



TOWN OF COLCHESTER

Commission on Aging
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Where Tradition Meets Tomorrow

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Colchester Commission on Aging Regular Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 12, 2009 – Colchester Senior Center

Members Present: Chairman Jean Stawicki, Bernie Erickson, Clara Erickson, Sue Maikshilo, Betty Ann Oppelt

Members Absent: Barbara Warden, Bill Wagner

Others Present: Patti White, Rosemary Coyle, Priscilla Clesowich

- 1. Call Meeting to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 1:06 p.m.
- 2. Minutes:** Sue Maikshilo motioned to approve the regular meeting minutes of 12/8/08. Clara Erickson seconded. All other members present voted in favor. MOTION CARRIED.
- 3. Financial Report:** Bernie Erickson reported that the senior center collected \$192.00 in November 2008 from bus transportation and that \$80.00 of that was from out of town trips. \$200.00 was collected in December and \$27.00 was from out of town trips. Sue Maikshilo motioned to accept the Financial Report. Clara Erickson seconded. All other members present voted in favor. MOTION CARRIED.
- 4. Chairman's Report:** Jean Stawicki spoke with Rob Gustafson in regard to last month's meeting. He was unable to attend due to a water emergency, but agreed to attend today at 1:45.

Jean was able to get the accreditation manual from the Norwich Senior Center. She will go through it to see what needs to be done to qualify.

Rosemary inquired about electing a new Vice Chair now that Ann Smyk's commission has expired. It was decided to add a vote to the February agenda to elect an interim Vice Chair to serve until the elections in June. There are 2 open spaces now that

both Ann and Sally Carbone have resigned. There was discussion regarding how to fill the positions.

Sue Maikshilo motioned to accept the Chairman's Report. Betty Ann Oppelt seconded. All other members present voted in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

- 5. Senior Center Director's Report:** Patti indicated that things are going well. Clara Erickson said that she is hearing wonderful things.

The Veterans have begun organizing their room. They have purchased paint and fabric for new curtains and will begin work as soon as the weather is better. The Commission commented on how nice the room looks.

On Tuesday, January 13th, the center is having a 'Kicking the Winter Blues' event. It began as a welcome to Patti in December, but had to be rescheduled due to weather. HealthNet is providing entertainment, and pizza will be served.

Priscilla Clesowich said they would like to host an evening presentation of the Golden Glow so that their families may attend.

Bernie Erickson asked about the exercise program that HealthNet used to provide. Priscilla said that they no longer do that, but the center has contracted with the instructor for a 5 week session on a fee-for-services basis because several people want to continue the program. The cost is \$36.00 for all 5 weeks, but there is also a drop-in fee if someone is interested. They are currently looking for other ways to subsidize the program.

Priscilla said that she has started a chair yoga class and there were 11 attendees last week.

At this point Patti left for another meeting.

Priscilla reported that Patti will circulate a survey at the 'Kicking the Winter Blues' event tomorrow to see how it goes.

Rob Gustafson entered the meeting at this point.

The senior center has been awarded a \$5,000 grant and they are looking to options on how to spend it. The money needs to be spent by April.

Sue Maikshilo motioned to accept the Senior Center Director's Report. Clara Erickson seconded. All other members present voted in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

6. Old Business:

A. Accreditation Process: No items were reported.

B. Residential Communities:

- 1. Concerns – Housing Authority Speaker:** Rob Gustafson, Colchester Housing Authority agent for Dublin Village and Ponemah Village, was asked by Jean if he could relate any concerns or complaints that seniors have to the Commission that they can be proactive in addressing. Rob said seniors are not able to use the out-of-town transportation provided by the town. He knows that the senior center is trying hard to provide this service but that there are limited funds but seniors have to cancel appointments because they can't get rides. The other concern he pointed out is the lack of truly affordable senior housing. Right now, he has 53 people on the waiting list between Dublin and Ponemah Villages. He has gone to TRIAD and asked them to get organizations in town to help seniors remain in their own homes, rather than looking for senior housing. Sometimes, they just need handrails or sidewalks installed.

Priscilla addressed the transportation issue. They are limited by the number of vehicles and drivers they have. Right now, though, they have the use of 2 police cars for transportation also. She related how difficult it is to coordinate all the rides and how important it is to sign up for the service as soon as possible so routes can be planned to benefit the most people.

As far as the housing issue is concerned, Rob said that since the rules have changed, affordable housing is being absorbed by younger, disabled people and not being replenished in other ways for seniors. Right now, Ponemah Village is 50% disabled housing and 50% senior housing. Dublin has a higher senior population because they are all ground floor units. There was a short discussion regarding seniors living together to share costs.

- 2. Contacting Communities:** Sue asked if the 53 people on the waiting list could be helped in anyway. Priscilla said they have to wait for them to ask for help otherwise it could be an invasion of their privacy. She said

that there are a lot of services available and seniors just need to be made aware of what they are and how to access them. There are also many businesses that provide services to seniors. Clara suggested publishing that information in the Busy Bee since it is delivered to all senior housing areas each month. Other suggestions were public TV and fliers through Meals on Wheels, Town Hall and on the senior busses.

Rosemary Coyle added that the tax ordinances have changed and the new ones will be posted on the website soon.

Sue Maikshilo motioned to accept Rob Gustafson's report. Betty Ann Oppelt seconded. All other members present voted in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Rob Gustafson left the meeting.

C. Legislation Update: Jean stated that the Commission needs to be more proactive in looking for ways to help on behalf of seniors in town. She mentioned accreditation and legislation. She said that accreditation can't be completed right now because of the state of the building that houses the senior center. However, she is proposing doing what they can in other aspects so that when the time is right, they will be ready. Also, by keeping an eye on proposed legislation in Hartford, the Commission can become involved in issues that affect them.

7. New Business: No items were reported.

8. Adjournment: Clara Erickson motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:29 p.m. Bernie Erickson seconded. All other members present voted in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Komoroski