



**City of Westfield
Minutes of the Council On Aging
April 11, 2022**

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

Board Members Present: Elizabeth Boucher, Ed Ekmalian, John Greaney, James Liptak, Eileen Rockwal, and Barbara Taylor. Also present was Tina Gorman, Executive Director of the Council On Aging and Ralph Figy, City Council Liaison.

II. Approval of Minutes of March 14, 2022 Meeting:

Upon Motion duly made by Judge Greaney and seconded by Ed Ekmalian, it was
VOTED unanimously: To approve the Minutes of the March 14, 2022 Meeting.

III. Public Participation:

Kathy Hillman thanked Tina Gorman for her comments regarding Westfield's Complete Streets proposal and her advocacy for the City's older adults at the April 7, 2022 City Council meeting.

IV: Items for Discussion/Information:

A. Highland Valley Elder Services (HVES) Report - Jim Liptak

Mr. Liptak reported on the following from the March HVES Board meeting:

Jackie LeMarche said that the organization is in good financial standing. Mrs. Gorman asked if the agency is fully staffed. Mr. Liptak replied that there is a lot of turnover among Care Managers. That is not uncommon with this type of position which tends to attract new college graduates who move on after getting a few years of experience in the field. Highland Valley currently maintains a waiting list of those needing service, primarily because there is a shortage of home health care workers. HVES is currently preparing approximately 600 meals for home delivery and congregate sites. The home delivered meals program is federally funded. The issues with temperature of food being delivered to clients have been worked out. Complaints about overcooked chicken are being remedied. 'Global meals' with an ethnic flare will be served once a month. Two HDM drivers are needed in Westfield and Northampton.

The President of the HVES Board of Directors is resigning because he is moving out of state.

The Service Incentive Grant money (through the Executive Office of Elder Affairs) has been cut significantly and the Hilltown Consortiums have been impacted greatly. They use the funding for newsletters and collaborative efforts to provide much needed services to older adults in the northern and southern hilltowns. They will work with MCOA (MA Association of Councils On Aging) to seek additional funding.

B. FY22 State Formula Grant Allocation

The FY22 State Formula Grant Allocation in the amount of approximately \$95,000 has been received by the City and approved by the City Council. This is the latest that Mrs. Gorman ever remembers getting the funding, which is usually distributed by EOEА before the winter holidays. For our COA, most of the funding is used for staff salaries. That money is borrowed from our Revolving Gift Account. We will reimburse the account now that the funding has been secured. Amy Porter from The Westfield News contacted Mrs. Gorman to write a story about the grant money. She thought this was new funding. Mrs. Gorman explained the annual allocation for FY22 was \$12 per elder using the 2010 census. She discussed the tardiness of the payment this year. Mrs. Gorman also commented on the possibility that the per elder adult rate may be reduced in FY23 if the 2020 census is used. It's hard for the COA Directors to plan a budget not having that crucial information. The day after the article appeared in the paper, Mrs. Gorman was contacted by Carole Malone, Assistant to Secretary Chen at EOEА. Ms. Malone assured Mrs. Gorman that the internal kinks have been worked out for a speedier distribution of funds in FY23. She also said that the \$12 per elder amount is once again in the State budget. The final funding may be dependent on the census numbers, however, which Mrs. Gorman pointed out to the Board, is exactly what she told Amy Porter.

C. FY22 Budget Shortfall

See the attached letter that Mrs. Gorman sent to Mayor McCabe for an anticipated shortfall in the amount of approximately \$14,000 for the FY22 Gas & Electric bill. The request for that funding will be reviewed by the City Council Finance Committee. Mrs. Gorman will attend the next Finance Committee meeting to explain the situation. The request should go back to the full Council for a vote at their April 21 meeting.

D. Senior Center Indoor Dining

See the attached flyer which explains the partial return to indoor dining. Indoor dining will be offered weekly on Thursdays during the month of April. Mrs. Gorman explained that the staff will monitor the numbers of people returning and if the numbers are healthy, she will add another day in May. If the weekly indoor dining sells out, Mrs. Gorman will discuss increasing the room capacity in the Great Room with the Health Director, Joe Rouse. The question was asked: Is it possible to have both in-house and curbside dining on the same day? Mrs. Gorman answered that this is not advisable because of safety concerns in the parking lot. The dining situation is fluid and will be re-evaluated on an ongoing basis.

