

**COMMISSION ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 13, 2023**

Present: Margret Hughes
Joe Palazzo
Ilene Harris
Marge Caste
Wendy Fiore

Absent: Joan Bengtson
Michel Bekech, Chairman

Also Present: Kristen Caramanica, Director
Anne Santoro, Board of Selectmen Member

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
EAST LYME, CT
2023 NOV 17 A 11:30
Caulfield
TOWN CLERK

1. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

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

Acting Chair Hughes called the meeting to order at 5 p.m.

- b. **Delegations.** There were no guests.

- c. **Approval of Meeting Minutes – October 10, 2023.** Ms. Hughes asked for additions, deletions or corrections to the October 10, 2023 Commission on Aging Meeting Minutes.

The following correction was noted: On page 1 Also Present should be changed to Absent.

MOTION (1): Ms. Harris moved to approve the October 10, 2023 Commission on Aging Minutes, as amended. Seconded by Ms. Caste. Ms. Hughes and Ms. Fiore abstained from voting. (3-0-2) Motion carried.

- d. **Correspondence.** Ms. Caramanica reported we received a \$5,000 Livable Community Grant from AARP for a coffee/tea station.

Recipients of the renters' rebate for 2022 received 2% less than they expected, because there were not enough funds.

Ms. Caramanica reported she met with the architect on the Feasible Study on Thursday with the directors of Parks and Recreation and the Library to go over relocating space and renovating. It was felt the following was needed: increased staff space, outdoor space, fitness room, clinical rooms, additional programming space and a large outdoor field house was added to the Parks and Rec plan, which would be of use to the senior center as well for activities such as pickleball. Ms. Santoro asked what the budget amounts were? Ms. Caramanica replied I do not have that information at this time.

2. STATUS REPORT

a. **Transportation.** Ms. Caramanica reported all busses are up and running. Dial-a-Ride has been busy. She added we still have not received our new bus.

b. **Senior Day Trips:**

1. Newport Playhouse, Thursday, November 16. There is a waitlist for this trip.
2. Radio City Christmas Spectacular, Saturday, December 2. This is multi-generational. There is a wait list for this trip.
3. A stocking stuffer holiday daytrip to Yankee Candle, Thursday, December 14.

Overnight Trips:

1. Mackinac Island, June 14 -June 22, 2024. There will be a trip presentation on Thursday, November 9.
2. Iceland Magical Northern Lights November 5 -November 11, 2024.
3. Croatia & It's Islands, April 22, 2025 -May 3, 2025. A trip presentation will be held on Friday, December 8, 2023.

c. **Programs**

(1) **Senior Nutrition Program.** There was nothing new to report.

(2) **Senior Center Programs -Ongoing.** Ms. Caramanica reported classes are doing well. We don't have a Tia Chi instructor now, but we are hoping he will be back soon.

The pick-up Thanksgiving meal on November 22 has been sold out.

Our Veterans Celebration Day went well.

We have worked with individuals on energy assistance. We have had 161 applications so far this year (program runs through April) and had a total of 166 last year.

We offered open enrollment with CHOICES counselors.

(3) **Senior Center Programs –New.** Ms. Caramanica reported we now have a Parkinson's Disease: Living with Intent group class on the first and third Wednesday of the month from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

d. **Budget – General Fund, Revolving Account.** Ms. Caramanica had nothing new to report on the General Fund.

e. **Revenues – General Fund, Revolving Account.** Ms. Caramanica had nothing new to report on revenues.

3. OLD BUSINESS

a. **Meeting with the Finance Director.** Ms. Caramanica reported she met with the Finance Director regarding a shortfall in the bus drivers' line item. She stated transportation is needed and the drivers are very busy.

She informed the Commission our telephone bill was \$121 and is now \$169.
She had to ask for an additional \$4,000 for the Parkinson's and pepper spray classes.

- b. **Other Pertinent Business.** There was no discussion on other pertinent business.

4. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **COA Meeting Dates for 2024.** Ms. Caramanica suggested the following 2024 meeting dates: January 8, February 12, March 11, April 8, May 13, June 10, no meetings in July or August, September 9 and adjusted meeting dates for the holiday calendar are October 21 and November 18. The last meeting will be on December 9.

**MOTION (2): Mr. Palazzo moved to approve the above schedule of meeting dates.
Seconded by Ms. Caste. (5-0) Unanimous.**

- b. **Preliminary Budget Discussion FY 24/25.** Ms. Caramanica reported she will have preliminary budget discussions for FY 24/25 at the December meeting.
- c. **Other Pertinent Business.** Ms. Caramanica attended the November 1 Board of Selectmen meeting on the establishment of a Youth and Family Department. They would like a liaison from this Commission. A Public Hearing will be held on November 15.

5. EX-OFFICIO REPORT

Ms. Santoro reported there will be a Public Hearing on November 15, 2023 at 7 p.m. at the Town Hall on the proposed Ordinance for the Youth, Family and Human Services Commission. This will be an advisory board to the Board of Selectmen. Youth and Family counsellors will be needed. They want to have a liaison from this Commission. They will outreach the community and services and families from youth to senior citizens. This will dove-tail human services. The ordinance now is only for Youth Services. It can be small or as large as needed. Jennifer Yu is doing social work for the senior center. Ms. Caramanica stated Ms. Yu is very busy and she has applied for another ARPA Fund through the State of CT for another grant to increase her hours as well as duration.

Ms. Santoro reported we had a Veterans Ceremony on Saturday morning. It was very well attended.

She informed the Commission the Charter Revision Commission's recommendations all passed except the following three: 1) Shall the town charter be amended to increase the price of real estate that may be purchased or sold upon the Board of Selectmen's authority and without town meeting approval, from \$10,000 to \$100,000. 2) to amend the town charter to provide for special appropriations or transfer of funds if the Board of Finance fails to act on such requests within 30 days and 3) Shall the town charter be amended to increase the Board of Selectmen's authority to make special appropriations, with Board of Finance approval, from \$10,000 to an aggregate of \$100,000 per town department in each fiscal year. Changes to the Charter will start in the next election.

6. PUBLIC DISCUSSION There were no guests.

7.BOARD RESPONSE. There was no need for a response.

8.ADJOURNMENT

MOTION (3): Ms. Harris moved to adjourn the October 10, 2023 Commission on Aging Meeting at 5:35 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Caste. (5-0) Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary