

Commission on Aging
February 13, 2023 – Regular Meeting
Town Hall – 127 Norwich Avenue

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Nola Weston, Vice Chair Marjorie Mlodzinski, Treasurer Linda Pasternak, Corresponding Secretary Gerrie Transue, Rosanne Tousignant, Roberta Avery, Alternates William Otfinoski and Terry Brown.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Quinn Kozak.

OTHERS PRESENT: First Selectman Andreas Bisbikos, Board of Selectman (BOS) Selectman Rosemary Coyle, Board of Finance (BOS) Liaison Art Shilosky, Board of Education Liaison Mary Tomasi, Senior Services Director Patty Watts, School Superintendent Daniel Sullivan III, Cathy Russi.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Nola Weston called this Regular Meeting to order at 9:00 am.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Weston led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

No additions were requested.

4. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Cathy Russi spoke about having training at the Senior Center for CPR and awareness of the location of the defibrillators at various places, updating the File of Life, and a new local dentist willing to give information on dental care.

5. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF JANUARY 9, 2023, MEETING MINUTES

Motion by: M. Mlodzinski

to approve the minutes of January 9, 2023, minutes as read.

Second by: R. Avery.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

6. LIAISON REPORTS

6.1 Board of Education

M. Tomasi introduced the new Superintendent Daniel Sullivan to the Commission. A question and answer session followed.

6.2 Board of Finance

A. Shilosky noted there is a meeting of the Board of Finance tomorrow, February 14, 2023.

6.3 Board of Selectmen

First Selectman Bisbikos and R. Coyle noted that the consultant firm UHY will be extended for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA); noted the 325th Anniversary of Colchester will be celebrated on October 13 and 14, 2023. The celebration will be paid for through donations and sponsors – similar to the 57 Fest. Those groups wanting to participate should contact Tiffany Quinn at the Parks & Recreation Department.

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Gayle Furman
TOWN CLERK

7. CHAIR REPORT

Chair Weston noted the survey is available online and in paper form at Cragin Library, the Town Hall and the East Haddam CoA. Chair Eric Rosenberg contacted Chair Weston about reinstating meetings for the Round Table. Chair Weston emailed back that the commission members are very interested in getting together again.

8. FINANCIAL REPORT

8.1 CoA

Treasurer L. Pasternak reported \$416.26 in Donations, \$350 in Health Fair- (\$150 for Training and Seminars, \$200 for Health Fair), Printing and Publications - \$300.

8.2 Director of Senior Services

See attached report.

9. OLD BUSINESS

9.1 Senior Center Building Committee

M. Mlodzinski said a meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 14, 2023, at 7:00 pm. Plans for a ground breaking ceremony will be discussed.

9.2 Norton Park

L. Pasternak reported that a meeting took place with Consultant J. Giglioti, State Representative Mark DeCaprio, Planner Demian Sorrentino and Mark Weaver from the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO). There is a possibility that a local company may be able to open and take the soil that needs to be removed. This will be a huge savings to the project rather than shipping it out of state.

9.3 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

M. Mlodzinski said the survey is available online and at Town Hall, Cragin Library and the Senior Center. The survey is available until February 20, 2023. The list of applications totals \$3.4 million, however, there is only \$2.2 million available. The plan is to present the list of applicants to the Board of Selectmen in March.

9.4 American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

R. Avery stated the next meeting is March 7, 2023, at 1:00 pm at the Senior Center.

9.5 Education Sub-Committee – Survey Update

T. Brown reviewed the results of the recent survey.

9.6 CSC Strategic Plan Update

Director Watts stated the committee expects to complete the plan in late February. The draft will then be presented to the Board of Selectmen for approval.

10. NEW BUSINESS

10.1 Wellness Fair

The Parks & Recreation Commission is planning a Wellness Fair for April. Due to the large amount of planning that went into the last one, an alternative plan was discussed.

