

MEETING OF NOVEMBER 5, 2008

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

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

Absent: Marlene Carbone and Sandra Micalizzi,

The minutes of the October 15, 2008 meeting were presented to the Commission. A motion was made by Michael Rossi to accept the minutes as presented; seconded by Marjorie Chase; all were in favor.

With regards to the evaluation of the Executive Director, the matter has been tabled until the next commission meeting, so that each individual commissioner has opportunity to touch base with the Director personally.

Treasurer Susan Locks gave the Treasurer's Report, noting that of the \$495,467. current budget, \$156,667.15 (33.6%) has been expended, \$9,919.26 encumbered, with \$328,880.59 available. It was noted that the Matching Grant second quarter payment has been received, and request will be made to the Finance Board to allocate the funds as prescribed by the terms of the grant. If necessary, Mr. Verderame will attend the November Finance Board Meeting. There being no further questions or comments, motion was made by Guss Nevelos to accept the Treasurers Report; seconded by Susan Locks; all were in favor.

Chairman Earl Temchin queried the Commissioners as to participation on the Budget Committee. Susan Locks, Lynn Maschi and Michael Rossi expressed their willingness to serve in that capacity and were appointed. The Budget Committee will meet one hour prior to the December 9th Commission Meeting. Executive Director Robert Verderame will obtain estimates for several potential budget items.

Executive Director Robert Verderame presented the October Director's and Program Coordinator's Reports. He reported that Dial-A-Ride provided 1043 one way rides, including 425 in town and 79 out of town medical runs. This is the fifth consecutive month that we have provided over one thousand rides. Again, it was noted that we are certainly doing our job in meeting the transportation requests.

He commented that the Social Service Program statistics continue to indicate a steady growth in requests for assistance. Specific mention was made regarding the Energy Assistance Program, which began in October and saw 77 applications completed for individuals with deliverable fuel. Those who heat with natural or electricity are being scheduled beginning in November, and to date we have received many inquiries. Also of note, were a number of incidents that the Executive Director was called upon to respond to in his role as Municipal Agent for the Elderly. These involve neglect and/or abuse situations. Earl Temchin asked how these are reported; and Mr. Verderame replied that he is contacted by the Police Department, Health Department and sometimes neighbors or concerned individuals.

Mr. Verderame pointed out that the Medicare Part D open enrollment period is from November 15 through December 31. We are hosting a Medicare Part D seminar at 9:30 a.m. on Monday, November 17th, in conjunction with having the DSS Rx Express Bus on site on that day. Eight CHOICES counselors, including Sharyn Murphy and Bob Verderame will be available to provide individual counseling. Recently Sharyn and Bob participated in two “web-inars” that provided updated information for the CHOICES program. Preparations are being made for the AARP TCE income tax program, which Cynthia Gilbert will oversee again this year.

The Executive Director remarked on the Bus Maintenance, noting the mileage and that all buses continue to be running well. Routine service maintenance was done on the 2002 and 2006 buses. In addition, the rear brake pads were replaced on the 2002 bus. Mr. Temchin inquired if we ever have three buses on the road at one time, and Bob responded that we do.

Under Building Maintenance, the pavilion was closed for the season; a cracked PVC pipe under the kitchen sink was replaced; the office area carpet was cleaned; Modern Pest resolved a minor issue; the kitchen door will need painting and a new screen door.

The Executive Director attended a Civil Preparedness Meeting, noting that the Calendar House is the third refuge/triage site for the town, following the High School and DePaolo Middle School. Our nutrition program has been hosting a number of seniors from the Plainville Senior Center. The Intergenerational Program with DePaolo Middle School began its fifth year with active participation between the students and senior citizens during the lunch program. The second of four sessions in the “Murder on the Menu” series was held.

Highlights of the Program Coordinator’s Report focused on the health and wellness programs, which included a Nurse Clinic; VNA Cholesterol/Glucose Screening; VNA blood pressure clinics and a VNA foot clinic. Also of note was the very successful Italian Night with 164 attending. Commissioner Chase injected that she attended and “it was a very good thing”. At the October membership meeting, SPD’s Sgt Lowell DePalma informed the seniors on identity theft and fraud, and Diane Briggs briefly presented an overview of the emergency preparedness program “SouthingtonCARES”. Thirty-nine folks enjoyed a Halloween Hot Dog Special, followed by Bingo with sixty participants. 2009 trip offerings were discussed and finalized; and the Program Coordinator, along with the Membership Association’s Ways and Means Chairperson attended an entertainment showcase in West Hartford.

A motion to accept the Director’s Report as presented was made by Michael Rossi; seconded by Guss Nevelos; all in favor.

Under Correspondence: The minutes of this morning’s, (November 5th), Department Heads Meeting were not yet available; however, Mr. Verderame remarked that the primary topic of discussion was the Town Council’s Budget Containment Policy to be discussed under “New Business”. A letter of appreciation from Mrs. Shirley D’Angelo was read by Earl Temchin. Mr. Temchin thanked the Calendar House staff for a job well done. Bob Verderame added that the families decided to purchase track lighting to illuminate the plaques and Paul Shappy installed them. A thank you letter was sent to the Falcon’s for their donation of seven round tables, already being used in the lunch room, adding to the atmosphere of the program, and encouraging conversation among the seniors. Yesterday we received five additional tables from them.

Continuing under Correspondence: A memo was sent to Vice Principal Chris Palmieri with dates for the Intergenerational Program previously mentioned. A telephone conversation with Health Director Charles Motes resulted in a scheduled Flu Shot Clinic to be held at Calendar House on Tuesday, December 17th at 9 a.m. He has 200 doses which will be made available to Southington and/or Plainville residents, aged 18 and older at no charge on a first come, first served basis.

Under Old Business: A sketch and model of aluminum columns was presented to the Commissioners. With the recommendation of the Assistant Town Engineer, this option to clad the existing columns, none of which need to be replaced, will support, reinforce and protect them from the elements. In response to Chairman Temchin's question as to commission action needed, Mr. Verderame replied nothing until a requested price quote is submitted. Walter Kizilski remarked that he highly approved the recommendation - the extruded piece is very strong and interlocking. Under "great news", the contract for the approved State DOT Grant that will enable the purchase of a new vehicle arrived today. The optimistic timeline involves submitting paperwork to the Town Manager, obtaining a resolution from the Town Council, submitting the contract by deadline, discussing specs in February and possibly having a new bus by the fall of 2009.

Under New Business: Regarding the Budget Containment Policy, a letter from Town Manager John Weichsel was read. Although current difficult economic times may place an additional burden on the budget committee, we can be confident that as in the past, careful attention and consideration will be given to maximizing all resources while minimizing expenditures. Considerable discussion involving the events and activities that take place outside of normal hours of operation ensued. Included are medical transportation, specifically for dialysis, several annual evening events that enable working seniors to participate and rental agreements, necessitating staff involvement resulting in overtime. This expense provided for in our current budget, is not an added expenditure. The State DOT Matching Grant for Transportation also requires that those funds be directed to specific line items, one of which is staff overtime for transportation concerns. However we are complying with the Town Council's directives as fully as possible. The Executive Director has discussed these concerns with the Town Manager.

A list of Commission Meeting dates for the calendar year 2009 was presented to the Commission, prior to submission to the Town Clerk. A motion was made by Guss Nivelos to approve those dates; seconded by Ben Cammuso; all in favor.

Under Public Discussion: A lengthy discussion regarding evening events and facility rentals took place with input from Membership Association President Ray Fecteau, members Walter Kizilski and Cliff Snow. Mr. Fecteau expressed considerable concern regarding the rentals noting that the majority of rentals are community organizations that have a history with us, conducting longstanding annual events. If forced to seek alternative venues, they may not return to Calendar House in the future. We don't want to turn away organizations that serve our community's senior citizens. Mr. Snow stressed the importance of the evening events to our members. They look forward to them, and for many they represent the only events they are able to attend due to daytime obligations.

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Chairman Earl Temchin acknowledged that because these are not frivolous events we will present a strong case for their continuance. Executive Director Robert Verderame assured the gentlemen that we hear your concerns and will do our best. Mr. Temchin observed that we need to respond to the mandate by conserving financial resources in every way possible. But we will submit a letter of consideration as relates to the matter under discussion. A motion was made by Michael Rossi that a letter be submitted to the Town Council presenting the concerns and requests as discussed; seconded by Ben Cammuso; all in favor.

Upcoming events include an annual Christmas Party on Thursday, December 4 at the Aqua Turf. The Building will be closing at 11:30 a.m. to allow the staff to assist at the event. A motion was made by Ben Cammuso to permit the early closing; seconded by Guss Nevelos; all in favor. The Commissioners are also invited to attend.

On a final note, Mr. Cammuso requested that an American flag be placed in the room where the Commission meets.

Ben Cammuso made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Guss Nevelos; all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting is **Tuesday, December 9th, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.**, which will be preceded by a Budget Committee Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Gilbert
Senior Center Secretary