

**COMMISSION ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
March 4, 2009
STONINGTON HUMAN SERVICES BUILDING COMMUNITY ROOM**

The regular meeting of the Commission on Aging was held on March 4, 2009 in the Human Services Building Community Room. Members present were: Stacy Cassata, Betty Croteau, Robert Elmer, Karen Hawthorn, Lisa Ryan, Billie Ward and Jennifer Young. Also attending: Beth Stewart, Director Stonington Human Services and Carol Umphlett Agent For The Elderly, Stonington Human Services. Unable to attend were: Maryann Bessette, Kathleen Crockford, David Schmidt and Virginia Turek.

Late Arrivals: Toni Potter: 4:08

The meeting was called to order by Robert Elmer at 4:02 p.m.

Minutes of the February 4, 2009 meeting were presented. Motion by Robert Elmer to accept the minutes and place on file. Seconded by Stacy Cassata. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report was presented by Jennifer Young. The following amounts are available for use: Postage: \$4,320.00; Reproduction & Printing: \$620.18; Program Expenses: \$1,528.61 for a budget total of \$6,468.79. There is \$297.80 in the Postage Due Account and \$661.06 in the Post Office Account.

Carol Umphlett, Agent For the Elderly, presented a Social Services activity report. In February 2009 a total of 1,072 residents contacts were made. 479 contacts were made for Energy Assistance. 139 of these contacts were seniors; Medical/Medicare: 94 contacts, 56 of these contacts were seniors; Transportation/Information Requests: 37 requests for information, 23 were seniors; Senior Advocacy: 41 senior contacts. The Renter's Rebate program begins in May and calls are already coming in.

Carol Umphlett presented an activity report on behalf of Alicia O'Neill, Human Services Program Coordinator. The Scam Prevention workshop at EKR has been rescheduled to March 5, 2009 at 9:30 a.m. Upcoming events: March 26 – Understanding Alzheimer's workshop by Robert Elmer; April 7 – Grandparents Raising Grandchildren workshop by Lori Liguori; April 7 – Triad/Washington Scam Prevention workshop; April 9 – AARP Safe Driving course at Stonington Human Services; AARP Safe Driving course at Stonington Human Services.

Carol presented correspondence from the Westerly-Pawcatuck Veteran's Board of Control offering the COA an opportunity to participate in the May 25 Memorial Day Parade. Carol also presented a survey from the Connecticut Association of National Honor Societies. The survey asked for input from senior center directors on activities that they would welcome and encourage to help bring together seniors with middle and high school students.

Lisa Ryan, legislative liaison for the Stonington COA, distributed the following bill proposals dealing with elder issues which are "budget neutral bills" (bills that won't cost the state money in the current economic climate): Committee Bill No. 244 "An Act Concerning The Elderly Property Tax Freeze Program"; Committee Bill No. 245 "An Act Concerning a Property Tax Credit For Home Improvements That Enable The Elderly or Disabled To Remain In Their Homes", Substitue Bill No. 451 "An Act Establishing A Silver Alert System"; Committee Bill No. 663 "An Act Concerning Senior Operators of Motor Vehicles".

Jennifer Young stated that the COMO has changed the venue to Shaw's for its Friday grocery shopping trip.

Toni Potter offered that the Groton Wal-Mart and Super Stop and Shop will assign a personal shopper with a day's notice and that Stop and Shop has "Peapod Shopping and Delivery" which is an online service where you can place your grocery order and for a nominal fee, it is delivered to your home.

Jennifer also distributed the route/time schedule brochure for the new SEAT Bus (Southeast Area Transit District).

Commission members inquired about the status of the construction and opening date for the new senior center. Neither PNC Liasion, June Strunk, nor First Selectman, Ed Haberek were present to give update. Pursuant to inquiries the Commission Chair, Robert Elmer, will call First Selectman Ed Haberek, for update to determine construction status, projected opening date and plans for management of the new senior center.

Karen Hawthorn shared that Westerly Adult Day Services and The Elms will co-sponsor an Alzheimer's Education/Training course for professionals working with dementia population. The two part course will be conducted by Rita St. Pierre of the Rhode Island Alzheimer's Association at Westerly Adult Day Services on 65 Wells Street, Westerly. Part I is on Wednesday, March 18 from 3:30 to 6:30 and Part II is on Wednesday, April 1 from 3:30 to 6:30. Karen will attend the training and Stacy Cassata will act as Secretary Pro Tem in Karen's absence at the April 1, Commission on Aging meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Jennifer Young stated that she followed up with a call to Service on the Sound but did not get a response. The service is offered through St. Andrew Presbyterian Church and St. Luke Lutheran Church who are partnering with Group Workcamp Foundation, Inc. The workcamp brings 400 youths and adults to Southeastern Connecticut to volunteer their time, energy and resources to work on approximately 80 homes free of charge. Free material and labor are provided for minor home repairs, painting, deck replacement and wheelchair ramp installation. Applications can be made at www.serviceonthesound.org. For more information or to volunteer call Service on the Sound at 860-446-1058.

NEW BUSINESS

Beth Stewart, Director of Stonington Human Services, presented a report on the cost of producing and distributing Gray Matters each year. Beth shared that obtaining sponsorship renewal for producing the newsletter is becoming more difficult and the cost of mailing and distribution alone exceeds \$3,000 a year. Beth proposed discontinuing the production of Gray Matters and, instead, using the Stonington Human Services Magazine which is a 16 page, color magazine that is produced twice a year and which costs \$500 to produce. The Commission on Aging agreed that from a fiscal point of view it is more economical to produce the Human Services Magazine and that news regarding senior programming could perhaps go into a senior center newsletter. Motion to phase out production of Gray Matters as soon as possible was made by Billie Ward, seconded by Lisa Ryan. Motion carried.

Motion to adjourn made by Billie Ward. Seconded by Jennifer Young. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, April 1, 2009 at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Hawthorn
Secretary