

City of Westfield  
Council On Aging  
Monthly Meeting  
August 8, 2016

City Hall, Room 201

59 Court Street, Westfield, Massachusetts



- I. The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair, Barbara Sokolowski, at 1:01 p.m.

The following Board Members were present: Cynthia Lee Andersen, Elizabeth Boucher, Alice Dawicki, John Leary, Barbara Sokolowski and Barbara Taylor. Also present were Tina Gorman, our Executive Director and Councilman Ralph Figy.

- II. Upon Motion duly made by Elizabeth Boucher and seconded by Barbara Taylor, it was unanimously:

VOTED: to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2016 Board Meeting with corrections.

**III. Public Participation:** There was no public participation.

**IV. Items for Discussion/Information:**

- A.** Ms. Gorman gave an update regarding the HVES (Highland Valley Elder Services). HVES does not hold Board meetings over the summer. We need to fill one of our representative positions made vacant by Marion Kraus leaving the HVES Board. She had 1 year left on her term. Jean Parisien who had been an HVES ombudsman has expressed interest in the position. Ms. Gorman suggested that she speak with James Liptak to discuss the position.
- B.** Ms. Gorman distributed a memo listing Executive Director FY 2017 goals with 4 major goals listed, copy attached:
1. She reported on the status of the first goal, the "development and implementation of a comprehensive smoking policy for the Westfield Senior Center building and grounds", the policy will be reviewed by the Legislative & Ordinance Committee of the City Council at their September meeting according to Councilman Figy.

2. With regard to the second goal, "expand COA services and supports to grandparents raising grandchildren", Ms. Gorman reported that we are working collaboratively with the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group leaders. In addition, we are working collaboratively with members of Boston-based Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren in Massachusetts to use the Westfield Senior Center as a host site for meetings and trainings. At the MCOA Advisory meeting, they recognized Westfield for putting the issue on the front burner. We are working on setting up 2 trainings in September and October. The issue received national attention with one of the US Olympians having been raised by her grandparents. A number of children are being raised by grandparents because of their parents' opioid addictions. They will be having programs in Pittsfield, Westfield, Greenfield and Worcester.
3. Regarding the third goal of Expansion of Senior Center programming to include a minimum of six evening programs during FY 2017, Evening Bingo was held last week and 30 people attended. Scheduling at night is a challenge because seniors don't usually like to drive at night. The 2 grandparent trainings will be held at night. Scheduling in winter, however, when it gets dark early will be challenging.
4. Regarding the fourth goal of "working with the Friends of the Westfield Senior Center" to open the gift shop to full capacity and to recognize all donors through signage, the Gift Shop needs to get a sales tax permit. As far as the status of the signage, the foyer wall is ½ ready. Unfortunately, the Friends Group is not happy with the contract with company to create the Giving Tree on the back wall. They are working to resolve the concerns.
- C. Ms. Gorman distributed a copy of the Memo to the COA Staff dated July 7, 2016, copy attached, announcing Karen Noblit's new title as Senior Benefits Coordinator. Her job description and title have been updated and she is recognized at the state level. The Memo also clarifies that Mary Lou Niedzielski's correct title is Program Director.
- D. The "Senior Safe: House Number Visibility Project" was featured in the August newsletter. We are educating the seniors that their house or condo number must be visible from the street so that first responders can easily see the numbers. The Westfield Fire Department submitted the grant and the amount is usually based on population so the maximum should have been \$2200. However, some towns did not apply for the grant so the remaining money was divided amongst the towns and cities who did apply. We received a

little over \$3000. The goal is to have all the Seniors' homes or condos have visible numbers. We are doing a big push in August, it will be on MassLive.com and front page of the Westfield News. We will probably get sticky back numbers from Home Depot or Rocky's. If we have money left over from the grant, we will buy additional smoke alarms. The fire department personnel want to have some alarms in stock because it is still a problem with some seniors not having adequate smoke alarms. The amount of smoke alarms required depends on the age of the house.

- E.** The E-Z Pass Transponder Give-Away was held in July and was wildly successful. At the Senior Options, 150 transponders were given away. At this Give-Away, 519 transponders were distributed in 4 hours. We never anticipated that high a number. The police were called and they sent traffic control for 3 hours. The Department of Transportation people were so happy. Important lessons were learned by this event; 662 people went through facility that day. For the presidential election, we will have no lunch for that day. The staff will park off site. Other COA's called Ms. Gorman to find out how Westfield got the transponder give-away and their senior centers did not.
- F.** Ms. Gorman reported that there was a choking incident in the great room. A senior performed the Heimlich maneuver so the incident was kept quiet. Training has been set up for the staff in CPR, AED and First Aid Training the morning of September 7, 2016. Ed Mello, head of the Greater Westfield and Western Hampden County Medical Reserve Corps, Inc. assisted in setting up the training which will be provided by Jerry Rudolph through the American Heart Association. The Senior Center will be closed until 1:30 p.m. that day.
- G.** The Senior Center will be the polling station for Ward 2 for the Primary Election on September 8, 2016. No lunch will be served but all other programs will be running that day. Coffee will be available.
- H.** Ms. Gorman reported that we are having an issue with the rest rooms, both the men's and the women's. Members are putting paper towels and incontinence supplies down the toilets. We have totally run out of paper towels and the decision has been made not to replace them in order to cut down on problems. There are hand dryers on all the bathrooms. There will be an article in the newsletter. Signs have been posted in the bathrooms and the staff checks both rest rooms upstairs. They will be putting small waste bins in the stalls.

