

MEETING OF APRIL 8, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Earl Temchin.

Members present: Ben Cammuso, Marjorie Chase, Marlene Carbone, Lynn Maschi, Guss Nevelos, Michael Rossi and Earl Temchin.

Members absent: Susan Locks, Sandra Micalizzi.

Mr. Temchin welcomed new Commissioners, Marjorie Chase and Marlene Carbone, to the Board. Congratulations to Guss Nevelos for his reappointment to the Commission. His participation and “hands on” involvement is much appreciated.

The minutes of the March 11, 2008 meeting were presented to the Commission. A motion was made by Michael Rossi to accept the minutes as presented; seconded by Guss Nevelos; all were in favor.

In the absence of a Treasurer, at Mr. Temchin’s request, Executive Director Robert Verderame gave the Treasurer’s Report. He reported that of the \$474,585. current budget, \$321,861.12 (67.8%) has been expended, leaving \$152,723.88 remaining. There are several line items that bear close watching, and may need transferred funds. At the March 12th Finance Board Meeting, Mr. Verderame requested an appropriation for the expenditures, (totaling \$3,450.), related to the damage from the ice storm, and was refused and advised “to look into your current funds”. As the Clerk Typist position was vacant for three months unused funds in the amount of \$6,000. have been requested to be transferred into Building/Grounds Maintenance. Two items had been incorrectly charged to the wrong line item by the Finance Department, and have been rectified. Noting the gasoline expenditure, Mr. Temchin wondered if the other town departments have to budget for gasoline. Lynn Maschi asked for an explanation of the procedure if and when we run short. Mr. Verderame explained that we watch the line items, and request transfers within our budget when necessary. Calendar House has rarely requested an appropriation. 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 was asked to present the Director’s and Program Coordinator’s Report. He noted that 830 one-way rides were provided in March. We have been receiving additional requests for transportation to dialysis treatment. Three dialysis patients have been added as regulars. Also noted has been an increase in out-of-state adult children contacting the senior center for information and services for their elderly parents living in Southington.

Under Social Services, we have already provided well over 250 individuals with Income Tax Assistance. We have received many inquiries concerning the economic stimulus package, and responded with assistance, instruction and forms. Cynthia Gilbert also provided brief instruction and information to staff members at The Summit, Southington Housing Authority and The Connecticut Center for Healthy Aging. SeniorNet Coordinator Peter Freeman has also been assisting walk-ins with the "Stimulus" filing. Many hands make light work and our volunteers have been incredible. Group sessions have been scheduled to enable individuals to complete their own Economic Stimulus form with oversight from tax aide counselors. Stimulus Payment requests can be filed after the April 15th income tax deadline.

The Energy Assistance program has basically ended, although there have been numerous inquiries. This program runs between September/October through March/April and somewhat into May. Approximately 300 applicants are processed annually. With the extension of this program, we are continuing to complete applications and field calls.

Seniors reaching age 65 are requesting comprehensive counseling regarding Medicare, Medicare Supplements and Medicare Part D benefits. ConnPACE applications and renewal applications remain constant.

The Renter's Rebate Program begins on May 15th. Sharyn Murphy and five volunteers attended training on April 2. Sharyn and one volunteer will be attending computer application training on April 17th, as beginning this year applications are required to be completed on computer.

Under Bus Maintenance, the broken frame under the step on the 2002 bus was repaired. Barring any major problem, we should have sufficient funds in that line item.

Under Building Maintenance, there is a leak in the hip roof above room 5, where the HVAC unit is located which will need to be tarred and sealed. Repairs were made to the partition in the main hall; also the electrician was in to repair the receptacles and emergency lights damaged during the ice storm. The parking lot lights timer and the pavilion motion detector timer were reset. Routine checks on all fire extinguishers and the Ansel system were done. The alarm went off at 2:18 a.m. on March 7, apparently due to loose paper triggering the motion detector. Steps have been taken to ensure that paper/notes are not left out.

On March 12, Health Director Charles Motes and I met with representatives from Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield to discuss ways to implement an employee Health, Wellness and Educational program. Several ideas discussed were presented to Town Manager John Weichsel, who has given his consent to proceed.

Southington School Superintendent Dr. Joseph Erdardi and several of his staff members visited the Senior Center and were impressed with the programs and work done here. Dr. Erdardi will speak at the April 24th Membership Association Meeting. As always, the Commissioners are welcome to attend.

The CASC training session on March 13th was well attended and very informative. Four staff members and five Commissioners attended.

A new Health Screening Initiative in conjunction with MidState Medical Center is being developed and will be implemented soon. A Certified Gerontological Nurse would be regularly scheduled on-site to conduct various health screenings and to provide health education information. This would be especially beneficial during the winter months. The nurse will not dispense any medications, OTC or otherwise. A bagel breakfast on June 2 will provide an opportunity to introduce the program and the nurse to the seniors.

In a preliminary organizational meeting with Sharon Robinson and Erika Copes of Central Connecticut Senior Services and Cynthia Gilbert, dates and logistics were discussed and assigned for the upcoming fifth annual Health Fair to be held on May 21. All other activities and classes will be cancelled for the day, and the building will close one hour early at 3:30 p.m. the previous day for preparation.

Health Director Charles Motes conducted a Civil Preparedness Class on March 26 for Town of Southington Department Heads and representatives from Plainville. Of note is that the Calendar House is fourth on the list of Town facilities to be utilized as a refuge or triage site, preceded by the High School, DePaolo and Derynoski schools.

Highlights of the Program Coordinator's Report include the highly successful "Taste of Italy" event sponsored by HealthNet; a Trip Sale to Springfield, MA for the International Tattoo; St. Patrick's Day Party; UCONN School of Pharmacy program on sleep disorders; the ongoing and well attended Grandparents raising Grandchildren support group; and Southington Fire Department Inspector Robert Upson's program on fire and carbon monoxide safety at the monthly membership meeting. Program Coordinator Sharyn Murphy attended the NCOA Conference in Washington DC and will be giving a report to the Commission at a later date.

Mr. Rossi thanked Mr. Verderame for an excellent and detailed report. A motion to accept the Director's Report as presented was made by Guss Nevelos; seconded by Lynn Maschi; all in favor.

Under Correspondence: At the April 2nd Department Heads Meeting, the increase in cost for gasoline was discussed. Mr. Weichsel asked all departments to save on usage as much as possible. There was some discussion among the Commissioners regarding the South End School. Mr. Rossi noted that the school is one of the best built. Marlene Carbone mentioned her children are attending that school, and she doesn't think the building is in bad shape, probably built better than a lot of newer buildings.

Continuing under correspondence it was noted that the Southington Community Theatre event has been canceled. Cynthia Gilbert elaborated on the upcoming Health Fair, and also called attention to the article re. Joan LaRose on Parkinson's Disease and Poetry Class, noting with enthusiasm the impact our classes have on the senior citizen participants, and the exceptional expertise and qualifications of our instructors.

We had an unfortunate issue with the caterer at a recent rental event, in terms of the condition that the kitchen was left in, but it was quickly resolved, and restored to an acceptable state.

Under Old Business: The Board of Finance requested that the Town Manager write letters to each Department Head requesting cuts in their budget requests. Mr. Verderame submitted an “inverse priority list” specifically cutting \$10,000. for a new bus. A grant application has been written for \$40,000. If accepted, the stipulation is 80/20. The cost of a new bus would be approximately \$48,000-\$50,000. and we would have to request town funding at that point. In the meantime, it is not necessary for funds to be budgeted. Mr. Rossi asked if we were asked to reduce by a certain amount, to which Mr. Verderame replied, “no”. Mrs. Maschi thought the budget had been approved. Mr. Temchin remarked that it still is in the process, noting that we are usually called to attend a workshop, and this year we were not required to do so. Mr. Verderame mentioned that at the public hearing considerable discussion concerned the addition of personnel. The police department has requested four new officers. We have requested an additional full time driver, and that might be in jeopardy. Mr. Rossi affirmed how the Executive Director had handled the Town Manager’s request, and asked if the Board of Finance might request further cuts, and if so, are we prepared? Mr. Verderame responded that further cuts would probably come in the Travel/Dues and Utilities line items. We have offset our request for an additional driver with a significant cut in the part time drivers line item.

Relating to the parking lot project: The issue of speed bumps came under discussion. Ben Cammuso proposed two speed bumps – one at the Hobart Street entrance/exit and one at the Pleasant Street entrance/exit, to curtail and slow down the 8 a.m. DePaolo traffic. Cars and NBT buses use our parking lot as a short cut to avoid the traffic flow on Pleasant Street. Also under consideration is a gate at the Hobart Street entrance/exit to be closed until 8:30 a.m. Mr. Temchin raised the issues of available funds and amending the site plan. Mr. Verderame remarked that we have the funds for the curbing and top coat, but not enough to cover the installation of a gate so that would have to be put on hold. The final layer of asphalt will be applied shortly, as well as the pavement markings. Damaged curbs will also be repaired at that time. Mrs. Maschi remarked that more signage is needed. Guss Nevelos noted we will be adding three more handicap spots. He made a motion that speed bumps, pavement stripes and arrows and additional signage be done to complete the project; seconded by Lynn Maschi; all were in favor. Mr. Verderame stated that the additional lighting is excellent.

Also, under Old Business: the Southington Orchard Valley Garden Club will be donating and planting several deciduous trees on April 23rd. Mr. Verderame met with Schmidt Lawn Care, who had been awarded the lawn care bid for this year.

The long awaited, much anticipated plaques were on display. The Commissioners were pleased with the quality of the workmanship. A committee comprised of Ben Cammuso, Guss Nevelos and former Commissioner Peter Santago, will decide on where to hang them, and when to hold a dedication. The families of Mr. D’Angelo and Mr. Della Vecchia will be contacted.

Under New Business: Information regarding upcoming CASC meetings was made available as requested by several of the Commissioners. Mr. Verderame gave explanation of the SeniorNet “Super Centers”. The SeniorNet Headquarters has set the minimum membership dues of \$3,600. Since many senior centers cannot meet this quota, an alliance has been formed, “The Central

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Connecticut SeniorNet Learning Center”, that Peter Freeman was asked to head. With a minimal impact to our operations, this significant development will meet the requirement of the parent organization, (SeniorNet), while bringing several Connecticut chapters together enabling shared curriculum, ideas and possibly instructors, resulting in better service and education. Cliff Snow remarked that our lab is the leader in this geographic area, second to none.

Continuing under New Business: As mentioned in the Director’s Report, a new Health Screening Program in conjunction with MidState will be initiated with a Bagel Breakfast on June 2nd. We recently were notified of the approval of our “Request for Funds” through the “Connecticut Senior Centers 2008 Special Funding Initiative” grant. This application related to the newly formed “Grandparents raising Grandchildren” support group. It was especially rewarding to learn that the grant award had been increased from the \$3,000. requested to \$5,000. Mr. Temchin remarked that Mr. Verderame and staff are the prototypical grant finders, and congratulated them.

Mr. Temchin appointed a nominating committee, asking Lynn Maschi, Michael Rossi and Ben Cammuso to serve in that capacity, charging them to submit nominations for the positions of Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Treasurer of the Senior Citizen Commission. The responsibilities of Secretary have been and will continue to be fulfilled by the Senior Center Secretary, at the pleasure of the Commission.

Under Public Communication: Membership Association President Ray Fecteau welcomed the new commissioners and looks forward to working with them in making the membership viable and keeping Southington seniors happy and active! Cliff Snow also welcomed the new commissioners, thanking the commission for all they’ve done, and said he was happy that Guss Nevelos was reappointed. Regarding the parking lot, he asked if the traffic flow had been taken into consideration – drivers coming in and going the wrong way – wondering if signs would be posted. Both Guss Nevelos and Ben Cammuso assured him that the matter of signage has been addressed. Earl Temchin felt that the traffic flow had been addressed in the site plan. Bob responded that it had and that the appropriate arrows, handicap markings and signage would be painted on the pavement and posted. Mr. Temchin remarked that this was a very important issue, especially with buses loading and unloading. Marjorie Chase asked what the proper traffic flow is, and was informed that both entrances are legal entrances and exits, that traffic entering the parking lot should stay to the right. Cliff also spoke as a member of the “lunch group” thanking Cynthia Gilbert for cleaning up after the rental incident. Marlene Carbone expressed her willingness to serve on this commission, remarking that she was born and grew up in Southington, has three children and is a registered nurse with 22 years experience, currently working at Bradley Hospital.

Michael Rossi made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Guss Nevelos; all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, May 13, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Gilbert
Senior Center Secretary