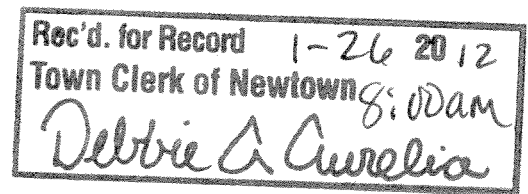


Commission on Aging  
Minutes of Regular Meeting  
Monday, January 23, 2012



The Commission on Aging held a regular meeting on Monday, January 23, 2012 at the Senior Center, 14 Riverside Road, Sandy Hook, CT. Chairman Thomas Dwyer called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Members Present: Thomas Dwyer, Karin Aurelia, LeReine Frampton, Joan Plouffe, Larry Schneider, Curt Symes, Sheila Torres.

Members Excused: Joanne Davis, Anna Wiedemann.

Support & Advisory Present: Marilyn Place, Director of Senior Service; Ann Piccini, Municipal Agent for the Elderly plus John Aurelia and Bob Sharpe of the Senior Action Committee.

Also Present: Aida Reiske and Barbara Hayden of the Senior Center staff; Newtown Police Officer Mary Helen McCarthy; William Thiessen, an applicant for appointment to the COA; former COA commissioner James Bernardi; Robert Merola, a member of the Town's Legislative Council plus fourteen members of the public.

Mr. Dwyer noted that James Bernardi's term expired on January 9, 2012 and he has not yet been reappointed by the Board of Selectmen. He further noted that former commissioner Mary Ellen Lydem's term also expired on January 6, 2012 and although she has been reappointed she has not yet been sworn in.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.** Rose West, 50 Elizabeth Circle, has been coming to the Senior Center for years. She feels that the exercise class is overcrowded and overflows onto the patio which has no heat or air conditioning. There is not enough equipment for the class. Parking is very difficult and she has had her car damaged. When there are trips there is not enough parking for patrons which is unsafe. She wants a safe, equipped and functioning senior center. There are safety issues.

Ms. Franklin has been to several senior centers and stated that the number of seniors and the size of Newtown's senior center is disproportionate. Members are discouraged by the lack of space and the center does not meet the needs of the seniors. There used to be twice a day exercise classes which are no longer provided. She would like to see additional programming such as more Zumba and yoga. Space is needed for them.

Nadamie Bistany 43 Elizabeth Circle, said there is a disproportionate amount of budget allotted to education and some of this money should go to the seniors.

Lidia Zierzow, 1 Alder Lane, has read that funds for a new senior center are proposed in the town's budget for the year 2016. Mr. Dwyer replied that this is for the design phase of such a building at Fairfield Hills and is the earliest commitment for such funding the town would provide. He pointed out that several years ago architectural plans were drawn up for a Community Center to be constructed at Fairfield Hills which would be shared equally by Park & Recreation facilities and a Senior Center and the space allocated to the Senior Center section would have been substantially more than existed at its current location. Unfortunately it was subsequently discovered that a building of the size contemplated could not be built at the intended location because of wetlands on the property, and if a smaller building

was constructed there the Senior Center part would consist of less space than in the current one so the COA withdrew its support for one in the proposed Community Center. Since then efforts to obtain funding for a new Senior Center have been frustrated because of the town's austerity budgets. In spite of this Mr. Dwyer stated that he will again advise the First Selectman of the seniors' concerns.

Janice Garten, 2 Watkins Drive, believes that because there are several housing developments in town restricted to those over the age of 55 we should have more services in town for the seniors.

Dolores Winans, 21 Saint George Place, asked if the Commission on Aging presents a budget to the Town for the Senior Center and is that budget reviewed or is the COA allocated a certain percentage to run the Senior Center. Mrs. Place replied that she prepares and submits to Town officials the Senior Center budget which is included in the Town's budget that's voted on. Ms. Winans feels that the seniors should petition the Town to present the fact that the seniors should enjoy the fruits of the Senior Center and that a whole generation is moving into Newtown with more 55+ communities. Mrs. Frampton noted that the seniors should attend the Board of Selectmen's meeting when the budget is presented. Mr. Dwyer agreed. Bob Merola of the Legislative Council suggested that the seniors check the Town's website to see when Senior Services is on the agenda for the Board of Selectmen. He also suggested that they attend the Board of Finance and Legislative Council budget meetings. Mr. Symes suggested that a small group represent the seniors at these meetings. Mrs. Torres noted that in the Patch it was brought up that maybe the Senior Center could be located in the Middle School because it might be closing.

