

## **Commission on Aging, Brookfield CT**

Regular Monthly Meeting: December 7, 2011

The meeting was called to order by Betsy McIlvaine, Chairman at 12:05 pm.

In attendance were: Commissioners Carol Howe and Peg Kaswer.

Others: Director of Senior and Social Services, Ellen Melville and Jeanne Effrece, FISH Scheduler.

November 2nd minutes were accepted as written.

## **Regular Reports**

### **Senior Center**

Ms. Melville reviewed support provided by the town during the Nor'easter. The community should be aware that the High School is the designated town shelter, the Police Department provides support for both 911 calls and non-emergency calls to the 775 number as well as a place to be warm, charge your cell phones. The Fire Department provides bottled water as well as fill up your own containers. The YMCA partnered with the town to provide showers, warmth, charging stations for cell phones, etc.. The Senior Center and Library were also places during the day to warm up, charge your devices etc.. Animals could go to the Bethel Animal Shelter on School Street, Bethel or Martha's Vineyard.

Ms. Melville encouraged residents to sign up with the CT ALERT SYSTEM to receive state communications on storms and other potential disasters.

The Thanksgiving Basket Program was a success. The Christmas Holiday Gift Program, coordinated by Ms. Hoolehan, is currently in process. Puzzles, games, books as well as gift cards from Shoprite, Target, Brookfield Lanes, Dunkin Donuts, Friendly's etc. would be most helpful as "add-ins". December 14<sup>th</sup> is the deadline.

The Senior Center Annual Holiday Bazaar, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, was a huge success!

### **Social Service**

Attending another meeting, Ms. Holliday sent her report with Ms. Melville. With regard to Medicare Part D (Prescription Drugs), the sign-up program closes today – December 7<sup>th</sup>.

It was noted that Goodwill Industries has a job center for retraining, resume assistance etc. for those unemployed. Goodwill also is doing money management classes. The Senior Center's money management program may have a follow-up in the spring.

Energy assistance requests are up by 13% this year. Due to the economy amounts given last year have been cut for some up to 71%. The Food Bank had 119 visits last month.

## **Old Business**

### **FISH Program:**

Action items from the November meeting are completed as follows:

Ms. McIlvaine spoke with Woodbury FISH. They too were slow to get started with clients.

Ms. Howe touched base with a number of our clients who seem to be doing fine.

Ms. Kaswer contacted Newcomers Club. She will e-mail them information about FISH for their

Newsletter.

In Ms. Holliday's absence, Ms. Melville reported Ms. Holliday had difficulty contacting someone to talk with at the 211 phone number. She will continue her effort.

Ms. Holliday will report on the status of the FISH Lunch/Learn at the January meeting

Ms. Kaswer indicated there were two additional requests for rides in the last two weeks.

The FISH scheduler, Ms. Effrece, distributed the December calendar on the fifteenth of November as scheduled. The COA will take care of mailing schedules to those without e-mail while Ms. Effrece is away this winter.

Ms. Howe & Ms. McIlvaine sent invitations to the volunteer drivers. A "Thank You" reception was held November 15 with a few in attendance. Thought and ideas were exchanged to publicize the program.

Action items for the January Meeting:

- Prepare short article for the Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Newsletter – Ms. Howe
- Contact Housatonic Times and The Brookfield Monthly Magazine to do a story – Ms. McIlvaine
- Print group photo to be used in publicity for Ms. Howe – Ms. McIlvaine
- Revise the phone message to be a little less intimidating for folks to leave a message – Ms. Kaswer
- Followup with Carol Dorie for ideas to publicize FISH – Ms. Melville/Ms. McIlvaine

#### **Facilities Planning Committee**

Ms. Howe attended a second committee meeting and suggested a Teen Center be considered. A list of facilities remains under review for prioritizing based on need.

#### **New Business:**

Ms. McIlvaine reported seeing information on a Seniors driving program – should they continue OR should they stop. The discussion concluded checking to see if Danbury Hospital runs such a program. Ms. McIlvaine will check into.

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peg Kaswer, Secretary