

**Colchester Commission on Aging**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, August 11, 2008 – Colchester Senior Center**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Jean Stawicki, Vice Chairman Ann Smyk, Betty Ann Oppelt, Bill Wagner

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Barbara Warden, Bernie Erickson, Clara Erickson, Sally Carbone

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Cathy Russi, Rosemary Coyle, Vicky Dominic, Phil Petrazillo

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 1:06 p.m.
2. **Photo Opportunity of Commission on Aging:** Cathy Russi suggested taking individual photos of each member of the Commission on Aging, rather than a group shot. That way, they can be arranged and labeled as needed. All members present agreed.
3. **Minutes:** Betty Ann Oppelt motioned to approve the regular meeting minutes of 7/14/08. Ann Smyk seconded. All other members present voted in favor with the exception of Bill Wagner who was not at that meeting. MOTION CARRIED.
4. **Financial Report:** No items were reported.
5. **Chairman's Report:** Jean Stawicki found that Chairmen are supposed to report to the Selectmen every quarter. She received a letter the night before the last meeting but was unable to attend. She did send them a report outlining her goals. Rosemary Coyle said it is always the first meeting of the month of each quarter. Their meetings are held on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays of the month.

Jean read through the bylaws and found that the Health Director is an ex-officio member of the Commission on Aging. Jean contacted her and she related that she does not do any special reporting regarding seniors to the Board of Selectmen. Jean thought she may be able to provide information on seniors in the community that may be useful in setting goals for accreditation.

Ann Smyk motioned to approve the Chairman's Report. Bill Wagner seconded. All other members present voted in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

**6. Vote on Application for Alternate Position:** Jean stated that Sue Maikshilo had applied for the open alternate position and was approved by the Board of Selectmen. Rosemary confirmed this and said her term is valid through 2011. Sue had not yet been notified. Betty Ann Oppelt motioned to approve Sue Maikshilo's application for the alternate position on the Commission on Aging. Ann Smyk seconded. All other members present voted in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

**7. Senior Center Director's Report:** Cathy Russi provided an Annual Town Report to all present at the meeting.

Cathy read an invitation for all Commission members to attend the annual Block Party hosted by the Green Team. This is a collaboration between Senior and Youth Services to plan, plant and grow vegetables and flowers. There are 3 Master Gardeners and one gardener in training involved. They have already started making and freezing food that they've grown. Also invited are the Governor of the State of Connecticut, Eileen Daly, Linda Orange, employees of Town Hall and the Green Team and their families. It will be held at the Senior Center on August 20<sup>th</sup> from 11:30 to 1:30.

The water cooler has been delivered. This is something the seniors wanted and are paying for themselves out of funds they raise.

On Monday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, Diane Stone will give a presentation on self-assessment for accreditation of senior centers. It will begin at 1:30 and consists of a slide presentation. Jean Stawicki asked what information they will hand out. Cathy said there is a book available for purchase and she will look into that.

Cathy said that she was sworn in again as the Municipal Agent for the elderly.

Cathy and Donna attended a meeting for energy assistance. TVCCA will come on Wednesday to install software on the computer to help assess needs of clients. Cathy will clear this with the computer department first. She would like to get a laptop and will ask TVCCA to help with this. There is, again, no deliverable fuel until November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Cathy worked on the numbers for the Annual Report. Jean has helped with this also. The donation account is made up of memorials that are left by people who passed away.

Linda Hodge called for a Department Head meeting for the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). She needs a 5 year plan to give the State. Cathy's input included \$15,000 for building improvements including the front door, windows and wiring, \$40,000 for a new senior center/community center and \$15,000 – \$25,000 for a new vehicle, which would be also funded by grants. These are annual figures. She pointed out that a community center would be bigger and

more expensive versus a senior center which could be financed by the Small City Block Grant, but would be available only to seniors for 20-25 years.

Cathy asked Commission members to start thinking about the budget as that will need to be done soon for the next fiscal year. Jean asked about grants for new vehicles. Cathy indicated that they will need a new vehicle for 2010. There is one van that the maintenance department has said will need to be retired next year.

There is DOT funding of \$32,000 for new initiatives consisting of out of town driving. This is a much needed, but very costly service due to hourly driver rates, gas and insurance. Reservations are required. Sometimes people make donations which are deposited into the town account on a weekly basis. Cathy said they can't ask for donations for this service because of the grant rules, but they can for the in-town trips.

September is Senior Center Month. Each year, they try to promote cultural diversity by offering educational programs that reflect a different country. This year is Russia. Tuesday will focus on Russian clothing and headdresses. The 4<sup>th</sup> will be cooking and tasting. The 9<sup>th</sup> will be a movie on St. Petersburg. There will be a Russian festival on the 11<sup>th</sup> with a speaker, meal and entertainment sponsored by the Friends of Cragin Memorial Library. The 16<sup>th</sup> will be education on Faberge eggs.

Shopping Cart Bingo will be held on September 19<sup>th</sup>.

World War II veterans of Colchester and Salem will be honored by the Secretary of State, Susan Bysiewicz on September 24<sup>th</sup>. Cathy invited the Commission to attend.

September 27<sup>th</sup> is the 57 Fest parade. The seniors are involved if anyone would like to volunteer.

The National Olympic Ping Pong champion would like to practice at the senior center. The table will be available for seniors to learn or play on.

Colchester seniors will be competing with seniors from other towns on Wii bowling.

The Senior Center is continuing the Renters Rebate program.

Pricilla went with the Golden Glow today to the East Haddam Senior Center. They will also attend a picnic in 2 weeks.

AARP programs will start up on September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Their meeting starts at 1:30 and a program on obtaining diabetic footwear through Medicare will begin at 2 pm.

Pricilla is putting together a volunteer handbook. They need to detail the types of people who volunteer and a plan of action if any problems arise.

Jean asked about the cleaning person. Cathy said someone has been coming in every night and has worked out really well. They empty garbage, clean bathrooms and sweep twice a week. Jean mentioned that the cleaning people are not on call and that Cathy is still doing things that need to be taken care of during the day.

Cathy stated that Jean has taken on the responsibility of taking out a Bingo permit from the State of Connecticut. There is no cost for this permit however there are rules to follow including prizes under \$20.00 and that it can only be played on certain days. They also have a permit to show movies because the senior center is a public place. This permit costs \$150.00 per year.

Cathy attended the Board of Selectman meeting and stayed until the end. She found it very interesting to hear the discussions and see what's involved in all the decisions that need to be made.

Cathy talked about the fraud that is being committed against seniors. She was interviewed for the newspaper with a police officer and got all the information out around town to make people aware of the issue.

Cathy suggested sending a card to Kay Conderino. Betty Ann offered to do this. Cathy said that Kay is not shy about voicing her concerns to people about the treatment of seniors. Cathy said Kay feels that although incomes decline, quality of life for seniors should be maintained.

Two refrigerators have been ordered from money that has been raised. One is for the kitchen and the other for the dining room. New chairs have been delivered that were financed by a grant received last year. Cathy is also pricing light-weight dining room tables that will be funded by another grant.

Cathy applied for two new computers from the National Institute of Senior Centers. They would be used to teach seniors how to utilize computers and for compiling statistics that the center needs.

Ann Smyk motioned to accept the Senior Center Director's Report. Betty Ann Oppelt seconded. All other members voted in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

**8. Old Business:** No items were reported.

**9. New Business:** Jean stated that the new business is accreditation. Rosemary suggested inviting the First Selectman to the presentation on Monday September 8<sup>th</sup>.

**10. Adjournment:** Betty Ann Oppelt motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:01 p.m. Ann Smyk seconded. All other members present voted in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Komoroski