E. Partnership with WPD – Drug Take Back Day

The Westfield Police Department and the Council On Aging will host a Drug Take Back Day on Saturday, April 30 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This is part of a larger national program. An article in the newsletter describes the event. In addition, flyers will be distributed during the curbside lunches and indoor dining this week.

V. Items for Action:

A Nominating Committee was formed for the selection of Board officers for FY23. James Liptak and Barbara Taylor will serve on the Nominating Committee. Officers will be voted on at the May 9, 2022 annual meeting of the COA Board of Directors.

VI. Director's Report

Review of Programs

- *AARP Tax Assistance Update*
 - o Today is the last day for tax appointments
 - o Total tax returns: 282

- *April 'Westfield Council On Aging Presents' Series*
 - o *Navigating Senior Living Options*
 - o Presenter: Eric Aasheim, Owner of Oasis Senior Advisors, Western Massachusetts
 - o Focused on senior living communities and assisted living facilities
 - o Aired Tuesdays at 2:45 throughout the month of April

- *April Performance*
 - o Shown on cable Channel 15 on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday evenings throughout the month of March
 - o Entertainment: *Whiskey Traveler* (Part of the Studio 120 Session series)

- *Representative Kelly Pease Office Hours*
 - o Monday, April 4 from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. p.m.
 - o Beginning in May, Representative Pease will generally hold office hours on the third Monday of the month from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

Upcoming Programs

- *CSF Shredding Event*
 - o Saturday, April 23 from 9 to 11 a.m. or until the truck fills
 - o A \$5 donation to CSF of Westfield for every box to be shredded
 - o Limit of three boxes per person
 - o Fundraiser to support local scholarships

- *National Prescription Drug Take Back Day*
 - o Saturday, April 30 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 - o Partnership with the WPD
 - o Accepted: pills, patches, ointments, liquids that are tightly sealed, vitamins, samples, and pet medications
 - o Accepted: Vape pens or other e-cigarette devices, after batteries are removed

- Not acceptable: syringes, intravenous solutions, and illicit substances
- *Volunteer Recognition Luncheon*
 - Indoors, Wednesday, May 4 at 10 a.m.
 - Invitations went out to 60 volunteers
 - Regular curbside lunch is suspended on that day
- *May 'Westfield Council On Aging Presents' Series*
 - Session Title: **Senior Scams: What To Look For and How To Fight Back**
 - Guest: **District Attorney Anthony Gulluni**
 - Topics covered will include: funeral and cemetery scams, fake telemarketing calls, fictitious charities asking for donations, investment schemes, false calls from the IRS about tax refunds or money owed, fake grandchildren needing financial help, Medicare fraud, sweepstakes scams, and others
 - Important topic so will be on the front page of the *May Voice of Experience* newsletter
- *May WCPC Performance*
 - Shown on cable Channel 15 on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday evenings throughout the month of May
 - Entertainment: *Helen Arbour* (Part of the Studio 120 Session series)
 - Singer, songwriter, musician from Bernardston, Massachusetts
 - Music is a blend of rock, country, folk, and blues
- *'My Life Story' Writing Group*
 - Will be facilitated by volunteer, Donna Herman
 - Mondays, 1:30 to 3 p.m., beginning on April 25
 - No writing experience necessary
 - Ideal group size: 3 to 10 members; 7 have signed up to date

Miscellaneous

- *Weekly Indoor Dining*
 - Thursdays at noon, beginning April 14
 - Reservation process will be the same as Curbside Cuisine
 - Call that morning between 8:30 and 9:15
 - Must speak with a staff member; no voicemails accepted
 - Payment will be made at a designated station in the Great Room between 11:30 and noon, \$3
 - All tables and chairs must remain in their exact place
 - Based on initial numbers, will look to add an additional day in May

VII: The Chair reminded the Board that our next meeting is to be held on Monday, May 9, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. at the Westfield Senior Center.

VIII. There being no further business to come before the Board, upon Motion duly made by John Greaney and seconded by Eileen Rockwal, it was unanimously VOTED to adjourn the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

List of Exhibits:

- Director's Report
- Letter to Mayor McCabe regarding FY22 Budget Shortfall
- Flyer regarding Meal Program

Elizabeth Boucher, Secretary