**V. Items For Action:** there were no items for action.

VI. Ms. Gorman, then presented the Director's Report, copy attached:

**Review of Programs:**

Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren was held Tuesday, June 14, 2016 from 6 to 8 p.m. Childcare was available, two retired teachers watched the kids in the Creative Center and another teacher helped some kids play pool. Two representatives from the Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren were the presenters. The presenters were very impressed with the Senior center and discussed holding the Western Massachusetts "listening tour" in Westfield.

"Sing & Paint - Tulips" fundraiser held on Wednesday, June 15, 2016, but had a very low turnout. The cost may have been prohibitive. The cost was \$35 with \$10 going to the local Alzheimer's Association.

The Father's Day Sail Away Luncheon was held Thursday, June 23, 2016 with entertainment provided by Center Stage. It was sold out. Ms. Gorman received a very nice card from an attendee.

The Senior Concert Band of Western Massachusetts held a free concert on Monday, June 27, 2016. It was very popular, we probably had 100 people, and we will repeat it next June.

We did not have enough people signing up for the AAA Driver Refresher Course so the class was cancelled.

Visiting Angels Ice Cream Splurge was a sold out event. The entertainers (Chuck and Ron) were good but their sound system was inadequate for the Great Room.

We had 100 people in attendance for the Stanley Park Indoor Picnic Luncheon. Bob McKeon, the Executive Director of Stanley Park, was very pleased with the turnout. He gave a history of the park and discussed the wide range of programs available there.

Dr. John Thayer presented a program on The Aging Eye. It was a very popular program. It was held in the Multipurpose room and we didn't realize that advance sign ups would be advisable. We are now having sign-ups for all educational programs so that we can use our space wisely and efficiently. If there will be high attendance, we take the tables out of the Multipurpose room.

The program Microwave Cooking for One or Two was a very popular program. We capped it at 20 and had a waiting list. The

food and nutrition programs seem to be in high demand so we are scheduling more for the fall.

Evening Bingo was run as a special program by Bay Path University Occupational Therapy interns. We had approximately 30 people in attendance. We had positive feedback, people liked the timing of the program: 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Attorney Cynthia Lee Andersen, a member of our Board, presented a talk regarding Responsibilities of an Agent Under a Durable Power of Attorney. There were approximately 50 people in attendance and we had very positive feedback.

#### **Upcoming Programs:**

A program explaining PACE (Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly) sponsored by Mercy Life will be presented by Celina Conway, their Director of Enrollment, on Thursday, September 1, 2016 at 1 p.m. It is modeled after Japanese elder care. Councilman Figy added that it is marvelous.

Cook Smart, Eat Well, a four-part healthy cooking and eating series, will be held on Thursdays at 9:45 a.m. starting September 8, 2016. It will include cooking demonstrations and taste tests. Enrollment is capped at 20.

A program entitled The Impact of Trauma on Children and Families will be held Thursday, September 15, 2016 from 6 to 8 p.m. Our target audience is grandparents raising grandchildren and we are hoping school teachers, adjustment counselors and school personnel will attend as well.

EOEA (Executive Office for Elder Affairs) Secretary Alice Bonner will visit the Westfield Senior Center. Her visit will take place during the final Alan's 2 for 2 Pancake Breakfast Friday, September 16, 2016 from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. and she will help serve the pancakes. Secretary Bonner is particularly interested in Westfield as a dementia-friendly community. Beth Cardillo, Executive Director of Armbrook Village will be in attendance.

Ms. Gorman reported that she works on our Annual Report in August so we should be able to go over that at our next meeting.

#### **Miscellaneous**

Upcoming staff vacations:

Mary Lou Niedzielski: August 5 to August 12

Nancy Renna: August 15 through August 19

Tina Gorman: August 15 through August 19

Karen Noblit: August 22 to August 26

Carl Bak: September 7 through September 9

VII. Vice Chair Barbara Sokolowski reminded us that our next meeting is Thursday, September 15, 2016, at 1:00 p.m. at the City Hall in Room 201. Also our October meeting, due to the conflict with Columbus Day, will be held on Thursday, October 17, 2016.

VIII. There being no further business to come before the Board, upon Motion duly made by Elizabeth Boucher and seconded by Alice Dawicki, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 1:54 p.m.

A true record.

List of Exhibits:

1. Agenda
2. Tina Gorman, Executive Director FY 2017 Goals
3. Memo to COA Staff dated July 7, 2016
4. Director's Report

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Cynthia Lee Andersen-Secretary