

Commission on Aging
January 11, 2021- Regular Meeting
Zoom Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Marjorie Mlodzinski, Vice Chair Nan Wasniewski, Treasurer Roberta Avery, Secretary Gerrie Transue at 8:40 am, Linda Pasternak.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sandy Gaetano.

OTHERS PRESENT: Board of Selectmen Liaison Rosemary Coyle, Board of Education Liaison Mary Tomasi, Senior Center Director Patty Watts, Board of Finance Liaison Mike Egan, Cathy Russi.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Marge Mlodzinski called this Regular Meeting to order at 8:30 am.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Mlodzinski led the Commission members in the pledge of allegiance.

3. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

No additions were requested.

4. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

No comments received.

5. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 14, 2021 MINUTES

Motion by: R. Avery

to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2021 minutes as read.

Second by: L. Pasternak.

Vote: Unanimous to approve by those present.

6. FINANCE REPORTS

6.1 CoA

R. Avery reported the amount stands at \$416.26 and a bill for \$300 has been submitted for the printing of the Senior Resource Guide that will leave the Printing & Publication line item at zero.

6.2 Senior Center

Director Watts presented the Transportation Report as follows:

Transportation Itemization for December 2020

ITEM	DATE	AMOUNT
Daily Transportation	12/31/2020	\$107.50 Total
Trips	12/31/2020	46.00
Combined Total		\$155.50
Year to Date Total		\$383.50

G. Transue joined the meeting at this point in the agenda.

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RECEIVED
Marge Mlodzinski
Chairman

7. CHAIR REPORT

Chair Mlodzinski noted the Board of Finance has posted a Budget Survey on the Town website with January 18, 2021 as a deadline for responses. The Senior Resource Guide was presented to the Board of Selectmen with favorable comments. Chair Mlodzinski thanked those who helped with the guide.

There will be free Covid-19 testing available on January 13, February 3, and Feb 17, from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at the former Citizens Bank on Norwich Avenue.

The First Selectman has announced that a public information campaign will be rolled out in Colchester to stop the spread of germs and infection. Press releases are expected soon to increase education and public awareness.

The LongTerm Recovery Committee is meeting twice monthly now. They have identified mental health and technology as areas of focus to provide help to the citizens of Colchester.

8. DIRECTOR OF SENIOR SERVICES REPORT

See attached.

9. OLD BUSINESS

9.1 Senior Center Building Committee

P. Watts stated there will be a public information presentation of the proposed senior center on January 21, 2021, with an architectural overview, a cost estimate review, outreach plans, and the anticipated schedule for a referendum on June 8, 2021.

9.2 Norton Park Committee

N. Wasniewski noted that the committee continues to work on grants and has submitted one recently. Fundraising continues with the next phase a request to businesses. The bridge work has been completed and the Board of Selectmen approved the plan to demolish the house at 129 Westchester Road. That land will be a continuation of the park.

R. Coyle suggested that the next time the committee does a public forum that it be recorded and put on the Town website so citizens could be directed there for information.

9.3 Senior Center Resource Guide

Two hundred copies of the Guide have been printed and will be distributed to Town Hall and the Senior Center.

9.4 Reopening of Senior Center

P. Watts stated that the reopening will depend on four weeks of a decline in cases and Chatham Health Department giving the go ahead.

10. NEW BUSINESS

10.1 Programs for 2021

Chair Mlodzinski would like to see some programs scheduled for the March-April time frame. Kristopher Sortwell, Eastern Connecticut Regional Director of the Alzheimer Association, is willing to provide one of the many programs offered by the association.

Another possibility is a presentation by Colchester Garden Club President Katherine Kosiba

A portion of the new senior center will be available for community use and Chair Mlodzinski would like to see the members of this Commission do an outreach to citizens about the center.

11. COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

Chair Mlodzinski read a letter of resignation from Jean Stawicki. J. Stawicki is a past president of this commission. The commission now has one member vacancy and two alternate vacancies.

12. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

P. Watts noted East Haddam Senior Center Director Brad Parker's wife passed away. G. Transue will send a card from the Commission.

L. Pasternak stated that not all seniors have access to the internet and asked if P. Watts could send a printed copy of the budget survey to those known to not have access. P. Watts said she would contact Board of Finance Chair R. Tarlov about the matter.

R. Avery reported that the Diversity and Inclusion Committee is working on a Mission Statement.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by: R. Avery
to adjourn this meeting.

Second by: N. Wasniewski

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

Chair Mlodzinski adjourned this meeting at 9:15 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jane Slade
Clerk

COA Meeting-January 11, 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)

Last month, I attended the Long-term Recovery Committee and Ad Hoc Committee for Diversity and Inclusion Meetings. I shared what the senior center has been doing to support community seniors throughout the pandemic and the closure of our building to the public.

Colchester remains at a Red Alert status for positive rates of COVID-19. Once cases begin to trend downward, CHD will be looking for a minimum of 4 weeks of stability before recommending that we reopen the senior center building to the public. The doors remain locked, with information to call in for assistance, or ring the doorbell—staff report daily and work from the building. Town Hall is also closed to the public, except by appointment through the end of the month of January 2021.

The Holiday Stocking Project collected a total of \$3,070.00, which provided stockings for 70 seniors in the community, delivered on December 2021. I will write a Letter to the Editor in the *River East News Bulletin* and will see if they would like to feature an article about the project.

New programs have begun under the leadership of Ruth Reinwald-Learn to Sign with Ruth, Coffee Talk with Ruth, Step by Step Painting Class, International Cooking Demos, Wheel of Fortune and Boggle on Zoom. We've identified a weakness in our programming around fine arts, so Ruth will be implementing several programs where participants can be creative and have fun.

AARP's Tax Aide program will begin in February, if AARP National allows it. We are making preparations for socially distanced appointments and scheduling appointments, effective January 1st. This may be shut down entirely, if AARP National deems it unsafe for their volunteers, due to COVID-19.

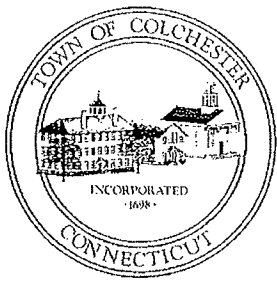
We are looking forward to the public education for the new senior center to begin and many CSC members have been asking about it. I think it will be something for people to be encouraged about and give them a positive thing to focus on in the community, which is timely.

Should the senior center or any of our programs or services be closed due to inclement weather, postings can be found on WFSB Channel 3 under "Colchester Senior Center." We do not follow the school calendar.

CSC will be closed on Monday, January 18th in observation of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Attendance & Meals Served:

- Meals delivered in November: Community Café: 231 MOW: 524
- Monthly transports in November: 454 (closed 11/11, 11/26 & 11/27)
- Monthly attendance in November: 807
- Total Membership: 1,301



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

95 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

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

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