

COMMISSION ON AGING
MINUTES
12/7/09

Commission members present: Ernie Albin, Peggy Anderson, Helen R. de Keijzer, Terry Hulley, and Lois Miller. Also present were Weston Social Services Director Charlene Chiang-Hillman, Senior Center Director Jennifer Ruddy, Program Coordinator Nancy McCormick, SWCAA (Southwestern CT Agency on Aging) liaison Meta Schroeter, and First Selectman Gayle Weinstein. Dial-a-Ride driver Gordon Green attended briefly.

Chairman Lois Miller called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. Ernie Albin made a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting as written, Terry Hulley seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Gayle Weinstein informed the group that the Reverend Wilson and Phyllis Gary of Norfield Church, had notified her that the church would begin to charge a facilities fee to the Senior Activities Center. The fee would cover custodial costs for set-up and cleaning services for the senior luncheons and yoga classes.

The Senior Center budget is unable to handle the unexpected extra expense. Considerable discussion about both logistical and funding issues ensued. The group's consensus was that, if possible, staying at the present venue for both senior luncheons and yoga classes is preferable to moving these activities elsewhere. To make sure there's no misunderstanding, it was decided to seek clarification of Norfield's needs and intentions.

In addition, Jen and Nancy are exploring alternative sites. It was noted that availability of parking and general suitability of access to alternative venues would have to be carefully considered. After the discussion, Gayle left the meeting.

Dial-a-Ride driver Gordon Green arrived to distribute his monthly activity reports to the Commission. The information on some entries needed clarification and Gordon will review his data inputs and bring a new report to the January meeting.

Charlene Chiang-Hillman began her report with news about Thanksgiving baskets that were prepared with the generous help of many community group volunteers. The baskets had fresh foods not typically available from other sources such as the Food Pantry. From last year to this, the number of families in need has gone from 35 to 95.

Charlene also reported that SWCAA, the Southwestern Connecticut Agency on Aging, has just given notice of changes in ConnPace and Respite Care/Home Care grant programs. The lack of State funds is making it more difficult to get assistance for people in a variety of situations while the need for such support is increasing.

Charlene expressed on-going concern about the insufficiency of time to do case-work/follow-up. She is seeking to add an additional part-time case-worker to the

Department. A brief discussion followed and will continue as she prepares her up-coming budget.

Finally, Charlene reported on the Holiday Giving program. Gift cards are available to meet community needs thanks to the generous support of local groups such as the Emmanuel Church Congregation, the Georgetown Fireman's Association, and the Westport/Weston Foundation. Gift cards are distributed for stores ranging from Stop & Shop and Caraluzzi's to Walmart and Kohls.

Lois announced that Town Tax Collector Charity Nichols has requested that all tax deferral programs have the same May 15th deadline. The request is expected to be approved by the selectmen after a public hearing scheduled for January 7th.

Jen Ruddy and Nancy McCormick began the Senior Activities Center report by distributing their budget. Nancy commented that she's found a printer willing to publish future newsletters at a low rate. She will speak with the Selectmen about seeking a business or other sponsorship for the Newsletter. Conversation about fundraising options ensued. One possibility was to have one or more community groups 'adopt' the Center as the beneficiary of a large single fundraising event or a grant. And, as in the past, the idea of seeking a 501C3 status for a Friends of the Senior Center or the Center itself was briefly discussed.

Meta distributed her report on the November 4th SWCAA meeting which was attended by approximately 25 people from around the region. The discussion focused on numerous issues and, as usual, town's shared information about their changing issues and needs.

There was a brief up-date and discussion about the recent meeting of the Cemetery Committee; and Ernie agreed to serve as a Commission observer/liaison.

Helen de Keijzer reported on the Weston Senior Services and Resource Directory and received approval on a few issues. She hopes to bring a nearly completed template to the January meeting.

Peggy Anderson will lead a discussion of ideas for the Domestic Violence Task Force/WHS student skit/presentation for Weston seniors (possibly to be held in May) at our next meeting.

Lois announced that Louellen Bartolomae has resigned from the Commission for personal reasons. She also announced her own decision not to continue on the Commission (her term ends this month). Everyone thanked Lois for her excellent leadership. Lois nominated Helen to serve as Chairman and it was seconded by Peggy. Helen accepted the nomination with the proviso that she'd serve only as Acting Chairman. She was elected unanimously.

Ernie made a motion to adjourn, it was seconded by Peggy, and approved at 12:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Helen R. de Keijzer