

Commission on Aging
March 8, 2021 – Regular Meeting
Zoom Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Marjorie Mlodzinski, Vice Chair Nan Wasniewski, Secretary Gerrie Transue Linda Pasternak, Rosanne Tousignant, Alternate Nola Weston, Treasurer Roberta Avery at 8:34 am.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sandy Gaetano.

OTHERS PRESENT: First Selectman Mary Bylone, Board of Selectmen Liaison Rosemary Coyle, Board of Education Liaison Mary Tomasi, Senior Center Director Patty Watts, Board of Finance Liaison Mike Egan, Quinn Kozak.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Marge Mlodzinski called this Regular Meeting to order at 8:31 am.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Mlodzinski led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Chair Mlodzinski requested moving Item 10 - Commission Membership as Item 3.1.

Motion by: N. Wasniewski

to move Item 10. Commission Membership to Item 3.1 as requested.

Second by: G. Transue.

Vote: Unanimous to approve by those present.

R. Avery joined the meeting at this point in the agenda.

3.1 (10.) COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

Chair Mlodzinski introduced and welcomed Rosanne Tousignant as a member and Nola Weston as an alternate to the Commission on Aging. Chair Mlodzinski also welcomed Quinn Kozak who is a 2020 graduate of Bacon Academy and is interested in joining the Commission.

4. CITIZENS COMMENTS – See above Item 3.

5. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES: FEBRUARY 8, 2021

Minutes of the February 8, 2021, Regular Meeting were presented for review. Chair Mlodzinski stated a correction to the date of Item 9.2 Norton Park Committee Public Forum on Zoom should read, "March 25, 2021, at 6:00 pm".

Motion by: R. Avery

to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2021, Regular Meeting with the correction to the Norton Park Public Forum to read *March 25*, 2021.

Second by: N. Wasniewski.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

6.1. CoA

Treasurer R. Avery stated there have been no changes to the Financial Report. The Printing & Publications Line Item remains at zero and the CoA budget is at \$516.26.

6.2. Senior Center – see attached report

7. CHAIR REPORT

Chair Mlodzinski thanked G. Transue for sending a thank you note to Robert Ferrara for a \$100 donation to the Commission. Fud Delivery Business Manager Dave Koji sent a \$200 donation to the Senior Center.

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2021 MAR -9 PM 2:09
MARJORIE MLODZINSKI
CHAIRMAN
COMMISSION ON AGING
TOWN CLERK

Commission on Aging
March 8, 2021 – Regular Meeting

R. Avery will be attending a March 11 meeting of the Senior Resources Agency on Aging Community Conversation to develop an area plan for three years, seeking input from caregivers, providers and beneficiaries. R. Avery will bring information to this commission.

The Long-Term Recovery Committee continues to meet and discuss how to implement needs. A report will be presented to the Board of Selectmen.

First Selectman Mary Bylone is continuing with the Community Conversations. Chatham Health Director Russell Melmed is now focusing on teacher vaccinations.

The referendum for the new fire equipment and apparatus will be held on at the end of May or June. The full budget referendum is scheduled for May 27, 2021.

The Abundant Life Church is having a drive-thru *Farmers to Families* Food Box Distribution every Friday through March from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

Westchester Congregational Church is having a drive-thru pic-up Turkey Dinner on March 27, 2021.

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee met on March 11, 2021.

The AARP State meeting will be held in April, however, the town AARP group has not scheduled a meeting as of yet.

Board of Education Chair Mary Tomasi stated there is a BOE budget presentation March 9, 2021 with a three percent increase. WJMS will be open full time after April vacation. The elementary schools were closed today due to several teachers having reactions to the vaccine and no substitutes available.

First Selectman Mary Bylone said she is hearing positive information about the grand list, new businesses in Town, State funding and the new building of affordable housing. M. Bylone thanked all the volunteers for their work on these committees and feels the public does not realize the work that is done by volunteers. Departments continue to present increases and there is a need to make up concessions from last year. M. Bylone urged citizens to participate in budget meetings where the budget is being discussed and planned. Also, the Historic Commission has reached an agreement on the improvements to most of the items for the Town Green. The Gazebo will have to be rebuilt.

Selectman Coyle added that the Town has received a \$150,000 grant and the BOS has asked the BOF to appropriate \$87,000 to purchase property to add to the Greenway corridor. A loan program for building owners to allow for long-term financing for clean energy and upgrades to lower energy costs was approved to go to a Town meeting for approval.

M. Egan stated the Superintendent of Schools has kept the BOF up to date on the budget situation. The Police Department is requesting new officers and cars to increase the frequency of patrols.

8. DIRECTOR SENIOR SERVICES REPORT – see attached repo

9. OLD BUSINESS

9.1 Senior Center Building Committee

Chair Mlodzinski said the building committee meets every two weeks, the committee is developing a power point presentation, preparing a letter to every household and letters to The Rivereast Bulletin to inform the public about the new center and the referendum that is being scheduled, possibly for September 23, 2021. There is Zoom link on the Town website for meetings.

