away, without our knowing. (See membership stats below)
- Beginning in late April, we began to roll out some distanced programming. That ramped up in May and even more in June. There is at least one thing on the program calendar daily, with up to three opportunities on some days. I wasn't sure how receptive people would be with Zoom technology, but it has gone remarkably well. We have taken a high and low-tech approach to try to offer things for everyone. We use a Conference Call platform for a weekly Bingo game and "In the News" program and have printable activities on the Town website or available through mail.
- We are seeing members one-on-one for personal appointments in person now, for Social Service assistance, Municipal Agent activities and Medicare.
- Effective June 1, Renters' Rebate appointments are being scheduled through Social Services.

Many senior centers statewide are talking about a reopening date of September 1 or later. I am working with the First Selectman, Emergency Management Director, our Area Agency on Aging and Chatham Health District following the recommendations of the phased reopening of the State. We will continue to add in services as it becomes safe and appropriate to do so, but because we serve an exclusively older adult population, we have to be particularly cautious in our plans for reopening.

Several Grant submissions have taken place during this time: Municipal Grant Program which supports our out-of-town medical transportation was submitted; the Section 5310 Program will be submitted to CTDOT/SCCOG for \$60,000 towards the purchase of a new bus. The Title III grant in the amount of \$14,665 which supports our Making Memories Program has been approved. The Colchester Lion's Night of Giving was cancelled. No financial gifts will be given this year.

I want to say that this has been a very difficult and stressful time. Our service model of people coming into our building, so we can assess, relate and serve has been upended by COVID-19, to say nothing

of the vulnerabilities of our members to this virus. We've had to reinvent almost everything that we would typically do as a senior center. I want to commend the senior center staff for their resiliency, their hard work and professionalism at this time to find ways to continue to serve our senior community. There is an argument to be made that there was no more critical time for senior centers than the time of COVID, when senior centers were not able to be open. I'm proud of my team, my department and the field of professionals in the aging network who truthfully have never worked harder. I am proud to stand with them through this crisis.

Another important topic that has surfaced at this time professionally has been senior access to technology. With tele-health at the forefront and the importance of platforms like Zoom for social connection and program opportunities, it has become much more visible through this crisis that technological access is important for senior safety. Devices and internet access are both important. This may be something the CoA could work to champion. Fundraising for devices which could be loaned out or collaborations with the Library are possibilities.

Attendance & Meals Served:

- Meals served in February: on site: 245 MOW: 344
- Meals served/delivered in March: 204 MOW: 344
- Monthly transports in February: 856
- Monthly transports in March: 564
- Monthly Attendance in February: 2286
- Monthly attendance in March: 1168
- Total Membership: 1305