

**COMMISSION ON AGING**  
**Minutes**  
**February 4, 2013**

**Present:** Commission members Helen de Keijzer, Peggy Anderson, Bruce Lorentzen, Don Gumaer, Laura Smits, Nina Daniel. Senior Center Director: Wendy Petty, Social Services Director: Charlene Chiang-Hillman; Senior Center Director Wendy Petty and Program Coordinator Pam Wilson; Dial-A-Ride Driver: Gordon Green; SWCAA Liaison: Meta Schroeter. Guest: Jim Schaper.

Helen convened the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

**January Minutes:** Minutes were approved by consensus.

**Transportation:** Gordon distributed his trip report and mentioned that the van is working much better after a recent re-alignment. We need to have the seat replaced. This is part of regular maintenance for the vehicle and it not considered a capital budget expense. There were a lot of trips in January. Bruce will investigate our van/capital needs in light of Town Hall request to allocate capital items two years out.

**Social Services Report:** Charlene reported that the Meals on Wheels program has made the transition to the new vendor. Jim asked if the program had lost people due to the increase in cost. Charlene explained that she has not lost anyone so far and that the town offered to subsidize the cost differential between the two programs for seniors who needed it. The cost is \$7.75 per day and includes two meals: a hot meal and a cold/bagged meal. Helen asked how many people the program serves. Charlene has 12 clients. Aitorio's donated a refrigerator (located in town hall) for the meals, so Social Services does not have to rely on the schools for refrigeration. So far the feedback on the program has been positive. She is having trouble with the state fuel assistance program, NEON, since the program is woefully understaffed. Charlene has been monitoring certain clients to keep them warm with Social Services budget funds if necessary. Some of the problem comes from those who are eligible waiting until January to apply. Many federal and state programs require people to sign up in the fall. Economy is still a factor for many clients. Charlene has also used Warm-Up Fund money as well as Social Services money to help. Helen asked if the Warm-Up Fund is able to help seniors with upgrading their heating equipment to make it more efficient, and/or with other conservation read a passage from the 2010 Senior Directory stating that this is part of

the Warm-Up Fund's mission. Discussion ensued. Jim asked Charlene how the Food Pantry was faring. Charlene replied that Betsy does a fine job but lately has needed to supplement the food pantry with supplies from Fairfield's Food Bank.

**Senior Center Director Report:** Wendy reported that she is still waiting for the town/schools to supply electric power to the new kitchen area. There is also an outside door that needs to be weatherized. There was a general discussion about the most effective way to get maintenance projects done within the Center. Wendy will be meeting with the Weston Garden Club to get a gardening plan for the outside garden. Wendy and Pam continue to plan for the car show in September. They are trying to set a date that will not conflict with the schools calendar or compete with the town of Newtown, who will also be holding a car show during the same time period. Pam reported that all programs are well-attended. The new Bridge Group is especially popular and has 12 members. Other items of interest include a "Brain Day" sponsored by The Greens; Daybreak Nursery will be sponsoring a floral arrangement class. Upcoming program topics include Senior Fraud, Estate Planning, Pickle Ball, Hips, and Knees, Dietician/Diabetes Management. A Hairdresser will visit the Center, Lunch outings will continue, Backgammon, Tai Chi are also well-attended. Helen encouraged the group to bring any new ideas to the Commission. There was also a discussion of the budget process. Laura will send an email to Commission members alerting them to important budget dates.

**SWCAA Report:** Meta reported that the last meeting of the agency was on January 9<sup>th</sup> in the Stamford Senior Center, which is being renovated. Bridgeport, Norwalk and Stamford senior centers have held Legislative Breakfasts. Meta reported that due to smaller budgets, the questions asked of town grant applicants have become more specific. Dr. Gary Gluck gave the group information concerning a bill he will present to the legislature in March concerning the right of terminally ill seniors and the disabled to end their lives if they choose after all possible avenues of treatment have been exhausted. Two states already have these laws and they are very effective and humane. Meta reported that most of the town reports concerned the lack of funds available for fuel assistance to seniors.

**Friends of the Senior Center:** Nina presented details for the Lifestyle Fair. The event will be held on Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> from 10:30-2:30 in the Norfield Parish Hall. There will be representatives from nearby residential programs as well as demonstrations about home

safety and the Practical Assistance Living Solutions (PALS) program. Nina requested that if members have ideas for other speakers, to please forward contact information to her.

**Other Business:** Helen asked how we can get more feedback from seniors about our programs. Discussion ensued about the best ways to go about this.

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Smits