

## **MEETING OF FEBRUARY 10, 2009**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Commissioner, Sandra Micalizzi.

Members present: Earl Temchin, Ben Cammuso, Susan Locks, Lynn Maschi, Sandra Micalizzi, Guss Nivelos, Marlene Carbone, Marjorie Chase, and Michael Rossi.

The minutes of the January 6, 2009 meeting were presented to the Commission. A motion was made by Guss Nivelos to accept the minutes as presented; seconded by Marjorie Chase; all were in favor.

Condolences were extended to Commissioner Marlene Carbone on the recent passing of her father-in-law, former Councilman, Robert Carbone.

A thank you card from Calendar House Secretary, Cynthia Gilbert was presented to the Commission. Filling in for Cynthia Gilbert, Dawn Sargis reported that Cynthia is recuperating at home and is expecting to return to work on Monday, March 2, 2009. It is not known at this time if Cynthia will be back to work full time or on a part time basis. Cynthia is very thankful for all the cards, phone calls and well wishes from everyone.

Reminders were given to Commissioners Ben Cammuso, Susan Locks, and Michael Rossi that their terms will expire March 1, 2009. The Executive Director advised that if they wished to continue serving on the Senior Citizen Commission, they should send a letter to the Town Council requesting to do so.

The Treasurer's Report was given by Susan Locks. She reported that of the \$507,976 current budget, \$272,172.27 (48.3%) has been expended, \$24,097.93 has been encumbered, leaving \$211,705.80 remaining. The line item of concern that we are watching is Temporary/Seasonal Wages. The Executive Director, Robert Verderame commented that he had recently reduced the part time dispatcher from five days to four days, and would probably need to reduce him even further to three days per week, with the office staff filling in with the dispatching duties. He reminded the Commission that we are due for the \$12,000 matching grant payment in April, which will help, but advised that a transfer of funds from one line item to the Temporary/Seasonal Wage line item may be necessary. He also warned that although we are hopeful to receive the matching grant next year, it is not guaranteed. A discussion was held regarding what would have to be done if the grant was not received. The Executive Director stated that our Dial-A-Ride program would have to be prioritized, limiting out of town travel, with dialysis and other life sustaining treatments our first priority, followed by regular doctor and dentist appointments, and lastly shopping trips.

A bill from Schmidt Lawn Care was presented to the Commission in the amount of \$5,010 for January sanding and snow plowing. It was noted that there is now an extra charge to take care of the Pleasant Street sidewalk, which was previously handled by the Town. It has been determined

by the Town that this sidewalk is the responsibility of Calendar House. The Town is still taking care of the Hobart Street sidewalk, as it is an access route for walkers to DePaolo Middle School. The Executive Director advised that this extra cost would need to be considered for next year's budget. He also advised that due to the numerous snowstorms this season an appropriation may need to be requested to cover the expenses in the Building Maintenance line item.

Regarding the pavilion repair, a letter was sent to JJ Dlugos and Sons, along with a copy of the purchase order in the amount of \$4,500. It was noted that repair work to the pavilion columns must be completed by June 30, 2009.

A letter was sent to Town Manager, Mr. John Weichsel requesting a transfer totaling \$1,000 from the Longevity (\$350) and Travel/Dues/Meetings (\$650) line items into the Printing of the Bulletin line item. The monthly bulletin is our number one communication piece, making this transfer necessary. It was noted that the Calendar House has asked members who have the bulletin mailed to them to sign up to receive it on-line if they have that capability. Dawn Sargis reported that thanks to SeniorNet, we now have the ability to send mass e-mail notifications to those who sign up for it, including notices regarding closings and delays, as well as our bulletin. The Executive Director stated there is a possibility that in the future, we will have to cease mailing out the bulletin due to cost constraints, but this would be a last resort. Commissioner Marjorie Chase suggested dropping off bulletins at the various elderly housing sites in town, Spring Lake Village, as well as the Library.

The Executive Director reported that the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter matching grant payment came in for \$12,508.75. A letter was sent to Mr. Weichsel and Robert Verderame will be going to the Finance Board meeting on February 11, 2009 to request the funds be placed in the Line Items of Bus Maintenance (\$508.75), Gasoline (\$1,000), and Part Time Drivers Salary (\$11,000).