Bill Thiessen, 101 Currituck Road, said it would be worthwhile to investigate what other buildings might be available in the Town. Mr. Dwyer replied that two years ago the Town suggested that a former food storage building at Fairfield Hills might serve as a larger senior center if properly refurbished but after being inspected by the Commission and members of the Senior Action Committee the offer was rejected. At about the same time the Town informed the Commission that if and when the police department is relocated from its current Main St. building to Fairfield Hills their former quarters might make a suitable senior center but this was rejected by the COA and SAC because of its location in a congested area and it has limited parking. He noted that in the recent Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee survey of town residents a shared senior center or stand alone building at Fairfield Hills were both supported but that housing there, which includes elderly housing, was rejected. Mr. Thiessen suggested that those present select a person to represent them and attend the budget meetings with Mr. Dwyer and Mrs. Place. Mrs. Place suggested that the seniors meet with the Senior Action Committee.

Mr. Symes noted that the Commission on Aging recently acquired a new van for the Senior Center and Mr. Dwyer added that efforts to obtain financing from the town for its purchase were unsuccessful therefore it had to be paid for by a withdrawal from the Commission's Gift Fund. Officer Mary Helen McCarthy stated that the Senior Center bus was used during the storms this year and was invaluable in transporting many residents.

Mrs. Torres noted that one objective of the Commission is to obtain grants to help the seniors and she encouraged the seniors to consider grants as alternate funding.

One of those present noted that this is an affluent town and we are paying high taxes. Another resident said that there is plenty of room in Fairfield Hills for a senior center.

Eileen Burns, 3 Harvest Common, teaches the yoga classes at the Senior Center and said there's a lack of parking space which results in unsafe conditions when visitors leave their cars in places not designated for parking. She noted that there is not enough room for the exercise classes and hopes that

people won't have to be turned away. She said that the Bethel Senior Center has sufficient parking and some Newtown seniors go there because of this.

Mrs. Place noted that parking has been a problem for some while and suggested that a letter be written to the Town requesting that an area near the Senior Center be leveled so it could be used for that purpose. Mr. Dwyer said that he'll write such a letter to the appropriate department(s). She also stated that classes have to move to different areas in the center according to how many participants are in attendance for each.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.** None

**MINUTES.** Mrs. Place referred to the statement in the December minutes regarding tickets to the Senior Center Christmas Party and pointed out that although it is true that Ann Benore of Social Services was not given a ticket paid for by the Gift Fund, five staff members did receive them as authorized at the COA's October meeting. The five were Mrs. Place, Aida Reiske, Barbara Hayden and Robert Sharpe (the van driver), all of the Senior Center, and Mrs. Picinni, the Municipal Agent for the Elderly. Ms. Benore was not given a ticket because her supervisor, Mrs. Picinni, needed her to be on duty at the Social Services office while the Christmas Party was being held. Mr. Dwyer referred to the statement in the minutes about Synergy Home Care and said that he had not yet contacted them about speaking at a COA meeting but would try to do so before the next meeting. Mrs. Place does not feel that only a few service groups like them should be contacted to make a presentation to the Commission on Aging as there are many groups out there who contact her; she said that the Senior Center is a buffer for these groups. The approval of the minutes was tabled to the next meeting.

**TREASURER'S REPORT.** Mrs. Aurelia stated that Commission on Aging Gift Fund balance is \$27,238.29 which is the same as it was when reported on at last month's meeting.

**DIRECTOR OF SENIOR SERVICES REPORT** (Attachment B to original minutes). Mr. Schneider asked if the Commission can facilitate the purchase of additional exercise equipment if there is a shortage. Mrs. Place feels that there is not a shortage and pointed out that many participants supply their own equipment, such as yoga mats.