10.2 CoA Email

Sometime ago the Commission had an email address, however, at this time license restrictions and costs have limited the use of the town address for commissions.

10.3 Social Hour with Colchester Senior Center

A social hour for the Commission members and American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) to meet Senior Center members was discussed. L. Pasternak will meet with Senior Center Program Coordinator J. Savage to arrange a date.

10.4 Meet the Superintendent

M. Tomasi introduced the new Superintendent of Schools, Daniel P. Sullivan, III. A question and answer session followed with a possible meeting at the Senior Center discussed for early April.

11. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

C. Russi spoke about possible programs for seniors regarding trash and recycling.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by: R. Avery
to adjourn the meeting.

Second by: R. Tousignant.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

Chair Weston adjourned this meeting at 10:47 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jane Slade

**Director of Senior Services Report
CoA Meeting February 13, 2023**

The construction contract with BRD Builders, LLC was signed on Friday, February 3rd at a well-attended reception at the senior center, witnessed by many excited community members. Groundbreaking Ceremony is anticipated in April.

I have met with the First Selectman to discuss the Senior Services budget. I am asking for a 20 hour part-time driver to help with the growing need for senior transportation, which Andreas agreed is very much needed, based upon our statistics and increasing rate of refusal. We need additional resources in order to add any additional services. I've attached a copy of our Annual Report for FY 2023-24. We are busier than we were prior to the pandemic.

An application for supplementary funding was sent to the Colchester Lions Club, which if awarded, will benefit the Making Memories Program. The Lions' Annual Night of Giving is scheduled on Wednesday, April 12.

I am thrilled to announce that Ellen Fougere, who retired as the Assistant Director of the Waterford Senior Center, will be joining us as a highly skilled Volunteer Senior Benefits Counselor beginning in March. She is credentialed to provide benefits counseling, CHOICES counseling, Renters Rebate and Energy Assistance applications, and MSP and SNAP applications. She will be a wonderful asset to our center.

The Strategic Planning Team expects to wrap up their work at a meeting on 2/23. The final draft will be submitted to the Board of Selectmen for final approval. I thank the committee for their excellent work.

Our Annual Site Audit for the Making Memories Program is scheduled for Tuesday, March 7th with Kathy Chase of Senior Resources Area Agency on Aging.

We have a staff member who is going out on a medical leave (2 weeks), and coverage has been arranged.

Inclement weather postings can be found on WSFB Channel 3 (on TV or online) and also on the CSC Facebook site.

AARP Tax Aide Services began on February 3rd. All appointments are currently full.

The Colchester Senior Center will be closed on Monday, February 20th for Presidents' Day.

Attendance & Meals Served:

- Meals delivered in December: Community Café: 371 MOW: 725
- Monthly transports in December: 709
- Monthly attendance in December: 2,012
- Total Membership: 1,640

Town of Colchester
FY 2023-2024
Budget Proposal

Department: Senior Services

Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Colchester Senior Services Department to support older adults by providing programs and services designed to promote their independence, health, wellness and overall quality of life.

Vision Statement

The Colchester Senior Center is a community resource dedicated to engaging, enriching and empowering seniors.

Staffing

Director (full time)
Program Coordinator (full time)
Administrative Assistant (full time)
Administrative Support (Per Diem)
Bus Driver (2) (1 full time, 1 full time, grant funded)
Bus Driver (2) (part time)
Making Memories Program Coordinator (part-time, grant funded)
Nutrition Site Server (contracted with TVCCA)

