



**City of Westfield
Council On Aging
Monthly Meeting
July 9, 2018**

City Hall, Room 201

59 Court Street, Westfield, Massachusetts

I. The meeting was called to order by the Chair, James V. Liptak, at 1:00 p.m.

The following Board Members were present: Cynthia Lee Andersen, KerryAnn Kielbasa, James V. Liptak, Eileen Rockwal, and Barbara Taylor. Also present were our Executive Director, Tina Gorman and our City Council liaison, Councilor Ralph Figy.

II. Approval of minutes of June 11, 2018 meeting:

Upon Motion duly made by KerryAnn Kielbasa and seconded by Eileen Rockwal it was unanimously:

VOTED: To table the approval of the minutes of the June 11, 2018 until the next meeting.

III. Public Participation: There was no public participation.

IV. Items for Discussion/Information:

A. Highland Valley Elder Services (HVES) Report: 1. Mr. Liptak reported that HVES has open Board seats both for town representatives and "at large" positions. They are also looking for officers, but Mr. Liptak indicated he was not interested in serving as a HVES officer at this time. 2. Westfield did award HVES a small block grant for their nutrition program. The program is also receiving a \$90,000 United Way grant which will help them upgrade their equipment. In April, 2018 they served 10,871 meals, only 680 were alternative choice meals. Those are only available at congregate meals sites at this time. 3. The Annual Meeting is being held October 4, 2018 at Hadley Farms and it is now the Keys to Aging Well Expo. They emailed the Directors of the Councils On Aging to let them know. They

are looking for sponsors and vendors. 4. They are setting up a taskforce for grandparents raising grandkids. 5. New location: Allan Ouimet and other officers are negotiating for a new space in Westfield. Their current lease is up December 2018.

B. COA City Budget FY2019 (6-15-18 Finance Committee Meeting): Ms. Gorman handed out a package of handouts to the Board, including a "Cliffs Notes" version of the COA City budget dated June 2018 and Event Statistics from 06/01/2017 through 06/01/2018 (see copies attached). Ms. Gorman gave the Finance Committee members the Event Statistics to let them know why we need a fulltime custodian. Our event sign ins for last year were 61,181. We served 17,742 meals last year. The Great Room floor is only washed once a week, but it should be washed at least twice a week. Ms. Gorman explained that we need to hire someone with experience for the Outreach Coordinator, so the salary has to reflect that requirement. That employee will be dealing with crisis situations. Councilor Allie could not make the Finance Committee meeting but Councilors Surprise and Emmershy were there. The Councilors had the idea that the Council on Aging could make money by renting out the Senior Center and using tax work off people to man it. Ms. Gorman explained that we can't substitute volunteers for city workers. There would be an issue with liability. Ms. Gorman explained to them that we had a committee thoroughly investigate the issue of renting the Senior Center and recommended against it. The Board voted against renting. The Councilors felt we were "losing money" by not renting. Ms. Gorman had the goal to add evening programs for our seniors but to mix it up, have some fun and some educational programming. Councilor Figy pointed out that the Finance Committee members might not be familiar with the restrictions on the use of the land due to Mary Noble's Will. The property can only be used to benefit seniors. Ms. Kielbasa commented on her experience with renting the Senior Center in Granby. Their Center is 8000 square feet and they have a fulltime and a part-time custodian. They charge \$125 plus a refundable \$200 deposit. It probably costs the Senior Center \$400 for each event. One of the Board members asked about the duties of the Senior Center Helper Kim Saffer. Ms. Gorman explained that she cannot do custodian type duties because a custodian is a union position. She can do the cleaning of the medical equipment because that is light duty. Ms. Gorman mentioned that she is working on redoing the job descriptions for the

employees. Ms. Taylor asked how the greeters were funded. Ms. Gorman said they are paid out of the state grant. Ms. Gorman also explained that the hours for our Kitchen Helper could go down if we get a fulltime custodian. Ms. Gorman went for training for the state grant. The EOE (Executive Office of Elder Affairs) won't let them work on their budgets, they won't release the paperwork until after the state budget is allowed. MCOA said that if the COAs get their contracts back right away they should be able to get at least some of the money on a timely basis. Right now, the cities and towns don't know what they will be getting under the state budget. The employees under Personal Service Agreements will be getting a 1% raise. Ms. Gorman will use state grant money to pay that. Ms. Aguda will be retiring from her fulltime position the end of November. Ms. Gorman will be working the salary of the new part-time position of Companion Program Coordinator which Ms. Aguda will have after she retires from her current fulltime position.

C. Senior Center Utilization - Review Handouts given to City Councilors: See sheet Event Statistics from 06/01/2017 through 06/01/2018.

D. Voice of Experience Article: Keeping Senior Center Participants Safe: An article regarding the active shooter training was put in the monthly newsletter. Mary Lou Niedzielski, our Program Director, met with various groups to get their thoughts. The biggest concern was the Fitness Room. With the other rooms they could turn off the lights and stand to the side. They did remind the seniors that in case of emergency there are other exits. Barbara Taylor asked if putting curtains in the Fitness Room would help. Ms. Gorman commented that maybe we could frost the windows. She will look into it.

E. Update of Fitness Programs; The men's fitness class took off. Westfield News had an article on the front page. They added another morning so now it is Monday and Wednesdays. They have additional equipment as well, weights and super bands. We have added Chair Yoga Dance class. It is a different twist to Chair Yoga. It is for all bodies, no experience necessary. Our Chair Yoga classes are maxed out. One of our seniors who had a stroke said the class made her feel like a new woman. Carol Palmer just retired from the YMCA. Ms. Palmer had handled all the details of the YMCA classes, so we are working out the details now with the instructors from the YMCA.

V. **Items For Action: None**

VI. **Our Executive Director, Tina Gorman, then presented the Director's Report, copy attached:**

Review of Programs:

PACE Presentation: This presentation was held Tuesday, June 12, 2018 at 6 p.m. and we had 12 participants. Celina Conway from Mercy Life was the presenter and she was very happy with the turnout.

Two-Part "Downsizing In Place" workshop series: The program was filled to capacity at 25. It filled up within 2 days. We had a waiting list, so Ms. Gorman will offer it again in the fall. The participants were very receptive to the information shared.

Father's Day Rock & Roll Concert: The concert featured the Knightsmen Band on Friday, June 15, 2018 from 6 to 7:45 p.m. This was the first time the band performed without Cory DeGray, its founder. They did a great job. We had 135 people in attendance. The event went very smoothly, we had 4 staff members and 4 volunteers assisting. Five door prizes and bottled water were distributed during the break (7 to 7:15 p.m.) The ice cream sundaes each participant received as they left were made the day before and bagged on Friday morning.

"Get Ready to Retire" Presentation: Susan Allen a financial consultant held an evening presentation on Wednesday, June 20, 2018 from 6 to 8 p.m. The topics included creating retirement income; Medicare basics; when to claim Social Security; 401K and 403B transfers and rollovers. There were 25 people in attendance. We received very positive feedback about the presentation.

Concert Band of Western Massachusetts: The annual Star-Spangled Senior Concert was held at the Senior Center Monday, June 12, 2018 from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. The band had 35 members and we had 75 enthusiastic participants, many dressed in red, white and blue. A number of veterans were there.

Art Show: The members of the Art Unlimited class held an Art Show on Wednesday, June 27, 2018 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Fireside Lounge. There was a display of original pieces from the class. Members of the Lions Club were in the foyer from 11 a.m. to noon for member recruitment and that went very well.

People asked about a box for donating glasses and the Lions Club said they would set one up at the Senior Center. A classical guitarist who recently graduated from Hartford School of Music offered to come in to try out to become an entertainer at our functions. He played in the foyer from 10:15 to 11:15. He was great, the seniors loved him.

Upcoming Programs:

Visiting Angels "Ice Cream Splurge": The annual splurge will be held Thursday, July 12, 2018. We will have entertainment by Dave Colluci.

Presentation: ClearCaptions Phone: On Wednesday, July 18, 2018 Dave Arnold a Title IV Americans With Disability Act Specialist will give a presentation regarding a phone that is designed for those with any form of hearing loss. The phone displays text of conversations in near real time on a large color touchscreen while also amplifying voice. To qualify for this free caption phone the person needs access to a landline phone as well as internet service. Fran Aguda went through her Companion Program list and found 17 people that were interested. Mr. Arnold will go to their homes to meet with them about the phone. The phone is free to participants.

Miscellaneous:

Staff Vacation Schedule:

Carl Bak: July 9 through July 13, 2018

Tara LeBlanc: July 19, 20, 23

Mary Lou Niedzielski: July 27, through August 3, 2018

Tina Gorman: August 2 through August 13, 2018

Karen Noblit: August 20 through August 24, 2018

Councilor Figy gave the Board an update as to the real estate tax deferral program that was recently voted on. We as a city can allow residents 65 or older, with income limitations who own a home in Westfield to defer paying their real estate taxes until they sell their home or upon death. Our income cap for the program was \$20,000 and the interest charged on the deferred real estate taxes was 8%. Mr. Figy had proposed that the City raise the income limit \$10,000 each year for 3 years and that the City lower the interest rate from 8% to 6%. The City Council decided to vote for a \$55,000 limit with a decrease to the interest to 6%. At this point we don't know what that will do to our budget. Under the current program only 3 people

take part. One of the Board members asked how they prove income to qualify for the program. Ms. Gorman said that it is usually income tax returns but often seniors do not need to file income tax returns if their income is limited. Councilor Surprise wants to push the tax work off program. Ms. Gorman is the person who administers the program and it does have some drawbacks. She is concerned that the Council has unrealistic expectations of what the volunteers can do. She emails all the departments asking if they want volunteers. Some say they want the same volunteers they had in the past, so they don't have to train new people. Many departments say, "it wasn't worth it". You have to train and supervise the volunteers. Volunteers don't have the same commitment that a paid employee would. Volunteers have their own lives with health issues, family issues, etc. The School System can usually take volunteers. Tina Macy coordinates the school program and she reported to Ms. Gorman that 2 of the volunteers never showed up for work. The duties given to the volunteers have to be carefully determined. There are concerns about confidentiality. Also, it is a lot of work to coordinate these volunteers without a volunteer coordinator. Councilor Figy had a suggestion: he asked Ms. Gorman to prepare a synopsis of the tax work off program and he will present it to the Council.

VII. The Chair reminded us that our next meeting will be held on August 13, 2018, at 1:00 p.m. at City Hall in Room 201. Ms. Gorman reported that she will be unable to attend the next Board meeting. Mary Lou Niedzielski our Program Director will be attending in her place.

VIII. There being no further business to come before the Board, upon Motion duly made by Eileen Rockwal and seconded by KerryAnn Kielbasa, it was unanimously

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

A true record.

List of Exhibits:

- a. Agenda
- b. Packet containing abbreviated version of FY 2019 Budget and Event Statistics 06/01/2017 - 06/01/2018
- c. Director's Report

Cynthia Lee Andersen-Secretary