**MUNICIPAL AGENT FOR THE ELDERLY REPORT.** (Attachment C to original minutes). Mrs. Picinni addressed concerns and suggestions expressed by William Thiessen in a memo he had sent to Mr. Dwyer and was distributed to the commissioners at the meeting (Attachment D to original minutes). She explained that Social Services does not solicit funds for Fuel Assistance and the State makes agreements with companies for a certain rate. She said that money is occasionally utilized from the Social Services Gift Fund and most of the seniors do not prefer to use mail order for prescriptions.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS.**

**Grants Subcommittee.** Mr. Dwyer distributed a report issued by this subcommittee which was formed at the December meeting and consists of Joan Plouffe and Sheila Torres. As there was insufficient time

to discuss the report in detail the matter was tabled to the next meeting. (Attachment A to original minutes).

**Senior Directory.** Mrs. Place noted that the draft Senior Directory, which has been prepared by Mrs. Weidemann and submitted to the Senior Center staff for comment, duplicates much of the information contained in the Guide to Newtown issued annually by the Newtown Bee. Aida Reiske pointed out the Guide itself duplicates considerable information that's available on the internet. Mrs. Torres feels that it's appropriate to have a guide that focuses only on seniors. Mrs. Place said that her staff has not yet had time to assemble the directory. The matter was tabled until Mrs. Wiedemann is present for further discussion. Mr. Dwyer suggested that in the meantime COA members should try to review the draft at the Senior Center when they have an opportunity.

**Tabled Items.** Owing to time constraints the following matters on the Agenda were tabled to the next meeting:

Reply to Sheila Torres's *Discussion Points* memo distributed to the commissioners at the September 26, 2011 meeting

Victory Garden Row for the Commission on Aging - Report by Sheila Torres

Planned Giving Program - Report by Curt Symes

New Senior Center

**NEW BUSINESS.** None noted.

**ADJOURNMENT.** The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Ann M. Mazur, Clerk

From: Tom Dwyer <thomas.s.dwyer@gmail.com>  
Subject: Re: COA December Meeting  
Date: January 11, 2012 5:58:37 PM EST  
To: Bill Thiessen <athiessen@earthlink.net>

Thanks Bill, I appreciate your interest in the work of the Commission on Aging.

Regarding Numbers 1 and 2 I'll forward you recommendations and suggestions to Ann Piccini (Newtown's Municipal Agent for the Elderly) and request that she comment upon them at our January 23rd meeting.

Regarding Number 3, there's just one fund that holds money donated by the public for the exclusive benefit of Newtown's seniors and it's the Commission on Aging Gift Fund but from time to time it's erroneously referred to as the Senior Center Gift Fund. The only mention of this Fund in the town's records that I'm aware of is in the Ordinance that created the COA and this is what it says:

#### Section 21-18. Gift Fund Account

Funds available to the Commission on Aging from a specific gift or bequest shall be placed in the custody of the Financial Director of the Town of Newtown and shall be kept by the Financial Director in the Fund, which fund shall be known as the Newtown Commission on Aging Fund and shall be kept separate and distinct from all other town funds. Gifts or bequests may be identified for a specific use. Disbursements from the Newtown Commission on Aging Fund shall be made on order of the Commission on Aging only and upon a majority vote of the Commission members not less than four (4) affirmative votes and, if specified for special use, in accordance with the terms of the specific gift or bequest. With proper documentation all checks drawn on the Fund shall be signed by the First Selectman and by the Finance Director of the Town of Newtown. The funds referred to herein are for the exclusive use of the Commission on Aging and shall not be used by the Town of Newtown for any purpose other than as authorized by the Commission on Aging.

The Fund is not referred to in the COA's Bylaws but on at least one occasion in the past the suggestion was made by one or more of the commissioners that we define it's purpose in writing but the majority decided it would be best to leave it undefined. As for the Social Services Fund, I had never heard of this until our December meeting and plan to obtain details about it from Ms. Piccini before our next one. I should point out that it's name indicates, it's not exclusively for seniors although seniors could obviously benefit from it.

