

**COMMISSION ON AGING  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
December 11, 2023**

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

Absent: Joan Bengtson

Also Present: Kristen Caramanica, Director  
Rose Ann Hardy, Ex Officio

Caulfield  
TOWN CLERK

2023 DEC 13 P 1:23

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
EAST LYME, CT

**1. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS**

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

Chairman Bekech called the December 11, 2023 Commission on Aging Regular Meeting to order at 5 p.m.

**MOTION (1): Mr. Palazzo moved to amend the Agenda to allow for Election of Officers at this time. Seconded by Ms. Caste. (6-0) Unanimous**

Ms. Hardy asked for nominations for Chair of the Commission on Aging for 2024.

**MOTION (2): Ms. Harris moved to nominate Michael Bekech as Chairman of the Commission on Aging for 2024. Seconded by Mr. Palazzo.**

Ms. Hardy asked for any other nominations for Chair and there were none.

**A vote was taken and Mr. Bekech was unanimously elected Chairman of the Commission on Aging for 2024.**

Ms. Hardy asked for nominations for Vice Chair of the Commission on Aging for 2024.

**MOTION (3): Ms. Harris moved to nominate Margret Hughes as Vice Chair of the Commission on Aging for 2024.**

Ms. Hardy asked for any other nominations for Vice Chair and there were none.

**A vote was taken and Ms. Hughes was unanimously elected Vice Chair of the Commission on Aging for 2024.**

Ms. Hardy asked for nominations for Secretary of the Commission on Aging for 2024.

**MOTION (4): Ms. Caste moved to nominate Ilene Harris as Secretary of the Commission on Aging for 2024.**

Ms. Hardy asked for any other nominations for Secretary and there were none.

**A vote was taken and Ilene Harris was unanimously elected Secretary of the Commission on Aging for 2024.**

**b. Delegations.** Ms. Fiore suggested that when the Parkinson's class meet in the Olive Chendali Room, they not have folding chairs for the comfort of the participants. Ms. Hardy recommended that Ms. Caramanica discuss checking into state surplus.

**c. Approval of Meeting Minutes November 13, 2023.** Mr. Bekech asked for additions, deletions, or corrections to the November 13, 2023 Commission on Aging Minutes.

**MOTION (5): Ms. Harris moved to approve the November 13, 2023 Commission on Aging Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Ms. Caste. (6-0) Unanimous**

**d. Correspondence.** Ms. Caramanica reported that TVCCA sent a check for \$2,000 to offset the costs incurred while accepting energy assistance applications.

Ms. Caramanica asked the Commission for their support for a weekend custodian at the Community Center. She added there are activities at the Community Center on weekends.

**MOTION (6): Ms. Harris moved to approve a letter of support from this Commission for a weekend custodian at the Community Center. Seconded by Mr. Palazzo. (6-0) Unanimous.**

## **2. STATUS REPORT**

**a. Transportation.** Ms. Caramanica reported R-1 and R-2 went in for quarterly maintenance. The 5310 bus is expected to be received in the summer.

Ms. Caramanica is looking for a new part-time driver.

### **b. Senior Trips.**

**1. Enrichment Trips.** A stocking stuffer day trip is planned to Yankee Candle on December 14.

#### **Overnight Trips. The following trips are planned:**

- 1. Tropical Costa Rica, March 21-March 29, 2024**
- 2. Mackinac Island on June 14-June 22, 2024.**
- 3. Iceland Magical Northern Lights November 5-November 11, 2024.**
- 4. Croatia and It's Islands, April 22, 2025-May 3, 2025.**

### **c. Programs**

**1. Senior Nutrition Program.** Ms. Caramanica reported the Senior Center was very busy in November. We had to deliver five days of food in three days.

2. **Senior Center Programs Ongoing.** Ms. Caramanica reported the Senior Center will begin taking tax appointments on January 10. They will try to schedule weekend appointments for those who work.
3. **Senior Center Programs New.** Ms. Caramanica informed the Commission registration was held today. Many programs are filled. There is a hot cocoa and cookies concert on Monday December 18 from 2 to 3 p.m. It has about 40 people signed up as of today.

She would like to add another day for Chair Yoga.

Jennifer Yu has completed energy assistance applications for 190 individuals. She has also been working with individuals who are not seniors.

Cathy Wilson has worked on Open Enrollment for thirty-six individuals

Ms. Caste asked if the speaker on recycling could be rescheduled? Ms. Caramanica agreed to check on it.

Ms. Caramanica will work on having a new music program. She encouraged the commission to let people know about them, highlighting ukulele and guitar. She was asked to have a choir.

**d. Budget-General Fund, Revolving Account.** Ms. Caramanica reported she had to make a transfer of funds to the telephone account. Ms. Yu doesn't have a telephone in her office. The drivers need to have cell phones on their buses. The land line cost has increased.

**e. Revenue.** Ms. Caramanica informed the Commission we received \$100 in donations for transportation.

### 3. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **ARPA Funds.** Ms. Caramanica stated she is continuing to work on ARPA funding that is available for senior centers through the State Department of Aging and Disability. The current ARPA funding for the Social Worker ends June 30, 2024. She's applying for more funding that must be expended by December 2024.
- b. **ARPA Funds.** The Senior Center needs a check-in station, a new freezer, a washing machine and dryer, and a dishwasher. Mr. Bekech asked is there enough money to cover those items? Ms. Caramanica stated Ms. Yu's salary is covered until June 2024. After her salary is paid, we will determine what additional items we can fund. Mr. Bekech stated the town would like us to be as independent as possible. Ms. Caramanica plans to meet again with the Finance Director to discuss these ideas.
- c. **Other Pertinent Business.**
  - a. Mr. Bekech asked for a show of support for the Commission on Aging staff for its diligent work on finding new monies.
  - b. Mrs. Caramanica is looking into protocol to receive the \$2000 from the reimbursement they received from TVCCA to cover paper supplies, ink, time etc. She

is confirming if she needs to be on the Board Selectmen's next Agenda. She will be requesting the paper and a printer for Ms. Yu.

- c. Ms. Caramanica is also finding out the protocol to receive the \$5,000 she was awarded through an AARP Grant she wrote for a coffee and tea station. She has written a Board of Selectman agenda request if needed.

#### **4. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. **Budget Discussion for 24/25.** The Commission reviewed the draft budget for 24/25. Ms. Caramanica reported she has met with the Finance Director and some changes were made. She will meet with the Finance Director again as well as the First Selectman, then the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance. The budget is due by the end of December. Mr. Bekech hopes to be available to attend meetings of the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance. He asked that Commission members consider attending also. There was a consensus of the Commission to submit the budget as presented.

#### **5. EX OFFICIO REPORT**

The following commissioners' appointments were renewed: Marge Caste and Wendy Fiore to January 5, 2026. Ilene Harris, Mike Bekech, Joseph Palazzo, and Joan Bengtson were renewed to January 3, 2028. Ms. Hardy swore in Mike Bekech.

#### **6. PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

There were no guests.

#### **7. BOARD RESPONSE**

There was no response.

#### **8. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION (7): Ms. Harris moved to adjourn the Commission on Aging December 11, 2023 Regular Meeting at 6:15 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Caste. (6-0) Unanimous.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary**