

## MEETING OF JULY 13, 2010

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Commission Chairman Earl Temchin.

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

Commissioner Ben Cammuso led the **Pledge of Allegiance** to the American Flag.

**The minutes of the June 8, 2010 meeting** were presented to the Commission. A motion was made by Guss Nevelos to accept the minutes as presented; seconded by Ben Cammuso; all were in favor.

The **Treasurer's Report** was given by Commissioner/Treasurer Susan Locks who reported that of the FY 2009/2010 \$509,025. revised budget, (which includes \$44,016 in Transfers/Adjustments), \$466,883.31 (92.9%) has been expended; \$6,225.74 remains encumbered, leaving \$35,915.95. Ms. Locks noted that Mr. Verderame had informed her that several bills have been submitted and will be paid against the existing funds, after which remaining funds will be returned to the Town's general fund. Funds that remain in the special revenue account will be carried over into the next fiscal year and will continue to augment transportation services as stipulated by the terms of the grant. Ms. Locks also reported that of the FY 2010/2011 \$475,644. revised budget, \$11,433.40 (8.3%) has been expended; \$27,827.80 has been encumbered, leaving an available budget of \$436,382.80. Commissioner Micalizzi commented on overtime paid in this FY and reiterated that with a tight budget, all expenses need to be monitored. A motion was made by Guss Nevelos to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented; seconded by Lynn Maschi; all were in favor.

Executive Director Robert Verderame presented the **Director's and Program Coordinator's Report for June 2010**, noting that the Dial-A-Ride Program provided 960 one-way rides, including 506 medical runs. Some 210 Renter Relief applications have been processed since the program began on May 17<sup>th</sup>. Program Coordinator Sharyn Murphy and volunteers are doing an excellent job. Two housing authority sites were visited, with four additional sites scheduled during July. This program generates considerable telephone calls, with over one hundred calls specific to it received during June. Connecticut became the first state to expand Medicaid coverage under the Affordable Care Act requiring states to cover low-income individuals. As various provisions of the new Health Care Reform Bill take effect, there will be additional training and informational sessions scheduled.

**Under Bus Maintenance:** All buses are running well.

**Under Building Maintenance:** The mercury switch thermostat in the office area was replaced, as well as a thermostat lock box in the game room. HVAC units were served and duct work to HVAC units was cleaned. Light fixture ballasts in the kitchen and hallway areas were changed. A change in the AT&T service adding two additional lines with roll-over feature was completed.

The annual **Youth Honor Day** pairing Southington High School students with various Town Departments took place on Tuesday, June 1. Miss Brooke Sakowicz spent the morning at the Calendar House interacting with a number of senior citizens as well as with the staff.

## Senior Citizen Commission Meeting

July 13, 2010

Page two

**Continuing under the Director's Report:** The Executive Director attended several meetings including: the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation Title VI meeting on June 2<sup>nd</sup>; the Connecticut Association of Municipal Agents statewide seminar in Montville, CT on June 11<sup>th</sup>; and the Connecticut Association of Municipal Agents Annual Mandatory Training Session at the Tolland Senior Center on June 15<sup>th</sup>. On June 25<sup>th</sup>, the Calendar House staff was able to participate in the Connecticut Association of Senior Center Personnel (CASCP) Annual All Staff Training afternoon session.

The Executive Director met with Mr. Dan Britt who is conducting a survey for the Bristol Chamber of Commerce relating to transportation needs and concerns. Items discussed included the Dial-a-Ride program as well as issues relating to the CT State District Line and the fact that Southington is one of only three towns that does not have a transit line. This survey should be completed by the end of the year.

Commissioner Micalizzi asked why the Bristol Chamber of Commerce would want Southington information. Mr. Verderame replied that the same state office deals with district line concerns for both Bristol and Southington, and in fact Bristol District Transit comes into Southington on a limited basis. Commissioner Temchin noted that the Bristol Senior Center transportation program is not as developed as Southington's. Mr. Temchin also remarked that theoretically the Bristol District Transit would provide transportation for some disabled non-senior individuals. Commissioner Micalizzi asked how this service is communicated to individuals that might benefit from it. Commissioner Maschi inquired as to the content and distribution of the Bristol survey. Mr. Temchin asked where the results would be disseminated. Mr. Verderame replied that in addition to the Bristol Chamber of Commerce, survey conclusions would be submitted to the State Representatives positioned to address considerations for possible funding. Mr. Britt will also be making the results available to the Executive Director.

Commissioner Micalizzi asked the Executive Director how often the grants are audited. Mr. Verderame replied that quarterly reports are submitted with full compliance to the requirements of both the Matching Grant and the SEC 5310 Grant. In fact with reference to the 5310 grant, six towns are chosen for audit from the 160 participating towns. We were recently due to be audited. However, complete responses and readily accessible documentation to verbal inquiries produced a satisfactory and very complimentary result, so much so that the physical audit was deemed unnecessary by Ellen M. Lawrence, of the CT Department of Transportation, Bureau of Public Transportation.

Commissioner Temchin noted the low mileage on the 2006 Bus, asking if problems with the lift had limited usage. Mr. Verderame responded that was the case; repairs have been done by the Ride-Away Handicap Equipment Corp.

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

Commissioner Temchin asked the Executive Director to continue with the **Program Coordinator's Report**. Mr. Verderame highlighted the day trip to Rhode Island; a trip sale for "Nantucket"; and the "Spring Fling Luncheon held at 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Church, coordinated by Stuart Estra, attended by 200 of our seniors. Bus transportation was provided by Dial-a-Ride to this event. Also, noted was an ice cream social featuring entertainment by Bob Mel (125 attendees); Country Western Evening Event (160 attendees), bus transportation was provided; a Bagel Breakfast with Dr. Manning; and the CASCP Staff Training Session.

## Senior Citizen Commission Meeting

July 13, 2010

Page three

**Continuing under the Program Coordinator's Report:** Commissioner Micalizzi remarked that the Wolcott Senior Center offers a number of day trips to the casinos, various restaurants and other places of interest within the state. She provided a copy of their activities to be given to the Program Coordinator. Mr. Verderame mentioned that we have provided transportation to the Manor Inn Restaurant for a group of seniors at their request on several occasions. Transportation is also provided to events within the town, such as the Spring Fling event and the Library afternoon movies program.

A motion to accept the Program Coordinator's Report as presented was made by Michael Rossi; seconded by Susan Locks; all were in favor.

**Under Correspondence:** The July 7<sup>th</sup> Department Heads Meeting minutes indicated that the Library is available as a "cooling center" in addition to the Calendar House. Since the library is open until 9 p.m., additional hours are provided. Also noted is that an upcoming revaluation will be in effect for the October 1, 2011 grand list. Regarding the "Closing of the Town Books for the 2009/2010 fiscal year", we are following the guidelines as outlined. The Board of Finance will meet on July 28, 2010.

**Under Old Business:** Notification that we have been awarded the Matching Grant for FY 2011 was received. Invoicing will be submitted for first quarter payment. Commissioner Cammuso reported that he is still working on the hand railing.

**Under Transportation Committee:** Commissioner Micalizzi reported that ninety-five completed surveys have been received out of the 202 sent. The committee will present a report at the September Commission Meeting.

**Under New Business:** An "Adventure Afternoon at the Movies" program is underway at the Library in cooperation with Calendar House. Transportation is available to interested seniors. Executive Director Robert Verderame has been in contact with Town Council Building Committee members Tony Tranquillo and Nick DePaolo. Under discussion are the building's flat roof, the concrete floor in the pavilion and a catch basin in the parking lot. Mr. Verderame indicated that there have been leaks in the main hall area. In response to Mr. Temchin's inquiry, Mr. Verderame noted that the roof was last done twenty-two years ago, there are too many patches. Commissioner Micalizzi asked if the matter would be taken out of our hands by the Building Committee, and Mr. Temchin replied that the Commission would continue to address the situation, stressing that with incidents of leaking it is an urgent situation. Commissioner Carbone inquired if a grant could be attained. Mr. Verderame remarked that he would certainly research possible grants, but noted that in the current economic climate funding sources are limited. Ms. Carbone questioned the condition of the pavilion pillars that had been a previous issue. Mr. Verderame assured the Commission that the pillars are doing fine, looking great. The concrete floor is showing some settling cracks that are not a problem or safety concern, but will be brought to the attention of the Building Committee. Commissioner Micalizzi asked which catch basin was a problem. Mr. Verderame informed her that it was an older basin, not one that had been installed during the parking lot renovation.

Mr. Verderame presented a request to have the main hall floor cleaned, waxed and sealed sooner rather than waiting until September when it is usually done. There has been unusual wear and tear on the floor during the fall, winter and spring due to tracked in salt and sand. Mr. Temchin asked the cost involved. Mr. Verderame noted that doing the entire flooring, including the main hall, hallways and classrooms cost \$2,000., an amount that has been budgeted. Ms. Micalizzi clarified that this would be done earlier, not additionally. Mr. Temchin concurred that it would not be an additional expense, simply a matter of timing. Ben Cammuso made a motion to have the floor in the Main Hall cleaned, waxed and sealed at the earliest opportunity; seconded by Guss Nevelos; all were in favor.

## Senior Citizen Commission Meeting

July 13, 2010

Page four

**Public Communication:** Calendar House member Walter Kizilski asked if that would be the second roof, remarking that a new roof can be put on top. Bob indicated the leaks are basically around the HVAC units. Earl noted there are inherent problems with flat and hip roofs. Bob observed that the soft spots create holes and resultant leaking. Earl remarked that the longer it goes the greater the job becomes. Bob said the committee may determine that a 2<sup>nd</sup> layer could be applied. Walt felt that 20 years for a commercial building was good. Cliff asked if the weight factor would be checked before an additional heavy layer of tar was applied. Bob noted it would certainly be considered.

The chair recognized Mr. Norman Ouellette, who introduced himself as a resident of Southington at 10 Florence Lane since 1976, a member of Calendar House and a bus rider. Following a stroke several years ago, he has come to rely on Dial-a-Ride, and is happy to have the service available. Mr. Ouellette spoke on a number of issues extensively, including but not limited to the following:

Concerns of the bus riders are not communicated because they are afraid to express their concerns for fear of retaliation. Stating that he knows he is “sexist” but that the majority of the riders are elderly ladies, who are followers like most women and do not want to get involved. Mr. Ouellette implied that he was speaking on behalf of the other riders. If concerns are expressed they fall on deaf ears, are not resolved and tend to fester and fester. He feels that the bus drivers should transmit concerns but has been told that they do not have any input. He indicated that he was surprised that the drivers are not at these meetings.

Referencing the commission meeting, he mentioned the lack of evening transportation citing that the bus riders have no means to attend the meetings to express concerns. Alluding to complaints, he did not respond with anything specific when asked by Commissioner Micalizzi “What are the concerns that have been expressed to you?” Ms. Micalizzi added that the survey was sent as a way for concerns to be expressed. Commissioner Nevelos asked Mr. Ouellette if he had received and completed a survey. Mr. Ouellette responded that it was the survey and conversation with Commissioner Maschi that brought him to this meeting. In fact, Ms. Maschi offered and provided a ride to the meeting as he does not drive.

Commissioner Temchin asked, “Is there something you have observed?” Mr. Ouellette expressed concern regarding decorum on the bus. Citing an example of a rider who boarded the bus with fifteen packages and was told it was against the rules to have that many packages, Mr. Ouellette stated that “no one seems to know the rules” A copy of the rules and regulations should be given to every rider, and there should be consequences for not adhering to them. He has been riding the bus since 2005 and when he first began using the bus, he was given a two page list of rules and regulations, but since then no one has them, they should be updated and made available. Of concern to him, is the behavior of some passengers who insist on keeping their packages on the seat next to them, and refuse to let someone sit on the seat. He spoke about the need for decorum on the bus. He has observed riders badgering other riders. He mentioned having some good times on the bus, but sometimes there is a lot of negativity and when a person is lambasted they feel bad all day. He feels that the drivers are the authority on the bus and should have the authority to enforce the rules. He has heard comments from the drivers that they are not the controllers of the people and can’t do anything. He stated that he “likes Vinny”, in fact Vinny helped him out a lot by taking him and his car to Maine, but “sometimes he says things in a way that is misunderstood, he says it wrong and they don’t know how to take it”.

**Senior Citizen Commission Meeting  
July 13, 2010  
Page five**

Of major concern to Mr. Ouellette is the limitation of transportation options. He did not appreciate Mr. Wayne Stanforth's recent public comments, because they showed a lack of understanding and made Mr. Ouellette and others who need the bus transportation feel like they were "nothing, of no importance". Some time ago, at a Town Council meeting the topic of mass transit was discussed and the remarks indicated that Southington does not need mass transit, but can take care of the needs. At that time, an additional bus was being purchased and an expansion of services was anticipated. He does not feel that any expansion has taken place. While acknowledging that medical appointments should be the emphasis, he reminded the commissioners that for many who cannot drive, this is their life. He stated that Southington is severely lacking in public transportation and that having lived in other locations, he enjoyed many options not available in Southington.

Mr. Ouellette expressed the desire that Dial-a-Ride be expanded, even if it created an expense to the town. For him and his wife shopping is an event they try to make the most of and take the opportunity to eat out. The rule of one destination on any given day hinders that. It would be appreciated if a variety of destinations were offered. They enjoyed going to Bristol or Meriden Square on occasion. He acknowledged that the bus is available for evening events at the Calendar House.

Noting that the Calendar House has both a 12 passenger and a 16 passenger bus, he feels that the larger bus should be used for shopping trips since more people ride the bus for shopping.

Mr. Ouellette suggested forming a "BRA", Bus Riders Association to provide a liaison for the bus riders to present concerns to the Commission on a regular basis.

He also expressed a need for reasonable legal service, stating his family had an involved issue regarding property owned by multiple family members and many elderly cannot afford the attorney fees charged. Commissioner Micalizzi responded with information regarding CT Legal, an available service.

Commissioner Temchin thanked Mr. Ouellette for his comments. Commissioner Micalizzi expressed appreciation to Mr. Ouellette for his efforts and for his willingness to come forward. Mr. Temchin remarked that there is a lot of work to be done, noting that Mr. Ouellette was in the right place. As a commission, we are the responsible place, each of us has been appointed by the town council, an elected body. Noting that the timing was perfect, as a transportation sub-committee has recently been established with the major charge of determining how we can improve. The survey is the first action in an effort to identify and address needs and resources.

Mr. Temchin also noted that "you have a broad liaison in place - the Calendar House Membership Association." Mr. Ouellette responded that he feels that bus issues are not important to the general membership. On occasion, he has attended membership meetings where as the only voice among eighty attendees, he raised concerns and felt dismissed, that nothing was addressed. Mr. Temchin assured him that nothing would be taken lightly by this commission, and that while we can't promise resolutions overnight, we are in the process of addressing the concerns.

Commissioners Temchin, Micalizzi and Maschi expressed thanks to Mr. Ouellette for his time and for expressing his perspective and concerns. Mr. Temchin asked Mr. Ouellette to encourage other bus riders to come to the commission meetings and assure them they would be heard.

Calendar House Membership Association Board Member and past president Cliff Snow asked to respond to a comment made by the bus rider. He stated that at every membership meeting, an opportunity is given for anyone to speak, "for the good of the organization", and present any concerns.

## Senior Citizen Commission Meeting

July 13, 2010

Page six

He insisted that not once had he ever heard Mr. Ouellette speak up. He expressed that particularly as a past president he was very upset by Mr. Ouellette's remarks. Noting that both Walter Kizilski and he are currently Board Members, you may be sure these concerns will be brought before the membership and especially to the Board of Directors. Walter Kizilski remarked that he had not spoken to Norman either and was not aware of a membership meeting that he had raised concerns.

As Mr. Ouellette began to speak to Mr. Snow, Commissioner Temchin stated that this is not a debate and insisted that all comments be addressed to the chair.

Commissioner Cammuso noted he had never seen more than forty persons at a membership meeting. Commissioner Micalizzi remarked that it is good that a resident has come forward.

Commissioner Temchin inquired regarding a "forgotten rider". Senior Center Secretary Cynthia Gilbert replied that although there was a miscommunication and traffic congestion resulting in a longer wait time than usual, the individual had been assured that the bus would be there. Without notifying Calendar House, the individual decided to leave the location and get himself home. Follow-up telephone conversation confirmed he had arrived home safely, and in fact apologized to a staff member for not waiting for the bus. Commissioner Maschi remarked that she had been in the Calendar House office at the time.

Preparing to adjourn, Mr. Temchin asked if there were any more comments.

Citing an article she read in the Hartford Courant, Commissioner Micalizzi remarked, "I see we have a very talented bus driver". She displayed the news article indicating that the bus driver is involved with the Southington Drive-In, which is a good thing for the community. She asked the Executive Director if this activity interferes with his responsibilities at Calendar House. Mr. Verderame replied absolutely not, he volunteers to help with this activity that occurs on the weekend, when he has no responsibilities at Calendar House.

Commissioner Cammuso observed that we cannot please everyone or meet all the expectations. Commissioner Micalizzi injected that the needs are exploding in Southington. Her personal experience in obtaining resources for elderly family members has been frustrating particularly in finding places that deliver meals to shut-ins. There just aren't any options. Executive Director Verderame suggested Meals on Wheels and Tops Market. Mr. Cammuso remarked that he works at Bread for Life and meals are delivered every day. Ms. Micalizzi remarked Tops Market only delivers groceries and that not everyone wants or qualifies for Meals on Wheels or Bread for Life and would like restaurant food.

Commissioner Maschi summed up the meeting by noting that there are many issues and it will take time. We have work ahead of us. We appreciate Mr. Ouellette coming tonight and think it was great to hear his perspective.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ben Cammuso; seconded by Guss Nevelos. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

As there is no meeting scheduled in August, the next Senior Citizens Commission meeting will be held **Tuesday, September 14, 2010** at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Cynthia Gilbert  
Senior Center Secretary