Regarding number 4, thanks for your offer to provide hay mulch for the proposed COA Victory Garden plot which I'll relay to Sheila at our next meeting.

By the way, have you applied for membership on the COA. I hope so!

Best regards and I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting,

Tom

Tom Dwyer, Chair  
Newtown Commission on Aging.

Mazur

**WILLIAM F. THIESSEN**

103 Currituck Road

Newtown, CT 06470

(203) 426-3200

December 2011 COA Meeting Comments and Suggestions

January 7, 2012

- 1) I would like to recommend that Social Services solicit bids, from local fuel companies, for the maximum number of gallons of fuel they are willing to provide for the number of dollars received from the state fuel assistance program. It should be identified, in the request for bid, how many homes would be receiving deliveries and the minimum gallonage provided at the time of delivery.
- 2) I am sure that Social Services is aware of the Western CT Area Agency on Aging, and the service they provide to address lowest cost Part D drug programs for seniors. I would like to say that I have used their services for the past three years to identify both lowest cost drug and supplement health insurance programs. What Social Services might not be aware of is they can save people additional dollars by having seniors, who use mostly generic drugs, sign up for a prescription savings club, like Big Y's (program sign up cost: \$7.95). One would take the lowest cost monthly Part D payment plan and buy 90 day generic drugs (\$9.99 per drug) thru plans like offered at Big Y. I save over \$100 a year by doing this versus buying my drugs thru the Part D plan. I still get one of my non-generic drug thru my Part D program and have the option to purchase other drugs my doctor might prescribe that aren't generic. Also, Big Y lets you know when to pick up your next 90 day supply of drugs, and will also call your doctor to renew your prescription if you do not have any refills left (Big Y documents provided).
- 3) There was a discussion about gift funds. As best as I was able to determine from the conversation, there are three organizational funds: the COA fund, the Senior Center fund, and the Social Services fund. It was not clear to me that the COA fund and Senior Center fund aren't one and the same. The three funds should not be co-mingled. If I were to donate money to the food bank, I would not want it to be used for Senior Center entertainment purposes. This brings up another point, I see that the COA monitors the Senior Center financial activities and funds, but who monitors the other two funds? Are all three funds audited?
- 4) Finally, Sheila Torres suggested that COA procure a plot at the Victory Garden site. I would like to donate four or five bales of mulch hay for this activity if it comes to fruition. However, I would not recommend starting an asparagus bed. It takes three years to establish the root system for a light cutting.

3 MAIN STREET  
NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT 06470  
TEL. (203) 270-4330  
FAX (203) 270-4333

**COMMISSION ON AGING January 23, 2012**  
**DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES/MUNICIPAL**  
**AGENT FOR THE ELDERLY REPORT**

Fuel assistance applications are still being completed and will be till the end of March. We have completed two hundred ten applications. Number of applications completed for seniors are 82 and number of applications for disabled are 28.

Operation Fuel has allocated \$5000 for the winter season for the Newtown Social Service Office. The applicant has to be in an emergency situation and be under the income guidelines. Completed two applications for two separate households that are disabled and they received \$500.00 each.

We are still seeing clients that are newly retired or that want information regarding the advantage plans. Clients with the Medicare Savings Program can change to another plan and we had three do so because of a change in their medication.

We are still receiving donation for the food pantry. I have approximately 18 seniors using the pantry each month

This month I have had several requests for homecare due to physical or mental health. We have completed two applications for Ct Home Care Program for Elders (CCCI). One had to be with a private agency till they spend down their assets to meet the State guidelines.

The Police Dept. had a large food drive on Saturday; we received half a ton of food from Taunton Press, Tier One and the High School. I am still receiving donations for the food pantry and with the surplus I have in a storage room I am keeping food on the shelves. I now have eighteen seniors using the pantry each month. I had a total of 50 to 73 each week that used the pantry. People are allocated food stamps money each month and about the third week of each month they run out of food money and then they use the food pantry.

I completed eight Medicaid applications, and nine redeterminations for Medicare Savings applications. **MEDICARE SAVINGS PROGRAM** is now the name for QMB which pays for the supplemental insurance with the state but the doctor has to be a state provider. QMB and SLMB and ALMB pay for the Part B \$96.40 or 115.00 and the Part D for Prescriptions that is deducted from Social Security checks each month.



