

**COMMISSION ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
February 6, 2008
STONINGTON HUMAN SERVICES BUILDING COMMUNITY ROOM**

Minutes

The regular meeting of the Commission on Aging was held on February 6, 2008 in the Human Services Building Community Room. Members present were Stacy Cassata, Faith Claspell, Betty Croteau, Robert Elmer, Karen Hawthorn, Toni Potter, Lisa Ryan, David Schmidt and Virginia Turek. Also in attendance was Carol Umphlett of the Human Services Department. Unable to attend: Maryann Bessette and Jennifer Young.

Late Arrivals:

First Selectman Ed Haberek 4:08 p.m.

Alicia O'Neill 4:25 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Robert Elmer at 4:01 p.m.

Minutes of the January 2, 2008 meeting were presented. Motion by Robert Elmer to accept the minutes and place on file. Seconded by Virginia Turek. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report was presented by Bob Elmer in Jennifer Young's absence. The following amounts are available for use: postage: \$4,304.00, reproduction and printing: \$806.35, and program expenses \$1,355.73. According to the Post Office, they are behind in posting the postage due items. The balance listed is dated 12/26. Motion by Faith Claspell to accept the report and place on file. Seconded by Stacy Cassata. Motion carried.

Carol Umphlett presented a report on attendance for January workshops and events: The Workshop for Grandparents Raising Children attended by 7; Gray Matters Folding attended by 9; UCONN vs. Cincinnati Basketball Game attended by 48; Senior Outreach Workshop for C-Diff concerns attended by 80. Upcoming events: February 13 Valentine Bingo at EKR with drop-in kids; March 5 Durable Power of Attorney vs. Conservatorship, March 12 Whites of Westport St. Patrick's Day Celebration; March 17 St. Patrick's Day Bingo with drop-in kids and April 18 American Girl Place in New York City.

Carol Umphlett reported that there has been a 43% increase in seniors served since January 2007. (153 in January 2007 is up to 219 in January 2008). Senior program participation has increased 62% (185 participated in January 2007 and is up to 301 participating in January 2008). Senior participation in the energy

assistance program has increased by 187% (24 seniors participated in 2007 compared to 69 participating seniors in 2008).

Of the 196 households served by social services (349 individuals), 32% (114) were seniors aged 55 years and older and 57% of those individuals were 70 and older.

Lisa Ryan reported on senior legislative issues. Sessions began on February 6. She also provided a flier from the Connecticut Coalition On Aging, Inc. which listed its priorities for action in 2008. The priorities were determined from the results of the Coalition's annual survey. The priorities listed are: 1) Promote state tax reform to lessen the burden of high property tax. 2) Improve existing senior housing to meet the needs of seniors; fund additional senior housing. 3) Promote comprehensive universal health care coverage for all ages. 4) Support home and community-based services.

Lisa stated that there will be a forum on Direct Care Workforce shortages. It will be held by Senior Resources at the VNA on April 29 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00.

David Schmidt questioned the possibility of having tax caps in Connecticut – a topic that has been discussed in the media lately. He noted many seniors are unable to stay in their homes because of the increase in taxes. Ed Haberek noted 33% of Connecticut tourism is located in the Stonington area. Ed is investigating options to raise revenue for the area (i.e. charging \$1 tax on area hotel rooms).

Carol Umphlett questioned whether the COA might become involved with town efforts to meet present needs for affordable senior housing with the goal of meeting anticipated increased future needs. First Selectman Ed Haberek agreed that affordable housing for seniors and the workforce is very important and offered that a meeting will be held in March to look at the possibility of increasing in-town senior housing (i.e. a possible 2nd Stonington Arms).

First Selectman Ed Haberek shared that the outcome of the last PNC building committee was to have representatives from Stonington Human Services and Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center (Beth Stewart and Vicki Anderson) come together to discuss ideas about the operations of the new PNC Senior Center. Ed also brought blue prints and sketches of the new center for the COA to see.

Ed Haberek asked for ideas on how the town can use grant monies for senior transportation and asked if the COA would like to form a sub-committee for this purpose. Stacy Cassata and Lisa Ryan volunteered to form a COA committee for senior transportation.

OLD BUSINESS

Grant Proposal to be submitted to the Mystic Women's Club - Toni Potter did research on cost of the Wii interactive gaming system, games and controllers (\$260 for basic system plus additional costs of additional games and controllers). Toni and Robert Elmer will co-write the grant proposal which is due on March 1.

Motion to adjourn by Virginia Turek. Seconded by Betty Croteau.

Meeting adjourned at 5:08

NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, March 5, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Hawthorn, Secretary