

MEETING OF OCTOBER 10, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 6:58 PM by Chairman Earl Temchin.

Members present: Earl Temchin, Ben Cammuso, Susan Locks, Lynn Maschi, Sandra Micalizzi, Guss Nevelos, Connie Proll and Michael Rossi.

Absent: Ruth Riccio

The minutes of the September 11th meeting were presented to the Commission. A motion was made by Sandra Micalizzi to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by Ben Cammuso, all were in favor.

The Treasurer's Report was given by Connie Proll. She reported that of the \$437,058. current budget, \$103,485.27 (23.7%) has been expended, leaving \$333,572.73 remaining. Executive Director Robert Verderame affirmed that we are on track. He again mentioned that the Part Time Driver Wages are slightly high reflecting the transportation services being utilized. Over 700 rides were provided this past month. Quarterly reports for gasoline expenditure will be in next month. We do receive monthly statements. A motion was made by Ben Cammuso to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented; seconded by Guss Nevelos; all were in favor.

Mr. Verderame mentioned that for the next Budget, we will need to seriously evaluate several areas and consider a new perspective particularly with regards to transportation issues, personnel, etc.

In giving the August Director's and Program Coordinator's Reports, Bob reiterated that our Dial-A-Ride program continues to grow; we had a total of 768 one-way rides, including 128 medical runs in-town, and 148 out-of-town. Earl remarked that this is off the charts. Bob said it certainly isn't slowing down. The feedback indicates we are pleasing folks 98% of the time; with about 2% complaints which primarily involve late pickups due to traffic and other extenuating circumstances. The membership numbers continue to increase each month, with 18 new members this month.

Lynn Maschi asked what constitutes "active" membership. Bob remarked that on average we have approximately 350 - 375 participants per day which doesn't include special events. Various groups meet here, such as the AARP Board of Directors, etc., as well as Safe Driving Courses, Classes, Lunch Program and Social Services. Earl commended the staff on the excellent job they are doing. Connie commented on the population of Southington estimating it at 40 to 41,000 people with approximately one quarter of the population over 55. She asked what the average age of Calendar House members is; Bob replied "72". She remarked that with the numbers in the schools decreasing, wonders why the school budget goes up, while we have trouble getting increased funding.

Continuing with the Director's Report, Bob reported under Social Service Programs, the Renters Relief Program ended September 15, with a total of 335 applications filed, thanks to the efforts of Sharyn Murphy and the volunteers. As one program ends, another begins - fuel assistance is up and

running. The first session was today and twelve applications were processed. People who heat with deliverable fuel (oil, propane, coal, wood) are scheduled first - those heating with electric and/or natural gas are scheduled after November 1st. There are income guidelines and an asset test. The program runs through April 30th, and it is projected we will take in between 300-400 applications.

In addition to the individual counseling appointments as indicated in the Report, there is a constant stream of phone calls for information, referrals and especially for transportation. There have been numerous calls inquiring about flu shots. Dates have been set for town employees, but no mass clinic has been planned. Last year, in part because our clinics were scheduled later in the season, the majority of people has already gotten the inoculation, and the Health Department had to discard a large amount of vaccine at considerable cost.

Lynn asked what ConnPACE involved. Bob explained it is a State Prescription Program for folks with low income/low assets. We also intake Title 19, Medicare and MedicareD applications. Renter's Relief is an entitlement programs through the Office of Policy and Management, State of Connecticut; renters over 65 can receive a rebate between \$90. - \$700.

Sandra mentioned that CL&P offers a free service to evaluate homes and suggest conservation and cost cutting steps. Bob informed the commission that a CL&P representative has been scheduled to present an informal seminar here on October 17th. He also noted that we have scheduled a MedicareD program in November with a representative from the CHOICES program and a Social Security Representative. Bob also mentioned the "scams" we had been alerted to, noting that this is one area that is addressed in the Municipal Agent Training Sessions he attends. He encouraged any commissioners, who were available, to attend the "Meet the Candidates" event on October 25th, as he would be at a Municipal Agent Meeting.

Lynn asked for information on the role of a Municipal Agent. Earl briefly described the functions and noted that every town by State Statute has to appoint one. It doesn't have to be the Senior Center Director, but that is a logical choice.

The buses are running fine, continue to be very busy. A muffler clamp was replaced on 2002 bus; brakes and mufflers were checked on all the buses. Under building maintenance, the HVAC units were serviced by PerfecTemp; a large rhododendron bush was moved with Benny's help; and the Fire Extinguishers & Ansel System was serviced.

In the meeting with Jim Williamson, although there were no specifics, the possibility of funding a full time driver might be considered a valid use of grant funding.

The Commission is aware that an additional full time driver is needed; as well as an additional part time clerical aide. Earl acknowledged these are definitely long term needs; but voiced concern as to what can be done this year - specifically in reference to eating up the part time driver's line item. Bob will put some numbers together for the next meeting. Earl stated that if we run through the line item, we can request a transfer from another line item or ask for an appropriation. If the weather holds, we might start with the snow removal account. Lynn asked how long the process takes. When the line item gets to about \$3,000., Bob will ask the Commission to write a letter to Finance Board, which in turn goes to the Town Council for approval, usually taking two weeks. Once

approved, the transfer or appropriation takes three days to be transferred. There was some discussion regarding the need to increase next year's budget. For a number of years, Bob has held the line on the budget, and in the next budget it's time to request additional funding in the line items. The Town Council is aware of the increased transportation issues. The Commissioners are willing to contact the council members, write letters to the editor or explore other ways of communicating the needs and concerns, as well as seeking other options to respond to these issues.