GRANTS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT  
January 23, 2012

**Sources consulted-**

- Marilyn Place
- WCAAA chair Latifa Sharif
- Judy Sklarz, former grant writer for the City of New Haven.

**Recommendations made-**

- Strategic plan is a must.
- Seek funding from all sources both private and public.
- Public funding is more focused on programming, demographic and physical needs.
- Infrastructure and equipment needs more likely to be met through private funding.

**Next Steps-**

- Strategic plan subcommittee
- Outreach to potential partners, e.g., WestConn, YMCA, United Way, Assisted Living Facilities



**NEWTOWN SENIOR CENTER  
Director of Senior Services  
Dec 19, 2011-Jan 23, 2012**

- **Work w/ AARP and set-up Driver Safety Programs for the year**
- **Work w/ Income tax assistance counselors on upcoming tax preparation session**
- **Oversee all programming**
- **Program Shop**
- **Supervise all programs**
- **Continue to access needs of clients**
- **Continue to plan excursions utilizing the senior van**
- **Confer w/ teachers on space issues**
- **Confer with teachers on ongoing schedules and changes**
- **Set-up with area Senior Center Directors on combining/sharing trips**
- **Confer with RSVP on ongoing community service projects and volunteer hours**
- **Continue to work with Ability Beyond Disabilities chorus program**
- **Supervise trips**
- **Continue to review contracts of potential trips for the year**
- **Continue to meet w/ and speak to tour companies on pending 2012 trips**
- **Continue to work with area hospital on ongoing community projects**
- **Continue community projects (Valentine's for Troops)**
- **Facilitate quilting/sewing classes**
- **Facilitate staff meetings when needed**
- **Confer w/ police on a clients family issues**
- **Work w/ and set-up appts for local nursing homes for client**
- **Meet w/ family members on clients situation**
- **Work w/ Griffin Hospital on upcoming Fall Prevention Program**
- **Confer w/ MasonicCare on continuation of scheduling in-house Lunch and Learn**

**COMPLETED TRIPS:**

- **Thanksgiving Celebration Nov 21**
- **Mohegan Sun overnight package Jan 18-19**

**UPCOMING TRIPS:**

- **UCONN @ Syracuse Jan 25-26**
- **Mohegan Sun Jan 25**
- **Chocolate Fest @ Hunt's Landing Feb 14**
- **A Great Day for the Irish March 13**

**SPECIAL EVENTS:**

- **Valentine Bingo Feb 8**
- **White Elephant Auction Feb 15**
- **Income Tax Assistance Feb 6 – April 9 appt only**
- **AARP Mature Driving Course March 16**
- **Fall Prevention Program TBA**

PROGRAMS	NUMBER OF ATTENDANTS	
	DEC	JAN
Zumba Gold	17	27
Exercise	280	292
Floor Yoga (2 days)	63	84
Chair Yoga (2 day)	38	40
Line Dance	14	10
Cards	65	62
Mah Jongg	28	26
Chorus	18	12
Bingo	30	26
Lunch	160	147
Knitting	14	17
Cards for Troops	14	16
Quilting	6	6
Board Games	28	28
Walk-Ins	22	31
Billiards	10	8
Trips	45	36
Newsletter	0	10
Wii	26	16
Painting/Art/Crafts	32	24
Scrabble	6	6
Tai Chi	16	16
Entertainment	148	
Bridges	21	20

**Attendance Daily:**

Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thurs	Friday
224	216	206	148	136

Dec has flown by and January certainly is doing the same.

During these months a lot of planning, evaluating, analysing, researching and networking is being done to continue and add programs for the 2012 Senior Center Calendar.

I meet with tour companies and plan a variety of day/night trips for the year.

I network w/ different agencies for speakers etc...(Danbury Hospital, Griffin Hospital, HART Bus, RSVP, MasonicCare and other local nursing homes etc.)

I confer w/ the mealsite N.O.W. to set-up specialty "Themed" luncheons.