The Executive Director reported that the budget for fiscal year 2009/2010 was presented to Mr. Weichsel. The increase to the Calendar House budget was kept at 2.5%. The Town Manager was advised that the \$9,000 requested for the new bus will not be quite enough to cover the expense, and that additional funds will have to be requested. At this point, it is looking to be a rather small amount to be requested, less than \$2,000. Over all we are expending a very small amount of funds for the new bus, thanks to the grant money we are receiving from the State of Connecticut.

A motion was made by Guss Nevelos to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented; seconded by Ben Cammuso; all were in favor.

Robert Verderame presented the Director's and Program Coordinator's Report for January 2009. He noted that the Dial-A-Ride Program provided 814 one-way rides. January was a slow month for Social Service requests in part due to the Medicare Part D open enrollment ending December 31<sup>st</sup>. He noted that Rent Relief will be starting in May and Social Services requests will start to pick up again. Income Tax appointments will begin on February 24, 2009. Mary Robarge is taking over as chairperson for this program in Cynthia Gilbert's absence. The Long Range Meeting for the Library was attended by the Executive Director and went extremely well. A retirement party in honor of Helen Archangelo of the Southington Housing Authority (and Mr. Weichsel's former secretary) was held at Calendar House on Friday, February 7, 2009.

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The Executive Director reported that our buses are currently doing well. The 2000 bus belongs to Calendar House, and the 2002 bus will soon belong to us as well. The new bus has been ordered, and we are hoping to receive it by October 2009. Chairman, Earl Temchin inquired about the gas mileage for the new bus versus the older models. He asked if we could save money by scheduling bus routes according to the gas mileage the bus receives. The Executive Director advised he would look into this. Commissioner Ben Cammuso asked if we had ever looked into using a small van for short trips. The Director advised that a small vehicle would not hold up, having trouble with the hills and snow. It was noted that the 2000 bus had new tires installed in January, and that the 2002 bus had a master cylinder replaced which was under warranty.

In regards to Building Maintenance, the Executive Director reported that the partition wall in room two was repaired. Fran Verderame donated furniture for the upstairs room that will be used for the Wii game system. We are hoping for the donation of a television set, and heaters as well. Paul Shappy installed track lighting in our hallway highlighting our plaques. The Commission requested a thank you be sent to him for this work.

The Program Coordinator report included a Nurse Clinic on January 5<sup>th</sup> entitled "Taking Off Those Holiday Pounds" (due to inclement weather, only 5 were in attendance); a trip sale to Rocking Horse Resort in New York was held January 9<sup>th</sup>; SeniorNet Class Registration was held January 12<sup>th</sup>; Classes resumed the week of January 26<sup>th</sup>; the Lunch program was cancelled January 28<sup>th</sup> due to weather; the Membership Meeting was held January 29<sup>th</sup> with 27 attending for the Installation of Officers Ceremony; and finally a Hot Dog Special was held January 30<sup>th</sup> with 20 people in attendance.

A motion to accept the Director's Report as presented was made by Earl Temchin; seconded by Guss Nevelos; all were in favor.

Under Correspondence: A letter from the Connecticut General Assembly Select Committee on Aging was received asking for input on important issues to Senior Centers. The Executive Director responded by email to Senator, Sam Caligiuri and Representative, Zeke Zalaski. A 2009/2010 Budget Schedule was received from the Finance Department highlighting the budget provisions set forth in the town charter. The Executive Director indicated that a public hearing will be held on April 6, 2009, but the venue was not yet determined. A letter was sent to Mr. Weichsel requesting that a new line item entitled Special Revenue Funding be added to our budget and the \$5,000 grant for the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group be deposited into it. The "Rescue a Buck" initiative was discussed. The Town is looking to gather money saving ideas from town employees and residents and more information can be found regarding this by visiting the Town of Southington website at [www.southington.org](http://www.southington.org). A heartfelt letter written by Calendar House Member Allan Gemmell was read by the Executive Director thanking us for the garden plots provided every spring. The Department Head meeting minutes from January 7, 2009 were reviewed. Chris Palmieri has verbally requested a rental for The Southington Community Theatre for May 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, and May 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.