2022-2023 Accomplishments

- Realized growth across many service lines: membership, program attendance/program sessions offered, transportation services, information and referral services, travel opportunities/participants and meals served/delivered.
- Established new community partnerships, particularly with the Across the Ages class at WJJMS, Regional Health Clinics with Hartford Healthcare, COVID Bivalent Booster & Flu Shot Clinics with Chatham Health District, Celebrate Colchester, Colchester Commission on Aging and local AARP Chapter #4019.
- Successful recruitment, hiring and training of a new Program Coordinator. Many new successful programs were developed.
- Implementation of changes to In-Town Transportation Services to increase efficiencies and serve more people, effective January 2022. Transportation services have expanded, and buses are traveling more miles this year than previously.
- After the resignation of the Social Services Coordinator, Director assisted with completing the season of Renters' Rebate and recruited help from TVCCA with the Energy Assistance program.
- Continued education, scheduling support and transportation for community seniors to receive their COVID booster vaccines. Nearly 100% of Colchester seniors are vaccinated according to State data.
- Rebuilt our senior travel programs to a full slate of travel opportunities, including the first international travel since the pandemic.
- Secured grant awards totaling \$53,261; including CTDOT Municipal Grant Program for medical transportation, and Title III funding for the Making Memories Program.

- Secured donations in the amount of \$592,599.95, including a \$575,000 bequest from the Estate of Stephen J. Bendas.
- Formed a committee to review/create an updated Strategic Plan for 2023-2027 and led monthly meetings from August through December, 2022. Anticipated completion of the project is February 2023.
- Recruited a team to participate in the Eastern CT Walk to End Alz, September 2022.
- Director attended all Senior Center Building Committee Meetings, serving in an advisory capacity, as we moved into final design stage of the new senior center project, post-referendum.
- Director actively participated in monthly Commission on Aging committee meetings.
- Director participated virtually in CASC (professional organization) meetings and trainings.

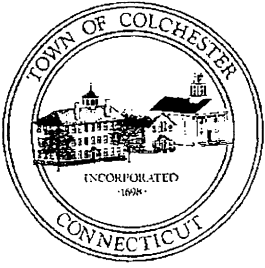
Measures (January 1 – December 31)

	2022	2021	2020
Membership Totals	1,640	1,470	*1,300
Unduplicated Annual Count	781	653	560
Total Clients Served (duplicated)	25,617	17,387	12,740
Total Programs Sessions Offered	1,694	1,311	905
Transportation, non-medical (total # of rides)	6,547	5,867	4,957
Transportation, medical (total # of rides)	2,610	2,124	1,861
Transportation mileage for In-Town Transportation	25,185	22,913	21,576
Information and Referrals	10,211	9,643	6,931
Making Memories Program (total units of service)	2,436	2984.50	4,286
Volunteer Hours (total hours)	3,671.5	2,172	1,948
Senior Center sponsored Travel Opportunities (attendees)	356	107	18
Meals-on-Wheels Deliveries	6,324	5,718	5,301
Meals Served Onsite (Community Café/Specials)	4,420	3,689	3,057

**100 members were archived due to the wellness check calls and 111 new members were registered throughout 2020. Membership went from 1,352 (Dec 2019) up to 1,384 (Mar 2020) down to 1,284 (Aug 2020) before climbing back up to 1,363 (Feb 2021).*

2023-2024 Objectives

- Continue to meet the needs of the senior population through innovative programs and efficient, professional services.
- Procure new 14 passenger wheelchair lift-equipped bus to replace the oldest in our fleet through approved Section 5310 grant with CTDOT. Due to procurement delays, funding opportunities through the Section 5310 Program were suspended in 2022.
- Evaluate need to increase resources for additional Medical Transportation Services, create a plan for the future in cooperation with the First Selectman.
- Evaluate need to increase resources for additional In-Town Transportation Services, create a plan for the future in cooperation with the First Selectman.
- Continue working with the Senior Center Building Committee throughout groundbreaking, building construction and transition into the new senior center.



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

95 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Patricia A. Watts, Director of Senior Services/Municipal Agent

Transportation Itemization for January 2023

Item	Date	Amount
Daily Transportation	1/06/2023	\$90.00 Total
	1/31/2023	\$15.00 Total
Trips	1/06/2023	\$218.00 Total
	1/31/2023	\$86.00 Total
Combined Total		\$409.00
Year to Date Total		\$1992.00