

COMMISSION ON AGING AND DISABLED

APRIL 7, 2021

ZOOM MEETING – 6:00 PM

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
IN NEWINGTON, CT

2021 APR -9 PM 1:43

  
Town Clerk

MEMBERS PRESENT

Karen Brecher  
Kathy Sobieski  
Chylene Pender  
Sandy Nafis  
Terri Lapenta-Duffek  
Mary Udice

MEMBERS ABSENT

Maureen Lynch

STAFF

Dianne Stone  
Jaime Trevethan  
Gail Whitney

TOWN COUNCIL LIAISONS

David Nagel

TOWN COUNCIL LIAISONS ABSENT

Carol Anest

I. CALL TO ORDER

Karen Brecher called the Commission on Aging and Disabled via Zoom meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

David Nagel reported that the Town Council is in the process of finalizing the budget. There have been public hearings, and the Mayor gave a good presentation. The Town Council will meet two more times to make any changes to the budget which should be finalized on April 20<sup>th</sup>. At the present time the mill rate is down .1. The Town Council meetings can be viewed on NCTV. There are no changes to the Senior and Disabled Center's budget in terms of projects and funding.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 3, 2021

The Commissioners approved the minutes from February 3, 2021.

V. STAFF REPORT

Dianne reported that the Central Connecticut Health District (CCHD) working with Meghan Manke, Emergency Management Director, and the CERT Team, has been holding vaccination clinics at the Center for older adults. There have been five first shot clinics where 500 people were vaccinated. The second shot clinic will take place this Friday and next Friday. She couldn't express enough how well these clinics have been held; CCHD is doing a great job. CERT has staffed clinics in all four communities and has done an unbelievable job. Credit also goes to the Senior and Disabled Center staff as 80-120 people were at the Center during these clinics. Outreach was done due to the fact that there were a limited number of people

allowed to come into the Center at any time. When vaccines were first available, scheduling was very difficult, but now the system is going well. The Center went through the membership list, people who use Dial-A-Ride, sorted membership by age, and made hundreds and hundreds of phone calls in order to reach everyone who is eligible. It was a painstaking process to contact each individual, but very successful with being able to vaccinate 500 people. If there are any cancellations for the second shot, there is a list of people who can be contacted notifying them of the opening, because the worst thing to do is throw away the vaccine, and so far no shots have had to be thrown out. Once this second shot clinic is held this Friday and next Friday, CCHD is done holding a clinic at the Center. However, from May 7<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> the CCHD will hold a mass clinic at the Berlin Fairgrounds offering the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The Center and CCHD are also looking into providing vaccines for people who are homebound. The State has created an online form if you are homebound; once the form is completed the State sends this information to the health district and the health district will send it to the Senior and Disabled Center who can vet people to make sure they are truly homebound. At this time there are 25 people on the list, so the CCHD is working on a plan to provide the Johnson and Johnson vaccine to homebound people. At this time Newington has approximately 85% of 65+ individuals who have been vaccinated.

Dianne is receiving many questions about reopening. Just like all other Town facilities, there is not a consideration of letting people into buildings while Newington is in the red zone. When Newington is in the orange zone, then Charles Brown, Director of CCHD will review this possibility. However, Mr. Brown thinks that senior centers will be the last place to let people back in. When reopening, it will be a gradual process with services such as foot care, as well as social work being priorities. The congregant meal will take a while to reopen as people eat together. A lot of information such as screenings, logging things, and contact tracing will need to be put into effect in order to let people into the building.

The Senior Center, Library, and Human Services worked on a townwide mailing that went to all households age 60+ providing general information about how to stay safe, active, and connected. Dianne stated this was a really good process of working with the other two departments. The Center's spring newsletter will be specially mailed to all Center members; this newsletter is dated March 2021 but covers programs and activities that will take place through the Center throughout the spring. With the Cares Act funding of \$2,500 (the Commission fronted this money and it will be reimbursed by the Cares Act), 450 home program kits were made available. These home program kits included adult paint-by-number, birdhouses, terrariums, window garden, cookie decorating. People are sending in pictures of things they made with these home program kits. The journaling kit didn't go as well. Other upcoming virtual programs include Tai Chi with 15 people enrolled, Matter of Balance, a fitness class and chair aerobics that Barbara Womer has recorded and can be shown on NCTV. High tech virtual programs include extreme weather, Zoom coffee hours, and a six week program with Nick Nicholson from Quinnipiac about zero isolation. This program takes people through the process of how to be socially active, how to get involved, get engaged, and interact. Meals-on-Wheels numbers keep increasing, and volunteers can now deliver these meals. The congregant grab-and-go numbers are going down which Dianne feels is due to the holiday, the weather is nicer, and people are getting vaccinated and feel comfortable going out. The grocery shopping program numbers have gone down, with \$700 spent in March, and over \$20,000 since this began in March 2020. The statewide association and statewide senior centers have worked with the Connecticut Healthy Living Collective in providing entertainment with Irish music, Irish step dancing, and a man telling stories of Ireland – all virtual. Next month the program will be water water everywhere with people talking about the ocean. Jamie and Dianne worked with the other 30-50 centers who participate in this coming up with program ideas.

Dianne stated that the facility is slated to get work done. She had reported that there was no air conditioning in the Center last summer. The HVAC will be worked on in the next couples of months as their useful life is long overdue. Additionally, the windows in the Center have leaks and are not energy efficient, so the replacement of windows is moving forward. The building looks a little tired and hasn't been painted in a long time. The Center is working with the Town to do that as well; the Town will fund painting

the interior of the building, but Dianne may come to the Commission if additional funding is needed depending on what the Town is able to do to spruce up the building.

The Volunteer Dinner is typically held in May and Dianne expressed that this should take place again similar to what was done last year. Dinner was delivered to all volunteers and the volunteer recognition was shown on NCTV with Karen Brecher speaking, along with the Mayor and other State representatives. An in-person dinner is not allowed, and the format last year worked well. There was no Wall Of Honor recipient last year, and it is appropriate not to do it again this year, however Dianne would like to highlight some of the volunteers who have done so much this last year like with the grocery shopping program, the garden people, and the tax aide folks. The Tax Aide program was done as a hybrid model this year with people dropping off their documents curbside, volunteers scanning them, and then returning them to the people, and then the volunteer tax preparer worked on the documents at home. The Meals-On-Wheels volunteers were brought back a couple of months ago, but due to the fact that not all volunteers are at the Center, then the Wall Of Honor shouldn't take place again this year.

Membership renewals take place at the end of June. Last year membership dues were waived as people couldn't come into the Center. Dianne thinks it is appropriate to waive membership dues again this year. She feels it is more important to keep members then the membership fee, however there is an opportunity to make a donation. Last year the Center lost a little bit but basically broke even with the number of donations that were received. A notice will go out to members that the dues will be waived again this year, but there is an opportunity to make a donation. This will be for residents and non-resident members, however robocalls and mailings only go to Newington residents. **MOTION: Sandy Nafis made a motion to waive the membership dues for 2021, Terri LaPenta-Duffek seconded the motion, the motion passed with a 5-0 vote, Mary Udice was on the Zoom meeting, but was muted so that was an abstention.** Karen commented that it is only fair to waive these dues as the building is closed and we don't want to lose members.

## VI. OLD BUSINESS

### A. Purchase Requests

There were no Purchase Requests at this time.

## VII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no New Business.

## IX. AGENDA FOR MAY MEETING

There were no changes for the May agenda.

## X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no Public Participation.

Dianne reiterated David Nagel's earlier comments about the budget stating that there were no changes to the submitted budget. The Center has not spent as much money this year due to programs being held virtually. All Town Departments have reduced staff, and Dianne is concerned about staff reduction especially once the Center reopens. She will keep the Commission apprised of this, but she does have concerns on how the Center will manage when people are allowed in again, and noted that volunteers will be very critical.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION:** Chylene Pender made a motion to adjourn, Sandy Nafis seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion passed with at 5-0 vote at 6:35 PM.

**The next meeting of the Commission on Aging and Disabled is Wednesday, May 5, 2021 at 6:00 PM.**

Respectfully Submitted,

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Gail Whitney, Commission Clerk