

**COMMISSION ON AGING  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
April 8, 2024**

Present: Michael Bekech  
Ilene Harris  
Joe Palazzo  
Margret Hughes  
Marge Caste  
Wendy Fiore  
Kevin McGowan

Absent: Joan Bengtson

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

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
EAST LYME, CT  
2024 APR 10 A 9:55  
Cassidy M. McGowan  
TOWN CLERK

**1. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS**

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

Chairman Bekech called the April 8, 2024 Commission on Aging Regular Meeting to order at 5 p.m.

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

c. **Approval of Meeting Minutes March 4, 2024.** Mr. Bekech asked for additions, deletions, or corrections to the March 4, 2024 Commission on Aging Minutes.

**MOTION (1): Ms. Harris moved to approve the March 4, 2024 Commission on Aging Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Ms. Fiore. (7-0) Unanimous**

**d. Correspondence.**

1. Letter from Amy Porter, Commissioner of Connecticut Aging and Disability Services regarding ARPA Senior Center Beneficiary Agreement.
2. Letter from Zack St. John, Director of Energy Services regarding SEAP fuel benefits enclosing a check in the amount of \$3,000.
3. Letter received regarding renter's rebate. Ms. Caramanica reported we are willing to go to a senior's residence but it benefits them to come to the Senior Center. We will provide transportation for them. The date for energy assistance has been extended.

Mr. Bekech added when our office goes to the site, we don't have good reception for WiFi. Many things can only be done at the Senior Center.

**e. STATUS REPORT**

a. **Transportation.** Ms. Caramanica reported our new bus is expected to arrive by mid-July. We now have a new driver and another driver is returning.

Due to financing Dial-a-Ride will not be taking any more rides in June for this fiscal year. They will still offer caregiver reimbursement in June; they are encouraging this. We are not

sure how many rides they will allow for next year. We are expected to know in June. If someone is willing to drive a senior to a medical appointment, they can be reimbursed for mileage.

**b. Senior Trips.** Ms. Caramanica reported the trips are doing very well.

**1. Enrichment Trips:**

- The Northern American Solar Eclipse, Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1:45
- Fun Trip—Koto, Groton, Wednesday, April 10, 11 a.m.
- Tiny House Craft Class, Monday April 15, 10 a.m.
- Emergency Preparedness Presentation, Tuesday April 16, 10 a.m.
- A Taste of Italy, Wednesday, April 17, 12:30.
- Memory Loss—When to be Concerned, Friday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, 10:30 a.m.
- Coffee with a Cop, Tuesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 9 a.m.
- ROMEO, Bill's Seafood, Westbrook, Wednesday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 11 a.m.
- Zumba Gold Seated—FREE, Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 11:30 a.m.
- Situational Awareness & Personal Safety, Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 a.m.
- NEW: Open Game Day, Every Thursday (except the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday)

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

1. Washington DC April 5 to April 8, 2024. Twelve individuals have signed up.
2. The Orchid Show at New York Botanical Garden on April 16, 2024
3. 9/11 Memorial and Museum Sunday May 19
4. Harvard Glass Museum & The Mapparium, Thursday, May 30<sup>th</sup>
5. Newport Playhouse—Cemetery Club, Tuesday, June 11th
6. Mackinac Island on June 14-June 22, 2024.
7. West Point Campus Tour, Thursday, June 20th
8. Iceland Magical Northern Lights November 5-November 11, 2024.
9. Croatia and It's Islands, April 22, 2025-May 3, 2025.

**c. Programs:** Emergency Preparedness Presentation; Coffee with a Cop, AARP served 312 individuals. Ms. Caramanica reported the last date for energy assistance will be May 31, 2024.

Beginning April 1 through October 1, we are having individuals come to the Senior Center to apply for Renter's Rebate. If they cannot, we will go to their home.

Mr. Lokken, Director of Parks and Recreation, Ms. Beauvais, Director of TUTS, and Ms. Caramanica had discussions on a play. Collectively we could not agree on things that should be handled administratively. As a result, no 2024 summer play plans were pursued.

1. **Senior Nutrition Program.** Ms. Caramanica reported there have been no changes to the Senior Nutrition Program.
2. **Senior Center Programs Ongoing.** Programs are doing well.
3. **Senior Center Programs New.** Zumba Gold Seated—Trial class for FREE.

4. **Budget – General Fund, Revolving Account** Ms. Caramanica reported our driver account is over our budget. She spoke to the Finance Director. He would like the \$6,234 to be paid for the part-time driver to be paid from our budget until the end of the year.

Ms. Caramanica, Mr. Bekech and Ms. Harris will meet with the Finance Director on April 10 at 10 a.m. Mr. Bekech added we received the Parahus funds and the Tombari funds for expanding programs not for expenses that are the town's responsibility.

Ms. Hardy felt the donors should designate to the Commission how they wish their gift to be used.

Mr. Bekech added we need \$6,234 to get us to the end of the year.

Ms. Hardy asked did the Tombari family specify how their gift should be used? Ms. Harris suggested asking the Executor of the will to direct this Commission. Ms. Fiore agreed to ask their lawyer.

5. **Revenues – General Fund, Revolving Account.** Ms. Caramanica reported we have received \$2,177.60 in donations from individuals who use our busses. She added we have \$21,000 in revenues.

### 3. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **ARPA Livable Community Grant.** Ms. Caramanica informed the Commission she applied for this grant.
- b. **ARPA Coffee/Tea Station Update.** Ms. Caramanica reported. The coffee/tea station is going well. She has received great feedback.
- c. **5310 Grant.** Ms. Caramanica has applied to DOT for this grant.
- d. **FY 24/25 Budget.** Ms. Caramanica reported the Annual Town Meeting will determine our budget.
- e. **Other Pertinent Business.** There was no discussion of other pertinent business.

### 4. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Dial-a-Ride.** Ms. Caramanica has applied for Dial-a-Ride. She stated we share it with twelve other towns.
- b. **Other Pertinent Business.** There was no other pertinent business.

### 5. EX OFFICIO REPORT

Ms. Hardy distributed copies of the Senior Center Proposed Program, which has been presented to the Board of Selectmen. She asked the Commission to review it and think about what they want. There are needs and there are wants. The roof on the Community Center needs to be replaced. The architect feels a second story can be added, and she felt it would benefit the Senior Center. Ms. Harris felt an elevator would be needed. Mr. Bekech stated office space is needed. The Social Worker is working out of a closet. Ms. Hardy added the East Lyme senior population is increasing.

Ms. Hardy informed the Commission the Zoning Commission considered a proposed development with four sections. Major concerns were traffic and environmental. Mr. Tytla

made it clear to his caretaker his wish was to give it to the Land Trust. His caretaker spoke to the Zoning Commission. It was not specified in the will. The Land Trust is turning it over to a developer. They are willing to give eight acres of property back to the Land Trust. The Zoning Commission denied the proposed development.

**MOTION (2): Ms. Fiore moved that the Commission on Aging monies donated specifically for the Senior Center for development of programs or program improvement should only be used for those purposes upon approval by the Commission on Aging. Seconded by Ms. Harris. (7-0) unanimous.**

**MOTION (3): Ms. Hughes moved that Ms. Harris and Mr. Bekech represent the Commission at its meeting with the Finance Director on April 10, 2024. Seconded by Ms. Caste. (7-0) Unanimous.**

**PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

There were no guests.

**6. BOARD RESPONSE**

There was no response.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION (4): Ms. Caste moved to adjourn the Commission on Aging April 8, 2024 Regular Meeting at 6:35 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Harris. (7-0) Unanimous.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary**