

**COMMISSION ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 10, 2022**

Present: John Whritner
Marge Caste
Ilene Harris
Michel Bekech
Joan Bengtson

FILED

Absent: Joe Palazzo

Also Present: Cathy Wilson, Director
Rose Ann Hardy, Ex officio

Jan 12, 2022 AT 11:57 AM
Brooke Stevens ATC
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

1. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

- a. Pledge of Allegiance. The Pledge of Allegiance was observed.

Chairman Whritner called the January 10, 2022 Commission on Aging Regular Meeting to order at 5 p.m.

- b. Delegations. There were no guests.
- c. Approval of Meeting Minutes December 13, 2021. Mr. Whritner asked for additions, deletions, or corrections to the December 13, 2021 Commission on Aging Minutes.

MOTION (1): Mr. Bekech moved to approve the December 13, 2021 Commission on Aging Regular Meeting Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Ms. Caste. Ms. Bengtson abstained from voting. (4-0-1) Motion carried.

- d. Correspondence. No new correspondence was received.

2. STATUS REPORT

- a. Transportation. Ms. Wilson reported soon the Senior Center vehicles will be located at the Public Safety Building. She discussed storage of supplies for the vehicles with Joe Bragaw and there was not an immediate solution as access to the building will be cumbersome for the drivers. Mr. Bekech suggested that Ms. Wilson request a small shed at the Public Safety Building parking area for these supplies. Ms. Wilson felt it would depend on how many vehicles will park at the Public Safety parking lot. She requested covered parking.

Due to covid concerns, the Center has once again limited the number of people to ride on the vehicles at one time to 3.

Ms. Hardy asked if the drivers will need extra time? Ms. Wilson replied we need to look at their start time. They begin at 8:30 a.m. and their first appointment can be at 9:30 a.m. Extra time may be added at the end of the day. She did not feel it would affect the budget. Ms. Harris asked what if there is a problem with a vehicle? Ms. Wilson replied it can go to the

Town Garage. Ms. Wilson informed the Commission that quarterly reporting for the 5310 grant is due by the end of the week. Quarterly maintenance will be done this month.

b. Senior Trips.

1. Enrichment Trips. The trip to the Hideaway Restaurant was cancelled due to covid concerns. A restaurant trip to the Hideaway is planned for February.

2. Day Trips. Ms. Wilson reported she plans to meet with Waterford and Old Lyme via Zoom this month to discuss day trips.

3. Overnight trips. Ms. Wilson informed the Commission we are offering a nine-day tour to the Colorado Rockies from August 12 to August 20, 2022. An overnight trip is planned to Ireland for ten days from October 6 to October 14, 2022.

Programs

1. Senior Nutrition Program. Ms. Wilson reported we have paused the Café program that ran on Tuesdays and Thursdays for the time being. It is hoped to resume again in February.

2. Senior Center Programs Ongoing. Ms. Wilson asked the instructors to check that participants are wearing masks and distancing. She feels it's important for the mental and emotional health of the participants to come in to the Senior Center.

3. Senior Center Programs – New. There are no new programs.

c. Budget-General Fund, Revolving Account. The budget is doing well.

d. Revenue. Revenues are doing ok.

3. OLD BUSINESS

a. Credit Card Processing. Ms. Wilson stated we have contracted with Print and Pay to provide the credit card process. The contract can be cancelled at any time if it does not work out.

b. Review of FY 22/23 Budget. The Fiscal Year 2022/23 Budget has been submitted.

c. Other Pertinent Business. There was no other pertinent old business discussed.

4. NEW BUSINESS

a. Update on COVID test kits distribution and N95 mask distribution. Ms. Wilson reported the first distribution was a week ago. Within ten minutes all available kits were allocated for distribution. Next Saturday a second allotment will be distributed; beginning at 8 a.m. test kits and N95 masks will be distributed at the Middle School from Society Road. This will be first come first serve. Ms. Harris reported CVS has test kits available.

- b. Emergency ALERTS and Notifications through Everbridge. Ms. Wilson reported you may receive a text, a call or an email or all three for Town notifications through Everbridge.
- c. Discussion and Possible Action on Meeting Senior Center Space Needs. Chairman Whritner asked Commission members to consider a Feasibility Study and Action Plan for meeting the space needs for the Senior Center. He felt the Parahus Account is one option, as well as the American Rescue Funds if our needs qualify. He asked should we work with the Parks and Recreation and the Library? Ms. Wilson felt at one time it made sense to use the school facilities, but it is not possible now. We cannot any longer use the school gym. She had received suggestions about partnering with a local, private gym. Mr. Whritner added the Community Center does not have a second floor or a basement for storage and space has become a continuing problem. Ms. Hardy suggested forming a subcommittee of this Commission to look for solutions. She stated legal counsel is available. A presentation can be made at budget time. She suggested preparing a list to determine which would qualify for the American Rescue Funds. To be included is what is needed short term and long term to continue programs being offered. Mr. Whritner suggested that the Subcommittee put together a draft of our problems and bring it back to the entire Commission. Ms. Harris stated there are drainage issues and storage issues. Ms. Wilson added our backyard cannot be used for programs because it is wet. Outside the kitchen door is an issue.
- d. Other Pertinent Business. Mr. Bekech reported our homes have been reassessed. We need to accept the fact that there is no longer a long-term employee in the Assessor's Office. The Assistant Assessor is now the Tax Collector. The additional two employees are new to the office. He advised that individuals make sure you have a hearing set up. He felt the notice is so late it will be critical to get the Grand List out and this will impact the Mill Rate. Ms. Hardy stated additional help has been hired. Mr. Bekech felt they are only a few hours per week and this will be a long-term project.

Mr. Bekech referred to the Senior Benefit Program and the need for this Commission to give its input.

Ms. Wilson asked if she should reach out to the Assessor's Office to offer assistance with the program filing this year. Mr. Bekech replied yes, and that the filing dates are February 1 through May 15. Proof of income is needed. The state uses approximately \$48,000 from all sources of income to determine eligibility. He asked that thought be given to what the average income is.

Mr. Bekech gave general information for those who use NABA. They look at car prices, and they have increased dramatically. He expects everything to moderate by October and car prices to drop by 30%.

5. EX-OFFICIO REPORT

Ms. Hardy reported there aren't many assessors available. Mr. Bekech stated he is on the Board of Assessments. Ms. Hardy stated we have not finalized appointments to commissions. She asked if anyone knows of someone who is willing to devote time to a commission to let her know.

She informed the Commission that the Town would like to purchase the Hathaway property which consists of 120 acres for open space. She felt it would be a shame if it were purchased by a developer. This property was listed as first on the Open Space Plan. The owner of the property wishes to keep a portion of the property and plans to build seven homes on it. It has access to water and can be used for activities. The Board of Selectmen has entered into early negotiations with the owner. The public will need to approve it. Land is becoming scarce. It may be possible to use a portion of the cost from American Rescue Funds.

6. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

There were no guests.

7. BOARD RESPONSE

There was no response.

8. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION (2): Ms. Bengtson moved to adjourn the Commission on Aging December 13, 2021 Regular Meeting at 6:00 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Caste. (5-0) Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary