

**City of Westfield  
Minutes of the Council On Aging  
October 18, 2021**

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, KerryAnn Kielbasa, James Liptak, Eileen Rockwal, and Barbara Taylor. Also present were Tina Gorman, Director of the Westfield Council On Aging and Ralph Figy, City Council Liaison.

**II. Approval of Minutes of September 20, 2021 Meeting:**

Upon Motion duly made by Barbara Taylor and seconded by Ed Ekmalian, it was

VOTED: To approve the Minutes of the September 20, 2021 meeting. There were two abstentions, KerryAnn Kielbasa and Eileen Rockwell, because they were not in attendance at the September 20, 2021 meeting.

**III. Public Participation:**

None

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

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

Mr. Liptak did not attend the HVES October meeting, but he did speak to the Administrative Assistant today (10/18/21) to get an update. HVES has three new Board Members. They are from the towns of Hatfield, Plainfield and Williamsburg, MA. Throughout the COVID pandemic, HVES maintained all services. Meals served or distributed have increased 20 percent throughout that time period.

Cynthia Tirrell is the new Director of the Easthampton Council On Aging. She was previously with the Cancer Connection in Northampton.

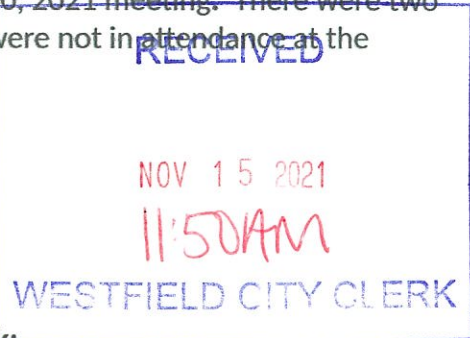
At this time, HVES has no vaccination mandate for employees.

The November HVES Board meeting will be on the same day as our Westfield COA meeting. The HVES meeting will be via Zoom so Mr. Liptak is hopeful that he can attend both meetings, which will be back-to-back.

**B. FY21 Senior Safe Grant, Update:**

Mrs. Gorman advised that of the 19 lock boxes that were purchased with grant funding, ten of them have been assigned to seniors and are ready to be installed. An Elm Electric employee has volunteered to help with the installation. All of the necessary forms have been completed. Lock box recipients were selected with help from Joyce Peregrin, Companion Program Coordinator. Recipients are considered 'at-risk' for 9-1-1 calls and are currently utilizing a variety of COA services.

The COA is in the second phase of the pilot program, *Sand for Seniors*. Forty-seven older adults will be



the recipient of a five-gallon bucket filled with a sand/salt mixture. Each bucket has a lid and recipients will also receive a sand scooper. The list of recipients was created with input from Joanne Ortigas, Joyce Peregrin, Julie Barnes, Mary Lou Niedzielski, and Tina Gorman. These are clients who each thought would benefit greatly from the program. Students from Westfield Technical Academy's Allied Health and Horticulture departments will begin delivering the buckets this week.

#### **C. Fall Flu Clinics, Review:**

Mrs. Gorman advised that the Senior Center held three Flu Clinics on October 5, 6, and 8 in partnership with the local Stop & Shop Pharmacy. Karen Noblit completed the paperwork for all 135 participants ahead of time. Mark Butera, Stop & Shop pharmacist, was impressed with the coordinated effort of the clinics. He said that he will gladly work with the COA on conducting COVID vaccine booster shot clinics in the future.

#### **D. Tax Work-Off Program, Update:**

Mrs. Gorman advised that to date, she has mailed out 20 applications to Seniors. There are 25 volunteer positions available. Five people have been interviewed and CORI checked and are ready to begin volunteering. Four individuals opted out of the program, for various reasons. The deadline for application submission is Friday, October 22. Senior Center staff will do reminder follow-up phone calls to those who requested an application, but have not yet called to schedule an interview.

#### **E. New COA Position and Hire**

Mrs. Gorman advised that she has hired Mary 'Happy' Daley as a part-time front desk Greeter. Her hours are noon to 2:00 p.m. daily. Mrs. Daley is a retired City employee and was looking for a part-time position. She was the City Auditor.

#### **V. Items for Action**

None

#### **VI. Director's Report**

##### **Review of Programs**

- *Meal Program*
  - o Have returned to curbside meals, five days a week
  - o Numbers are beginning to climb
  
- *'Westfield Council On Aging Presents' Series, October*
  - o Ron Bryant, President, Baystate Noble Hospital
  - o 'Baystate Noble ~ OUR Community Hospital'
  - o Ron provided an overview of programs, services, structural improvements and planned renovations, and the coordination of patient care with Baystate in Springfield
  - o Airing Tuesdays at 2:45 p.m. on Channel 15
  
- *Fitness Programs*
  - o Chair Yoga: three classes that meet twice a week with advance registration
    - Cleaning and sanitizing between classes has become routine

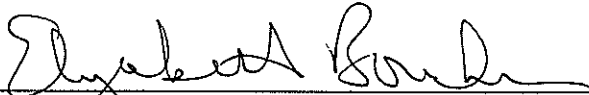
- o Totally FUN Fitness: two classes that meet twice a week with advance registration
  - Each class is filled to capacity
  - Very positive feedback from participants about Carol Palmer
- o Male Call: one class that meets twice a week
  - Average number in the class is eight so no pre-registration is necessary at this time
  - Very committed group of men
- o Line Dancing: Two sessions with pre-registration done quarterly
  - Sign-ups will be next month and priority will be given to those who did not get into one of the current sessions
- *Support Groups*
  - o Side By Side: small group, but facilitator continues phone contact with those who are still reluctant to join the in-person group
    - Tina Gorman – Facilitator
  - o Viewpoints: small group, but facilitator continues phone contact with those who are still reluctant to join the in-person group
    - Agnes Fleming – Facilitator

### Upcoming Programs

- *Autumn Harvest Curbside Dinner*
  - o Comfort food menu: Yankee pot roast with gravy, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables
- Pre-registration required
- 220 signed up
- *Curbside signups for Totally FUN Fitness late fall classes*
  - o Wednesday, November 3 at 9 a.m.
  - o Classes begin November 16 and end on December 28
- *'Westfield Council On Aging Presents' Series, November*
  - o Tina Gorman: 'Conversational Dementia'
  - o Topics:
    - Communication strategies for family, friends, caregivers of those with dementia
    - Reasons that situations can easily escalate, both at home and in public, and methods to create a more calming environment
    - This presentation is in keeping with Westfield's **'Dementia Friendly'** community status
- *Veterans/Thanksgiving 'Sarah the Fiddler' Concert*
  - o Shown on cable Channel 15 eleven times throughout November, including twice on Veterans Day and twice on Thanksgiving, Wednesday afternoons, and Saturday evenings
- *Friends of the Westfield Senior Center Lottery Ticket Fundraiser*
  - o Ticket sales during curbside meal distribution November 8 through November 24
  - o \$100 worth of lottery tickets in a box full of holiday preparation items (cards, gift tags, gift bags, wrapping paper)

**List of Exhibits:**

- Director's Report



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Elizabeth Boucher, Secretary