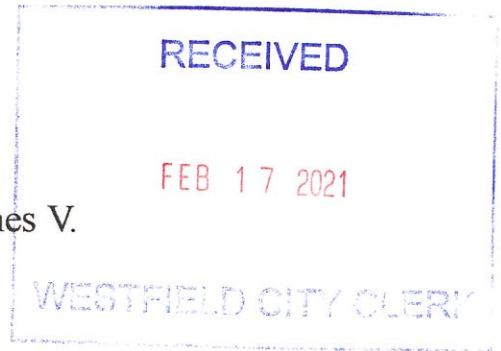


**City of Westfield**  
**Minutes of the Council On Aging**  
**Monthly Meeting ~ ZOOM Conference Call**  
**January 11, 2021**



**I.** The Meeting was called to order by the Chair, James V. Liptak at 1:02 p.m.

**Board Members Present:** Elizabeth Boucher, James V. Liptak, Eileen Rockwal, Barbara Taylor and KerryAnn Kielbasa. Also present were Tina Gorman, Director of the Westfield Council On Aging and Ralph Figy, City Council Liaison. Board Member Alan Sudentas was absent. There were no guests. This COA meeting was recorded as it is a legal meeting available to the public and was broadcast on Cable Channel 15. Mr. Peter Cowles recorded the meeting.

**II. Approval of Minutes of December 14, 2020 Meeting:**

Upon Motion duly made by KerryAnn Kielbasa, and seconded by Eileen Rockwal, it was  
unanimously VOTED: To approve the Minutes of the December 14, 2020 meeting.

**III. Public Participation: NONE**

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

**A. Highland Valley Elder Services (HVES):**

Mr. Liptak attended the HVES Board meeting, virtually, on January 4, 2021. Carolyn Finn gave a presentation regarding the Ombudsman Services. Currently the ten volunteers in the program are limited in their functions. They check on grievances from older adults or check on misuse of funds. The service is paid for by the Federal Government. HVES is looking to be more visible to the public and is working to market information about their services. Nutritionally, HVES provided 685 Christmas dinners and 630 New Year's dinners. A part-time nutritionist has not yet been hired. Similar to other food services companies, HVES is now utilizing the SNAP Chef website. State Senator Joanne Comerford recently visited the HVES kitchen and was impressed with the cleanliness and COVID precautions instituted.

**B. AARP Tax Assistance Update**

Mrs. Gorman advised that the Senior Center staff set up a Tax Assistance voicemail and all tax appointment requests are transferred to that line. As of January 8, 2021, after just three days of the voicemail activation, 170 requests had been made.

Tax assistance requests have been suspended until February 1. The COA staff will begin scheduling appointments with priority to those Westfield residents who are 75+ years of age. Initially, appointments will be scheduled two days per week, 16 appointments per day, throughout the month of March. The AARP Regional Tax Coordinator, Bruce Tomaso, is hoping to begin in mid-February, but ultimately AARP at the national level will make that call. Bruce is also hopeful to add another day a week in Westfield. Should more appointment opportunities open up, the Tax Assistance voicemail will reflect that change and additional seniors will be added to the schedule.

A 'tax packet' will be mailed to each participant in February. The packet will consist of a confirmation letter, a list of required documents, general tax information, and a plastic cinch bag. The cinch bags were donated by Baystate Noble Hospital at Mrs. Gorman's request. Participants will be instructed to put all of the necessary tax documents in the cinch bag and place it in the Senior Center drop box by 9 a.m. on the day of their scheduled appointment. All participants are being advised to have a 'Plan B' in place in case the program is suspended at any point this year because of the pandemic.

### **C. Inclement Weather Protocol**

Mrs. Gorman advised that the Senior Center is traditionally closed if the Westfield schools are closed because of inclement weather. However, with students learning remotely and the Senior Center closed to the public, the primary concern is the curbside meal program. If there is warning of an impending snowstorm, the COA staff will make every effort to offer multiple meals in advance of the storm. Unless City Hall is closed because of a dangerous weather advisory, the Council On Aging staff will report to work but the meal may be cancelled.

The Council On Aging Director will use her best judgment in determining whether or not to cancel that day's curbside meal distribution, based on the local road and Senior Center parking lot conditions. Meal cancellation will be announced on the three local television stations, WSKB radio, cable Channel 15, and posted on the City website by 7 a.m.

### **D. September, October 2021 Meeting Date Changes**

Because of holidays and the scheduling of the HVES September meeting, the Board voted unanimously to approve the following

date changes for September and October:  
September 20, 2021 (third Monday of the month) and October  
18, 2021 (third Monday of the month). Jim will send letter to  
the City Clerk with a notification of the changes.

**V. Items for Action:**

**Authorization for COA Executive Director to submit  
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application:**

Ms. Gorman explained that we apply for the grant every year for  
our Companion Program. Ms. Gorman will need the approval of  
the Board in order to submit our application for the CDBG. The  
following motion was duly made by Barbara Taylor and  
seconded by Eileen Rockwal:

To authorize Tina Gorman, Executive Director of the Westfield  
Council On Aging to submit the 2021 Community Development  
Block Grant application.

