

COMMISSION ON AGING MINUTES

September 8, 2015

Present: Commission members Helen de Keijzer, Don Gumaer, Laura Smits, Peg Anderson, and Bruce Lorentzen; Senior Center Director Wendy Petty; Weston Social Services Director Charlene Chiang Hillman; Weston/Westport Health District Representative Monica Wheeler; SWCAA liaison Meta Schroeter; Dial-A-Ride driver Gordon Greene and Weston resident Dale Robinson.

Meeting convened at 9:25.

SWCAA Report: The last meeting was on June 7th in Bridgeport. The agency noted that there will be no COLA for Social Security this year and therefore, there will be no increase in Medicare premiums to those who are currently in the program. CHOICES will be holding mandatory training in October with the major insurance carriers. Medicare open enrollment will be from October 15th until December 7th. Pat Knebel reviewed the grant packages and allocations process to receive those grants. Meta stated that there was not much to report since most senior centers have smaller programs in the summer.

Dial-A-Ride: Gordon distributed reports for the summer months and went over them.

Social Services: Charlene reported that she has had a busy summer with a few seniors in need resulting in some conservancies, since many cannot live alone, stressing town emergency services. Unfortunately, a few seniors have missed the deadline for receiving tax abatement, resulting in high bills that they cannot afford. Discussion ensued about what, if anything can be done once they have missed the deadline. The Food Pantry is being turned over to another group, it has been difficult finding someone to head this up; pantry procedures will be reviewed. Meals on Wheels is in a state of transition as some participants have left town but the program has experienced a recent increase in the number of users and Charlene is hoping that the provider will therefore not require a premium for transporting meals to town. Bruce said that he is looking into how Redding handles their 'meals' program. Charlene is now working on making sure people have signed up for the fuel assistance programs.

Senior Center Director: Wendy stated that she has been working on the upcoming car show (9/20). The vendor will be bringing the bus we are aiming to purchase. There will be a fund-raising letter sent to everyone in town to solicit funds for the purchase. Helen presented the new logo to be used for any signs and as part of a redesigned newsletter masthead—discussion ensued. An updated Community Help Sheet will be inserted in the next newsletter. Wendy has two bids to create a website for the center, the cost is approximately \$2,000 to set up with the idea that Wendy or Pam would be able to update it themselves. All agreed that it should be done. There was a discussion about the possibility of putting air conditioning in the rest of the center's south-facing rooms at a future date (it was installed in the movie room in July). Helen will discuss landscaping in the front of the center with the town's beautification committee. We will continue to mail the newsletter to Weston household residents.

Westport/Weston Health District: Monica stated that flu shot season begins on October 1st and that all of the vaccines distributed will be preservative-free. She said that the higher dose vaccine is the one recommended for seniors 65+ and that this year's batch is better than last year's. Monica recommended that people wait until October to get their vaccine for it to be fully effective throughout the season. The district will hold a clinic on October 8th from 9:30-11:30 in the Weston Library and another one at the Senior Lunch at Norfield on October 14th and possibly an evening clinic on October 19th. Monica described a 'fall risk' assessment that has been offered in Westport and Helen suggested that such a clinic be arranged at the center. Discussion ensued.

Annual Report: Helen asked if everyone had a chance to review the report. All agreed and approved what she had written.

Terms: The Commission terms for Don, Peg and Laura are expiring at the end of December. Peg and Don want to continue for another term. Laura will not renew at the end of December and will send a letter to the appropriate people.

Helen talked about what other towns are doing to help their own seniors "age in place". She organized a meeting with a founder of Stay at Home Wilton and will organize one with Staying Put in New Canaan. Helen will explore a variety of key issues that would need to be addressed to make providing some of the most popular benefits of such a 'Village' program through the center in Weston possible. This led to a discussion about the difficulty of finding volunteers in general, especially in the area of transportation—a major issue for seniors in Weston since there isn't any public transportation available. Gordon suggested that we may want to include a third flexible back-up driver and Bruce suggested that there may be a way to work with the schools transportation people who are already appropriately licensed. Helen suggested that this, as well as the need for funding a replacement Dial-a-Ride van, can be brought up in budget discussions this year.

Helen mentioned that there has been high turn-out for the Art Gottlieb lectures and that we may want to think about doing a joint lecture series with the library at a future date, perhaps using the old "Weston Open Learning" program as a model, especially since the library can be opened in the evening.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Smits