

MEETING OF MARCH 8, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairman Earl Temchin.

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

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

The minutes of the February 8, 2011 meeting were presented to the Commission. Guss Nevelos made a motion to accept the minutes as presented; seconded by Michael Rossi; all were in favor.

As Commissioner/Treasurer Susan Locks was slightly delayed in arriving, the **Treasurer's Report** was given by Executive Director Robert Verderame who reported that of the FY 2010/2011 \$476,244. revised budget, \$285,163.85 (65.2%) has been expended; \$25,277.20 remains encumbered, leaving an available budget of \$165,802.95. Lynn Maschi asked "how are we doing in general?" Robert responded that we're good, with February behind us and no more major snow storms hopefully, we'll be fine. We have spring clean up and mowing ahead, but we should be okay. Earl Temchin inquired if the grant funds had been acted upon by the BOF and if these monies would help. Robert replied that they had not been acted upon but would not affect building maintenance as the grant funds can only be used for transportation line items such as Temp/Seasonal drivers; driver overtime; gasoline and vehicle maintenance. Earl asked who decides the line items, and if the Commission had input in the decision. Robert responded that the conditions of the grant determine and restrict the funds. A motion was made by Ben Cammuso to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented; seconded by Marjorie Chase; all were in favor.

Executive Director Robert Verderame presented the **February 2011 Director's and Program Coordinator's Reports**, noting that 18 new members joined last month. Dial-a-Ride provided 920 one way rides including 397 in town medical rides and 51 out of town medical rides. The shortest month of the year was further shorted by snow days and holidays. Income Tax Preparation got off to a great start. However we are having some computer issues. Calendar House member Mark White contributed that they are old, hand-me-down machines and as the software gets more complex, the machines are struggling. In fact if they are not replaced, we may need to discontinue several of the programs. He remarked that the membership may help. Continuing with his report, Robert noted that during the recent rainstorm, two buses parked at Aszklars were under water up to the front tires. The Southington Fire Department was able to wade to them, start them up and drive them out of the water. They are both running fine. Robert has made arrangements to have them parked on higher ground. Lynn Maschi asked if keeping the buses at Aszklars was a free privilege and Robert affirmed that it is. The buses are parked within a fenced, locked area, and there have not been any incidents of vandalism, as opposed to issues experienced at Calendar House. Under Building Maintenance, Saucier Mechanical was called in twice – due to no heat in office area caused by snow buildup on outside pipes; and an issue with the HVAC unit that services the hall area. This unit has a damaged part but is limping along. Since the units are due to be replaced, we don't want or need to put money into it at this time. There was a leak in the hallway skylight, vinyl siding damage and window screens damaged by recent storms. Sandra Micalizzi inquired if the storm damage was covered by insurance. Robert noted we have a \$5,000. deductable, but he would research the issue with Mark Sciota. DBS Energy, Inc. began work upgrading the lighting to be more energy efficient by replacing ballasts and bulbs throughout the building. Most of the interior work has been completed, with restroom motion sensors and exit signs remaining to be done. Exterior lights will also be replaced. A motion to accept the Director's and Program Coordinator's Reports was made by Michael Rossi; seconded by Guss Nevelos; all were in favor.

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Under Correspondence: Minutes from the February 9, 2011 Department Heads Meeting were available. It was noted that at the request of the Town Manager, the minutes had been forwarded to all town employees, not just the department heads. At the chairman's request, the entire document was read aloud. It was noted that the requested Assessment of Facilities and Equipment has already been prepared and submitted to the Town Manager. Robert assured the commission that the new town manager has expressed his intention to attend a commission meeting, and to spend some time at the center meeting the seniors. Emilia Portelinha sent a memo confirming the contractual amount for gasoline through December 31, 2011, an expense that has been budgeted. Town Manager Garry Brumback had requested an informal survey be taken regarding the use of North Center School for some town offices and the likelihood of residents leaving town departments and patronizing the downtown area merchants. Robert surveyed 220 seniors. Several noted that the North Center School would actually be more accessible, some wondered where it was and several noted that they would go to the center of town after visiting a town department.

