



City of Westfield
Minutes of the Council On Aging
May 9, 2022

I. The Meeting was called to order by the Chair, James V. Liptak at 1:01 p.m.

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

II. Approval of Minutes of April 11, 2022 Meeting:

Upon Motion duly made by Judge Greaney and seconded by Ed Ekmalian, it was VOTED unanimously: To approve the Minutes of the April 11, 2022 Meeting.

III. Public Participation:

Five people attended the meeting, but none wished to speak publicly.

IV: Items for Discussion/Information:

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

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

A presentation at the last HVES Board meeting focused on the Ombudsman Program. These volunteers are trained extensively and are assigned to one or more skilled nursing facilities (SNF) to address resident concerns in a constructive manner. This is a federally funded program, established as part of the 1965 Older Americans Act. There are eleven SNFs in the HVES catchment area. Three of them are located in Westfield. HVES currently has eight trained volunteers. Tina suggested that the current Program Coordinator send a flyer regarding any upcoming volunteer trainings to be marketed by the COA Directors.

HVES continues to distribute computer tablets to the Home Delivered Meal (HDM) drivers. They are utilized to communicate participant information to the central office. The 'Care Coordinate' is ready for implementation. HVES is continuing to increase congregate meal dining, where possible. HVES will host its annual volunteer recognition event on July 24 at Look Park. The Southern Hilltown Consortium received its grant funding for the publication of their newsletter.

B. FY23 City Budget

Mrs. Gorman sent a revised budget to Mayor McCabe, changing the original budget submitted on February 1, 2022. She met with the Mayor and Vicki Moro, City Auditor on May 2 to discuss the changes. The Mayor approved the revision and Ms. Moro made the changes in MUNIS. Mrs. Gorman met with COA Liaisons, Councilor Ralph Figy and Councilor Jim Adams, that same evening to discuss the revisions. There were four changes: 1) The salary for the Senior Benefits Coordinator has been increased and the job description expanded. 2) The proposed position of Assistant Director has been eliminated and replaced with a more limited 25-hour per week position. 3) The weekly hours for the Activities Aide position will be reduced to six hours per week

and the position moved from City funding to State Grant funding, using carryover money. 4) Under Purchase of Service, the amount allocated for Westfield G & E is increased to compensate for rising fuel prices.

The City budget was presented by the Mayor to the full City Council at the May 5, 2022 meeting. It is now in the Finance Committee. Finance Chair Bridget Matthews-Kane will begin meetings with the Department Heads after Councilors have had two weeks to review the budget. The City Council cannot change budget figures, but they can remove line items.

C. Senior Center Indoor Dining Update:

Indoor dining is now being offered every Tuesday and Thursday. The numbers are still low, averaging 30, which is less than half of pre-COVID numbers. Other area Senior Centers are experiencing the same hesitancy with congregate meals. The COA staff will monitor the numbers and plan accordingly.

D. New Senior Center Programming

Three new programs were initiated by seniors. Volunteer Donna Herman is facilitating the 'My Life Story' writing group. The group meets weekly on Monday afternoons. Thus far the participants are very enthusiastic and the group seems to be jelling nicely. The pool players have started a Thursday afternoon Singles Billiards Tournament that has quickly become very popular. And after several inquiries about starting a Mexican Train Dominoes group and some coordination by the COA Program Director, Mary Lou Niedzielski, a small group has started playing on Monday afternoons in the Games Room.

V. Items for Action:

Items for Action – Election of Board Officers

James Liptak brought forward the names of those COA Board members willing to accept positions as Officers for FY23 as follows:

Chair: James Liptak
Vice Chair: Eileen Rockwal
Secretary: Elizabeth Boucher
Treasurer: Barbara Taylor

Upon a Motion duly made by James Liptak and seconded by Elizabeth Boucher, it was unanimously **VOTED** to accept the slate of Officers as listed above.

- The Board of Directors was advised by Mrs. Gorman that each member must sign the *Signature of Authorization Form*. Those Board members present signed the form. Mrs. Gorman will contact Barbara Taylor and Eileen Rockwal for their signatures prior to the next Board meeting.

VI. Director's Report

Review of Programs

- *May 'Westfield Council On Aging Presents' Series*
 - o Session Title: **Senior Scams: What To Look For and How To Fight Back**
 - o Guest: **District Attorney Anthony Gulluni**
 - o Topics covered: 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
 - o On the front page of the May *Voice of Experience* newsletter
 - o Aired Tuesdays at 2:45 throughout the month of May

- *May Performance*
 - o Shown on cable Channel 15 on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday evenings throughout the month of May
 - o 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

- *CSF Shredding Event*
 - o Saturday, April 23 from 9 to 11 a.m.
 - o Two COA staff and one volunteer assisted with set-up and traffic flow
 - o The organization raised \$1,141.00 for 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 Two COA staff and two volunteers assisted with set-up, traffic flow, and distribution of safety information and the May newsletter
 - o 56 File of Life packets were distributed to seniors

- *Volunteer Recognition Breakfast*
 - o Indoors, Wednesday, May 4 at 10 a.m.
 - o 31 volunteers and 14 guests and staff attended
 - o Mayor McCabe and Councilor Figy distributed a gift to each volunteer
 - o Largest group that we've had dining in the Great Room since the COVID outbreak

- *'My Life Story' Writing Group*
 - o Facilitated by volunteer, Donna Herman
 - o Mondays, 1:30 to 3 p.m.
 - o Group has 8 to 10 enthusiastic participants

Upcoming Programs

- *Legislative Office Hours*
 - Representative Kelly Pease: Third Monday of the month from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
 - Monday, May 16
 - Senator John Velis: Fourth Monday of the month from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
 - Monday, May 23

- Mother's Day Parade of Hats Curbside Luncheon
 - Wednesday, May 18
 - Turkey dinner with strawberry shortcake for dessert
 - Will cap at 200
 - 80 signed up to date

- *Two-Part 'Downsizing In Place' workshop series*
 - Thursdays, May 19 and May 26 from 1 to 2 p.m.
 - Offered in 2018 and 2019 and was very successful
 - 8 signed up to date
 - A carefully planned approach to sorting through years of treasures prior to an actual move or crisis
 - Director will present

- *June 'Westfield Council On Aging Presents' Series*
 - Annual Elder Law Education Project ~ offered through Mass Bar Association
 - Attorney Mary Paier Powers has been assigned to Westfield
 - WCPC taping scheduled for May 18

- *June WCPC Performance*
 - Shown on cable Channel 15 on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday evenings throughout the month of May
 - Entertainment: *Rock Duo* (Part of the Studio 120 Session series)
 - Our own Harry Rock (Friends Board member and host of *Westfield Council On Aging Presents*) with John Severance

- *Friends of the Westfield Senior Center Annual Meeting*
 - In-person event
 - Tuesday, June 7 at 2 p.m.
 - Invitations sent to all Lifetime Members

Miscellaneous

- *Leisurely Indoor Dining*
 - Tuesdays and Thursdays at noon, beginning May 3
 - Reservation process is the same as Curbside Cuisine

VII: The Chair reminded the Board that our next meeting is to be held on Monday, June 13, 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 Ed Ekmalian it was unanimously VOTED to adjourn the meeting at 1:44 p.m.

List of Exhibits:

- Director's Report

Elizabeth Boucher, Secretary