9.2 Programs for 2021

Last year a presentation from the Bacon Academy Environmental Club was scheduled entitled “Food, Stuff, Energy & Water” and cancelled due to Covid. Chair Mlodzinski and teacher Jill Levasseur have rescheduled this public Zoom presentation for 6:00 pm on Earth Day, April 22, 2021.

Chair Mlodzinski has arranged for a presentation with Kris Sortwell on an Alzheimer’s topic. As there are several possible topics, a decision will be made at the April meeting for a public Zoom presentation from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm on May 19, 2021.

Chair Mlodzinski would like to see this commission partner with the Youth Services group and the Parks & Recreation department for a joint event. Garden Club President Katherine Kosiba has also offered to talk about the value of gardening with seniors.

9.3 Norton Park Committee

N. Wasniewski said fundraising is continuing, a “neighbor forum” was held recently reaching out to the property owners near the proposed park, the committee is pursuing two grants. It is hoped that with good weather, progress will be seen when the cleanup resumes. A public forum through Cragin Library is scheduled for March 25, 2021. The last forum was recorded and is available on the Town website.

9.4 Policies and Procedures Review Subcommittee

Director Watts, M. Mlodzinski, R. Avery and G. Transue will review the existing policies and procedures for the Senior Center.

9.5 Reopening of Senior Center

Director Watts said some area Senior Centers have plans to reopen in May and others to open in September. Colchester has gone from a Covid red zone to an orange zone and it is hoped that a May opening will be possible. Masks and social distancing will still be in place.

10. COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP – See Item 3.1

11. CITIZENS COMMENTS

Q. Kozak offered to help with the advertisements for upcoming events.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by: R. Avery
to adjourn.

Second by: N. Wasniewski.

Vote: Unanimous to adjourn.

Chair Mlodzinski adjourned this meeting at 9:34 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jane Slade
Clerk

COA Meeting-March 8, 2021

Though our building is still not open to the public, we continue to provide the following services:

- Transportation for in-town, medical rides and monthly shopping trips (masked and socially distanced)
- Meals: MOW deliveries (Tuesday-Friday) and Community Café (5 frozen meals delivered every Tuesday)
- Wellness Check outreach calls-these are now happening once per month, unless otherwise requested
- Virtual Programming with at least 1 in-person safely distanced special event per month.
- Weekly communications through email blasts and robo-calls to all members
- Management of the office: volume of phone calls have remained steady, paying bills, grant reports, management of social media, etc.
- Building is closed, but people can call in to make an appointment for any one-on-one assistance which cannot be handled by phone. (masked and socially distanced)

Chatham Health District completed their 2nd Dose Clinic on-site on February 24th and a First Dose Vaccine Clinic on February 22nd, with a 2nd Dose scheduled on March 22nd. CHD has been asked to turn their attention towards vaccinating educators within the district and for the short term will not be holding public clinics.

Age eligibility has been lowered to 55+, effective March 1st. Whenever this happens, we hear about difficulty for folks to schedule their appointments. Our message is to be patient. There is still a limited amount of vaccine available, which is why there is a systematic rollout. The best way for people to schedule appointments is through VAMS, if they have computer access and by the toll-free CT COVID Vaccine Appointment Line at 877-918-2224.

Now that almost 95% of Colchester residents ages 75+ have received at least a first dose of vaccine, the senior center will be switching from scheduling for local vaccine clinics to providing guidance and/or assistance, as needed. The assumption is that as we move toward the lower age categories, most have access to computers and are able to navigate the system needed to schedule their own appointment, and they also (most likely) have access to transportation resources. According to CHD, if additional clinics are established, those appointments will be available through VAMS, unlike the "closed clinics" we were holding where the appointments did not show up in VAMS.

Last week, we had the wonderful experience of wishing our eldest senior center member, Mary W. a happy 100th birthday by delivering a proclamation on behalf of the First Selectman, a birthday card, balloons and a birthday cake. She is an incredibly sharp and capable woman who lives independently in the community and is even still driving. She represents everything about healthy and active aging that we hope to champion. What a joy to celebrate her milestone birthday!

We've been actively growing our social media presence on Facebook, as it will be an important tool to help reach segments of the population about the new senior center.

Colchester was downgraded on Friday to an Orange Alert status for COVID-19 positivity, and numbers are steadily declining. I've begun gathering information from other directors statewide about when they anticipate reopening. It ranges from early May until after Labor Day. As always, we will be looking to CHD to help us determine safety for reopening. Until then, we continue serving people by phone and email and are serving folks in-person by appointment.

AARP's Tax Aide program has begun and will continue into mid-April. The new format for scanning appointments seems to be working well. Appointments are scheduled on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Attendance & Meals Served:

- Meals delivered in January: Community Café:195 MOW: 512
- Monthly transports in January: 495
- Monthly attendance in January: 805
- Total Membership: 1369 (Membership grew rapidly last month with the registration of 50 new members.)

Item	Date	Amount	
Daily Transportation	2/26/2021	\$99.00	Total
Trips	2/26/2021	\$0.00	Total
Combined Total		\$99.00	
Year to Date Total		\$482.50	