A roll call vote was requested and the results of the roll call vote  
were as follows:

James Liptak	yes	Barbara
Taylor	Yes	
KerryAnn Kielbasa	yes	Elizabeth
Boucher	Yes	
Eileen Rockwal	yes	

As a result of the vote, the Secretary reported that the  
Motion carried.

**Approval of Citizens Scholarship of Westfield shredding  
event:**

The Board was asked to vote today for the approval of the use of  
the Senior Center parking lot for the April 17, 2021 Citizens  
Scholarship of Westfield shredding event. Ms. Gorman reported  
that the organization has secured the appropriate insurance for  
the event. Upon Motion Duty made by Eileen Rockwal and  
seconded by KerryAnn Kielbasa, it was unanimously voted to  
approve the use of the Senior Center parking lot for the April 17,  
2021 shredding event by Citizens Scholarship of Westfield.

**VI: Director's Report**

**Review of Programs**

- *(Two Days Before Christmas) Curbside Dinner*
  - o This was a traditional Christmas turkey dinner with  
145 participants
  
- *Complementary Christmas Eve Curbside Cheer*
  - o Targeted toward our lunchtime "regulars"

- 70 participants for this continental breakfast to-go
- Three staff and two volunteers encouraged participants to take their time going through the line and talk to each staff/volunteer along the way
- *'Good Riddance 2020' New Year's Eve Luncheon*
  - Roast beef dinner with 150 participants
  - Festive atmosphere as the staff, volunteers, and participants bid good riddance to 2020 with horns, hats, beads, and New Year's face masks
  - Entertainment on Channel 15, repeat of The Knightsmen Band, recorded this summer

## **Upcoming Programs**

- *'Beating the Winter Blahs' Friends Group Fundraiser*
  - February calendar raffle with a gift card prize for each day of the month
  - Forty-six sheets of tickets sold in the first three days
  - Will sell tickets daily during lunch until January 29
  - Cost is \$5 for a sheet of 25 tickets with 28 opportunities to win during the month of February
- *Channel 15 'Very Merry January' Performance*
  - Brad Shepard and Richie Mitnick teamed up for a performance filled with music and bad jokes
  - Feedback so far has been very positive
  - Airing Wednesday afternoons and Saturday evenings on Channel 15
  - All entertainment performances are now being aired throughout the month on a set schedule instead of just once to coincide with a special luncheon
- *Comfort Food to Comfort Rehoboth Seniors*
  - A fundraising charitable event for the Rehoboth COA following the demolition of their Senior Center by fire on September 12, 2020
  - Meatloaf dinner on Thursday, January 28. Cost is \$5 with \$2 from every meal going to Rehoboth. The Friends group will match the amount of money brought in on that day.
  - Target number is 175 participants.
- *Book Bundle Give-Away*
  - Thursday, January 14 from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
  - Joyce Peregrin thinned, from the Fireside Lounge

shelves and cabinets, an abundance of donated books.

She then sorted them and packaged them in threes by genre.

- The give-away will be done curbside during and after lunch with the caveat that none of these books may be returned to the Senior Center.

- *'Westfield Council On Aging Presents' Series*

- 'The Power of Music in Our Everyday Lives'
- Aired Tuesdays at 2:45 throughout the month of January
- Presenter: Tina Gorman
- Extremely positive feedback after the January 5 show

### **Additional Discussion**

Mr. Liptak commended Mrs. Gorman for her anticipation of the needs of Westfield's older adults. Mrs. Gorman thanked Mrs. Liptak and said that she and her staff keep tabs on people through face-to-face contact as well as phone communication.

Mrs. Taylor complimented Mrs. Gorman and the COA staff on the telephone reassurance calls that they conduct on a regular basis. She had received one that morning from Sandra Fisher and was very pleased to be remembered with a "nice chat."

Councilor Figy asked about the possibility of a vaccination drive-through at the Senior Center.

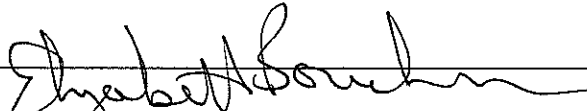
Mrs. Gorman advised that they have been inundated with phone calls and a few people actually showed up at the Senior Center thinking that they could get vaccinated now. Mrs. Gorman has contacted Joe Rouse at the Westfield Health Department who advised that she should "stay tuned" as those making the vaccination decisions in Boston have not provided information to the local health departments on the number of vaccine vials that will be available to them, when they will be sent out, and who those vaccines should be administered to. Mrs. Gorman told Mr. Rouse that she and her staff will work with the Health Department in whatever way they are requested to do so.

**VII:** The Chair reminded the Board that our next meeting is scheduled to be held on

**VIII.** There being no further business to come before the Board, upon Motion duly made by Elizabeth Boucher and seconded by Barbara Taylor, it was unanimously VOTED to adjourn the meeting at 1:45 p.m.

**List of Exhibits:**

- Director's Report

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Elizabeth Boucher, Secretary