Under old business; two memos were sent to Mr. Weichsel requesting permission for Robert Verderame and Vincent Morrelli, full time bus driver, to travel out of town to the Department of Transportation for pre-procurement classes for the new bus. Both classes were attended, and as previously mentioned, the bus has been ordered. The Executive Director noted that the bus will carry 16 passengers and be equipped with two wheel chair lifts, a heavy chassis and large motor. A letter was sent to Mr. Weichsel as per the Budget Containment Policy highlighting Calendar House's Budget Containment and Energy Conservation. The Executive Director made a verbal correction in the letter stating that the AT&T grant received was in the amount of \$900, not \$750. Calendar House's new rental agreement contract was reviewed. Due to the new restrictions on over time, we are now charging a \$200 rental fee. \$100 is payable to Calendar House, and \$100 is payable to the Town of Southington. The \$100 Town of Southington check will be deposited into the Calendar House over time line item to pay the employee working the over time for the rental. This new agreement is acceptable to Mr. Weichsel and Town Attorney; Mark Sciota assisted us in drafting the new contract. A motion to approve the new Calendar House Rental Agreement was made by Michael Rossi, seconded by Marlene Carbone; all were in favor.

Under new business; a letter was sent to The Orchard Valley Garden Club advising that we would waive the rental fee for their May 9<sup>th</sup> plant sale. This was agreed upon at the January 6, 2009 Commission meeting due to the fact that the Garden Club has been very generous to Calendar House by donating new trees for the property after the construction of our new parking lot. They are also planning to donate more plantings for our islands in the near future. The Executive Director reported that our Intergenerational Valentines Day Party with Kennedy Middle School is scheduled for Wednesday, February 11, 2009. Sixty-three seniors have purchased tickets and Kennedy Middle School is expecting forty-two students and six teachers to attend. A letter from the Employees Community Service Fund enclosing the \$900 AT&T grant was presented. The Executive Director asked for a motion to deposit these funds into the Calendar House Membership Account. A motion to deposit the \$900 into the Membership Account was made by Michael Rossi, seconded by Guss Nevelos; all were in favor.

Commissioner Sandra Micalizzi spoke to inform the Commission of a new mechanism to ready citizens for an emergency. She distributed information to the Executive Director in regards to the web site [ready.gov](http://ready.gov). On this website there is information on registering for a statewide phone tree and preparing a family emergency plan. This information will be presented at the next Membership Meeting and copies will be made available to members in the office.

Under public communications; Membership Association President, Ray Fecteau was present and expressed concern about the possibility of no longer mailing the monthly bulletin. Mr. Fecteau explained that he is currently looking for ways to increase attendance at the monthly membership meetings. He is concerned if the bulletin is not mailed notifying members of the meeting that attendance would continue to decrease. The Executive Director explained that no longer mailing the bulletin was just one cost saving possibility. Other possibilities include charging a subscription fee to mail the bulletin, charging a joining fee for the center, or charging for classes. Of course, these are all last resorts, but if budget constraints continue, we may have to revisit these suggestions in the future. The Executive Director also advised that if the bulletin was no longer going to be mailed, it would be phased in and we would give advance notice to the Membership of any change that would occur. It was again noted that the bulletin is available on-line as well as in our office and that if needed Commissioner Marjorie Chase has offered to distribute copies to

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Spring Lake Village. Commissioner Lynn Maschi asked if Mr. Fecteau had any idea why attendance was down at the Membership Meetings. Mr. Fecteau commented that sometimes cake and coffee is simply not enough to get members out for the meeting. The Membership Association is trying to come up with interesting entertainment and informative speakers to increase attendance. It was also noted that inclement weather in the winter months negatively affects attendance, and that many seniors are either still working or babysitting in the afternoons when the Membership Meetings take place. Robert Verderame commented that many other Senior Centers are experiencing the same problem with attendance and have started to hold meetings every other month instead of monthly. He advised Mr. Fecteau that holding meetings every other month might be something to look into.

The next Senior Citizens Commission meeting will be held Tuesday, March 10, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

A motion to adjourn was made by Ben Camusso; seconded by Michael Rossi, all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Sargis  
Acting Senior Center Secretary