Under Old Business: The final restart of the generator was successful with the Fire Marshall, Engineer and Electrician all signing off on the completion of the project. Funding for the required fencing has been included in our proposed budget, reduced by a donation from the membership. The trees/bushes also required by the PZC will be donated and planted by the Southington Orchard Valley Garden Club. D.B.S. has started upgrading the lighting fixtures in the building. They will be upgrading the "Exit" signs, installing motion sensors and upgrading the outside lights. Earl Temchin noted that the lighting upgrade as well the replacement of both rooftop HVAC units will eliminate a significant budget request due to the work that Bob and his staff did in pursuing a plan to fund these items via a grant covering 48% of the total cost, with a long term zero percent repayment plan for the balance. Regarding the Matching Grant, we have been advised that a 25% reduction is expected. Robert has contacted several representatives and senators who have assured him of their support in retaining the grant funding. Quite frankly, we can work with this reduction, but should all funding be cut, it would create an extreme hardship requiring a cut in services. Lynn Maschi asked if Robert's impression was that the 25% was not devastating, but workable. Robert replied, "Exactly".

Under Transportation Committee: Lynn Maschi stated that overall the transportation program is growing and it is amazing the work that is being done. She obtained a bus driver job description from Town Hall, noting that it seemed outdated. Sandra Micalizzi asked if it was union contract driven, and it is. Lynn Maschi inquired how the commission could change it. Robert remarked that it would be a struggle to get the union to agree and would need to go through the Town Manager. Lynn Maschi observed a bus driver on January 31 whom she did not recognize. Robert noted that there is a part time back up driver in training, since the NBT drivers are unavailable early morning when most needed. When Lynn asked if this was a new position that the commission should have been aware of, Robert replied it was not, only a temporary back-up. Sandra Micalizzi questioned any hiring done without the commission's knowledge. Earl Temchin noted that the overall policy under question is a matter for the commission to take up, with a fine line as to remanding it to Executive Session. Lynn Maschi further noted that she wants to be aware and part of the overall operation. Her observations being that there are adjustments that can be made, and work to be done. She echoed the Town Manager's remarks on working together as a team.

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Under New Business: Robert, Earl, Sandra and Lynn attended the Board of Finance Workshop. The purpose was to justify our budget request and present an overall explanation of what we do here. Bob did an excellent job, as did Earl, Sandra and Lynn in answering specific questions especially regarding the transportation program, equipment and grant funding. It was noted that sometimes one may see an empty bus on the road, but careful utilization is being done and Earl indicated that maximizing our resources is a primary priority. A second workshop will be scheduled to “crunch numbers” and all the commissioners are invited to attend. Robert and Lynn attended the Board of Finance Public Hearing on March 7, 2011. John Leary stated the situation regarding the economy and the budget process. John Moise remarked that Janet Mellon of Community Services and Robert Verderame at Calendar House Senior Center have been inundated with crisis issues. Also, of note was that the Calendar House bus service has multiplied in the last ten years from 200 rides per month then, to 1000 rides per month now. Board members were amazed at the amount of Social Services that are provided. Earl remarked that an attempt was made to explain to the Board of Finance that Calendar House is not just about the building, but also about the outreach provided. He felt that details provided at the workshop were informative and enlightening to the Board. Robert noted that the Public Hearing was basically about the Board of Education. Town Manager Garry Brumback requested \$100,000. for much needed town technology upgrading. The public agreed. We are currently operating in Cost Containment Policy Tier 3. Copies of the policy were made available to each commissioner.

Public Communication: Mark White reiterated the need as previously mentioned for new computers. He commended the commission and Bob for the work that is being done. Eduardo Almeida remarked that he just joined the Calendar House, having recently retired and is eager to get involved. Robert invited him to come into his office and discuss volunteer opportunities. Earl Temchin welcomed him on behalf of the commission. Ben Cammuso asked if consideration has been given to purchasing a smaller van. Robert noted that small vans experience more wear, especially with the current infrastructure, brakes wear out quickly. Handicap accessibility is an issue with vans as compared to buses. Also the grant funding will not cover a vehicle not equipped with a handicap lift. Calendar House does have a short list of volunteers willing to drive individuals, and the RSVP organization provides limited transportation with volunteers reimbursed for mileage and covered by insurance. However RSVP will not transport individuals requiring wheelchairs, walkers or canes.

A motion to adjourn the public meeting to go into Executive Session was made by Lynn Maschi; seconded by Susan Locks. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

The next Senior Citizens Commission meeting will be held **Tuesday, April 12, 2011** at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cynthia Gilbert
Senior Center Secretary