Not only is this a busy time of organizing for my staff and myself...this time of year always contains a lot of losses for our members.....with that many clients need one on one from the people they trust on a daily basis. The ones that they see just about every day at the Center. ( example,we lost our organist Angie Fedak suddenly and it truly was felt by all) We visit the nursing homes ....go to funerals.....make special phone calls...help w/ doctor appts and assist if needed....

The exercise class still continues to grow...whereas the new addition is not big enough to hold all participants on a comfortable and safety level....we are getting new members daily and they want exercise ..yoga ...Tai Chi

I've noticed that Monday's has the biggest class of 32 for exercise...so now on Monday's exercise will be in the main room.

Usually this doesn't happen ("snowbirds") in the month of January but the participants are growing.

Although , the Center has been doing cards for troops on our own for the past 6 years...this year we're doing Valentine's For Troops w/ Donna Randle...it's great and all involved love it!

This year our inter-generational group "Bridges" that meets most Wednesdays @ 2:30 Will be doing a fashion show w/ the seniors...we have a new twist to "Fashion" and it is truly creative. This will be combined w/ our annual Mother's Day Tea.

The Senior Services Budget had no increase on any of the program lines...(same as last year)

Again, we have scheduled income tax preparation free to all seniors startng Feb 6 till mid April. See attached

Marilyn





Newtown Senior Center  
Director Marilyn Place  
14 Riverside Road  
Sandy Hook, CT 06482  
(203) 270-4310  
January-February 2012

## NEWTOWN SENIOR CENTER NEWSLETTER

### **AARP Income Tax Assistance for year 2011**

February 6th — April 9th Mondays only from 9-12

By Appointment Only - free of charge for low and middle-income taxpayers. If married, both spouses should be present. Please bring the following:

#### WHAT TO BRING TO A COUNSELING SESSION

**Note:** If taxpayer(s) expect to itemize deductions, we recommend scheduling appointments at least after Mid-February in the event that the IRS needs time to reflect recent tax legislation updates.

#### PERSONAL

- If married, both husband and wife should be present.
- Proof of identity (picture or other documentation).
- Social security number (Social Security Card or Benefit Statement-Form SSA-1099) for taxpayer and all dependents.
- Copy of last year's Federal and state tax returns.
- Personal check, if Direct Deposit refund, with bank checking account & routing no.

#### INCOME

- W-2 Wage & Tax Statement form from each employer and W-2G Certain Gambling Winnings forms.
- Unemployment compensation statements.
- SSA-1099 Social Security / RRB-1099 Railroad Retirement payments forms.
- All 1099 forms reporting interest (1099-INT), dividends (1099-DIV), proceeds from sales (1099-B) as well as purchase price (cost basis) of sold assets.
- 1099-R forms reporting pension & annuity income and IRA distributions.
- 1099-Misc form reporting any miscellaneous income.

#### DEDUCTIONS AND CREDITS

- A taxpayer may want to itemize deductions:
  - Form 1098 Home Mortgage Interest (may also provide Real Estate Taxes paid)
  - Contributions to charity documentation
  - Real estate and personal property (vehicle) taxes paid
  - State income tax refund documentation (if itemized in 2010)
  - Health/dental insurance including Medicare B and D payments (on SSA-1099).
  - Qualified out-of-pocket medical expenses.
- Capital loss carryover from prior years
- Calendar year local real estate and personal property taxes (regardless if itemizing).
- Child and dependent care provider expenses.
- Qualified education expenses.
- Residential energy credit expenses.

#### PAYMENTS MADE

Quarterly estimated federal and state taxes paid & prior year's refund applied



### *A Cozy Feeling From Slipper Day*

From left, Amanda Trampsoch, Elizabeth Wolf, Mackenzie Page, Amy Pruner, and Kati Moses show off their slippers on Wednesday, January 18, at "Slipper Day" at the Newtown Senior Center. The middle school students are part of an after school group that joins with senior citizens each Wednesday, year around, for a variety of fun activities. The students have recently held a Hat Day, made apple pies with the center members, and are currently planning a fashion show with outfits they make themselves.

—Bee Photo, Crevier