

**COMMISSION ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
May 6, 2009**

STONINGTON HUMAN SERVICES BUILDING COMMUNITY ROOM

The regular meeting of the Commission on Aging was held on May 6, 2009 in the Human Services Building Community Room. Members present were: Maryann Bessette, Betty Croteau, Karen Hawthorn, Lisa Ryan, David Schmidt, Virginia Turek, and Jennifer Young. Also attending: Carol Umphlett Agent For The Elderly, Stonington Human Services. Unable to attend were: Stacy Cassata, Kathleen Crockford, Robert Elmer, Toni Potter, and Billie Ward.

Guests: June Strunk, Vice President of PNC Board; Stonington High School Students from Citizens in Action: Michelle Harrison and Emily Colby

Late Arrivals: Ed Haberek: 4:07

The meeting was called to order by Karen Hawthorn at 4:02 p.m.

Minutes of the April 1, 2009 meeting were presented. Motion to accept minutes and place on file with correction to wording of number of PNC rides made by Lisa Ryan. Seconded by Maryann Bessette. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report was presented by Jennifer Young. The following amounts are available for use: Postage: \$3,960.00; Reproduction & Printing: \$620.18; Program Expenses: \$479.46 for a budget total of \$5,059.64. There is \$188.18 in the Postage Due Account and \$338.79 in the Post Office Account. Motion to accept report and place on file made by Lisa Ryan. Seconded by Betty Croteau. Motion carried.

Carol Umphlett, Agent For the Elderly, Stonington Human Services reported that the tracking system for statistics is under contract. She is hopeful that it will be up and running soon. She provided the following information: The Renter's Rebate Program begins on May 15. It is a state program which can provide financial assistance once a year to help supplement seniors' rental expenses. The program is available to seniors 65 and older and to those 18 years of age and older who receive Social Security Disability. Energy Assistance will run to the end of May. Carol has seen many seniors applying for assistance this year, but due to asset test, many were not eligible. Over 350 applications were taken for all programs so far. Carol continues to do CHOICES and budget counseling.

Carol also made a report on behalf of Alicia O'Neill, Human Services Program Coordinator. In March, 10 seniors participated in the Gray Matters folding and 6 participated in the Understanding Alzheimer's Workshop. In April, 15 attended the Triad/Washington Trust Workshop on Avoiding Scams at Stone Ridge; 8 attended the Yellow Dot program at Stone Ridge and 18 participated in the AARP Safe Driver's Course. Upcoming Events: May 5: AARP Safe Driver's Course at EKR; May 6: AARP Safe Driver's Course at EKR; May 6: Intergenerational event with EKR residents and Kids Care Club.

Lisa Ryan, legislative liaison for the Stonington COA, distributed handouts on the following: 1) Silver Alert System: The Senate has approved a bill to set up an alert system to notify the public when a cognitively impaired adult goes missing or wanders away. It is called a "Silver Alert" and is modeled after the Amber Alerts which are issued to prompt widespread publicity about missing children. The bill is being sent to the House for a vote. 2) Bill Summary Public Law 111-15 The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act: Senior Nutrition Programs will receive a total of \$100 million; this includes \$65 million for congregate meals, \$32 million for home-delivered meals, and \$3 million for Native American nutrition services. 3) CHOICES Program may be facing a \$160,000 cut to our Area Agency on Aging

Ed Haberek reported that May has been proclaimed as Older American's Month in Stonington. He will send out copies of the proclamation to all Commission on Aging members. He also stated that he attended a planning meeting on May 6 for the dedication and opening of the Robert A. Granato Senior Center on May 27, 2009 at 10:30 a.m. Press releases and invitations were reviewed. Carol Umphlett volunteered that the Commission on Aging would contribute toward the centerpieces. The Pawcatuck Middle School Jazz Ensemble will provide the music. There will be another planning meeting on May 20.

Ed shared that Stonington had its first identified presumptive case of the H1N1 virus, also called swine flu. The case was identified as a child in Pawcatuck who attends the West Vine Street School. There has been another probable case reported in Granby bringing the total of probable or confirmed cases in Connecticut to 14. There is a Flu Information Link on the Town of Stonington Website. Ed stated that the town is prepared.

Ed reported that he attended a meeting last week regarding the filling of the space occupied by the old Stop and Shop in Pawcatuck. Requests have been made to fill the spot with a Trader Joe's.

Ed shared that the Board of Directors of EHDOD is at Stonington Arms this week. There is a need for affordable senior housing in the area and they are looking at property for the possibility of building a second Stonington Arms.

June Strunk gave a report on behalf of the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center. In March 2009 PNC provided 51 seniors with a total of 485 rides. 278 rides were for medical appointments or adult day services. The rest were for shopping, lunch, barber/hair appointments. The PNC has 91 approved senior riders: 79 from Stonington, 8 from North Stonington, 4 from Westerly. June also reported that PNC has seen an increase in heating assistance requests (approximately doubled for 2008-2009).

OLD BUSINESS

Virginia Turek reported that all banking and legal issues related to dissolving the Golden Agers have been successfully settled.

Carol Umphlett reported that Senior Surveys are still coming in (approximately 75% have been returned). The results so far have been mostly positive with seniors happy with programs in place.

NEW BUSINESS

The new Robert A. Granato Senior Center planning committee met on May 6. The Commission on Aging will donate money for centerpieces.

Jennifer Young pointed out that the Farmer's Market is open year round and that the Department of Agriculture provides coupons for use at the Farmer's Market in the summer. There is a means test for eligibility for the coupons.

Lisa Ryan reported that Senior Resources has established a task force to examine the personal care work force shortage which is both a national and state problem. The task force will try to identify ways to address the shortage. There will be a public launch of "When No One Cares", a white paper on the crisis facing the direct care workforce, on Thursday, May 21 from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m., Room 1B, Legislative Office Building, Hartford, Connecticut. Lisa will be happy to help with rides.

Motion to adjourn made by Virginia Turek. Seconded by Maryann Bessette. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, June 3, 2009 at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**Jennifer Young, Treasurer and
Secretary Pro Tem**