At the recent L.O.C.H.S.T.P. meeting, Bob was told he was essentially too far south; the towns in the northern area are already connected. Basically we're on our own.

Earl asserted that we have three buses with a fourth one coming - we have worked hard to get to this point - the buses need to be staffed.

Bob briefly reviewed the Program Coordinator's Report highlighting class registration - over 500 registrations were received; 20 people attended a Bagel Breakfast with a speaker on Medicare & Short Term Rehab; the Annual Chicken BBQ was attended by 66 persons; 17 grandparents participated in the support group; 52 persons traveled to New London/Foxwoods to see "Say Goodnight Gracie"; and 33 people enjoyed a Hot Dog Special and Bingo event.

Under Correspondence: It was noted that the October Department Heads Meeting was canceled; DePaolo Middle School was permitted to use our parking lot; the Health Department is making flu shots available to town employees; in lieu of no scheduled clinic at Calendar House, seniors are being advised to seek alternatives and listings of VNA clinics have been posted. The ARC has requested use of the building on 11/11/07 for a meeting. Connie made a motion to approve this rental; seconded by Michael Rossi; all were in favor; permission granted.

Regarding Old Business: There was discussion regarding the plaques. Guss proposed some wording - the consensus was that "many years of dedicated service during the formation and development of Calendar House" somehow be included. A suggestion was made to prepare a framed history expanding what could be accommodated on the plaque itself. It was requested that research be done as far as dates/years of service as well as positions held (i.e. Chairman, etc.). This will be made available at the next meeting. Some discussion re. two separate plaques vs. one plaque ensued. The Commission expressed desire to finalize and complete this project. A dedication will be planned, probably mid-afternoon with cake/coffee, hopefully Mrs. D'Angelo and Mrs. Della Vecchia would be able to attend. Michael made a motion to table further discussion and continue with the meeting's agenda. Seconded by Benny; all in favor.

In reference to the Parking Lot - we will be going out to bid this week, and once the contractor is chosen, the project will continue to move along. Earl mentioned that there are materials that can be used in colder weather. The contractor's schedule, and availability of materials will affect the time frame. The Center will need to close down for two weeks or so, and the logistics of that will be worked out.

Regarding the Snow Removal Contract tabled at last meeting: As requested, the March 13, 2007 minutes were available and indicated that we would go out to bid for the coming season. However, considering the uncertainty with the timing of the Parking Lot Project, and in view of the fact we will have to go out to bid once it is completed, the consensus was that we rollover the existing

contract with Dan Quinlan. Mr. Quinlan has provided a quote for the upcoming season with no increase over the previous year. Connie remarked that when we last went out to bid, Mr. Quinlan was the lowest bidder. It was noted that the concerns were on the amounts over 6" of accumulation and on the charges for sand and salt. It was felt that last year multiple applications and/or plowing occurred on the same day. Bob mentioned that on at least one of the occasions, Bob requested they come back that day. One consideration was the incident when an individual allegedly slipped on black ice, and subsequently filed a lawsuit.

Lynn inquired if Bob had discussed rate increases based on the new parking lot configuration. Bob remarked that he had not, but with 26 new spots, we will need to go to bid and the last bid advertisement cost \$252. Sandra stated that next year we absolutely will have to go out to bid. Ben asked if the Town would plow, Bob answered no, that is not an option. Michael made a motion that we dubiously go along with the rollover; seconded by Lynn; all in favor; contract will be rolled over for one more year.

Under New Business: Bob asserted that with our primary considerations being transportation, social services and classes, it is felt some down sizing of activities is needed to enable the staff to focus on priorities. In particular the trip offerings. It is noted that it has become more difficult to fill the trips, probably because other organizations are offering similar trips in the same frame. We have been doing nine plus trips annually including day trips, overnight and extended trips. We would to cut that down to five. Connie asked if any seniors would be willing to take on the planning and follow through with trips; Bob responded for a number of reasons, that would not be a good choice. Earl remarked that generally these decisions are left to the discretion of the Executive Director and his staff, and the Commission is confident to continue that practice.

Re. the status of the Senior Center Part Time Clerk Typist, well over 500 applications were submitted - combining the Part Time position at the Senior Center and the Full Time position at the Economic Development Office. A mass testing has been scheduled for Saturday, October 27, at the High School. Eventually we will receive applications and/or resumes. As in the past, the Commission will conduct individual interviews.

As Chairman of the Commission, Earl appointed a 2008/09 Budget Committee comprised of Lynn Maschi, Connie Proll, Sandra Micalizzi and himself. He stressed that all members of the Commission are more than welcome to participate in any budget discussion or meeting. Bob will prepare preliminary numbers. The Committee will not meet prior to the next Commission meeting.

As previously mentioned, the Calendar House classes are very well attended and enthusiastically received. One of our instructors, Patricia Mottola has been very instrumental in encouraging her classes' participation and involvement. Last October, a number of students who submitted various works of art in Connecticut Community Care, Inc.'s statewide "The Art of Successful Aging" exhibition, were awarded first, second and honorable mention in their categories and were honored at a reception. Last year, a poetry class was inaugurated. Again, Ms. Mottola encouraged her students to enter their work in CCCI's Senior Poetry Contest. Over 450 entries were received from all over Connecticut. We are very pleased to announce that one of our very own senior citizens has been named the first place winner! Ms. Joan LaRose has been involved in our classes for some time, and will be honored at a dinner to be held in October at the Aqua Turf.

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One additional note: recently Mr. Dick Fortunato, President of the Membership Association submitted his resignation. He will continue to assist the staff with Publicity. The Association will appoint an interim president to serve until their next election of officers.

The next Commission Meeting will be on **Wednesday**, November 14, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Gilbert
Senior Center Secretary