

**COMMISSION ON THE AGING
4 Brush Hill Road
New Fairfield, CT 06812**

MINUTES

Meeting

September 27, 2011

A regular meeting of the Commission on the Aging was held on Tuesday September 27, 2011 at the New Fairfield Senior Center. Maureen Salerno called the meeting to order at 7:33pm. Secretary, Laurie Busse, took the minutes.

Present: Maureen Salerno, Chair, Cindy LaCour, Vice Chair, Janet Loya, Kathy Hull, Jeannette Sweeney, Bob Alberetti, Katy Johannssen, and Roberta Ilardo (at 7:45pm)

Absent: Stephanie Shaughnessy

Guest: Leonard Russell, Town Representative to the HART Board

Elevation of Alternates:

Jeannette Sweeney was elevated to full voting status.

MINUTES:

Janet Loya made a motion to adopt the Minutes to the August 23, 2011 Minutes as presented, 2nd by Cindy LaCour vote 8-0.

CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

OLD BUSINESS

1. Transportation:

Leonard Russell discussed the HART Bus is a quasi government entity. It operates like a private corporation but is regulated by the government. The Board of Directors is appointed by the Towns and they are all volunteers. Their budget is comprised of grants from the federal, state, and local governments and the fare box. The largest portion of their budget comes from State grants. This year they received a large decrease in grants. The State grant was reduced from \$94,000 to \$85,000; revenues from the fare box for a 10 month period were just over \$3,800. All towns negotiate their budgets separately. The Commission discussed how New Fairfield decides their budget. Discussion followed on the percentage towns pay for fixed routes and how that percentage is decided. The fares recently increased from 60 cents to \$1.00 and although this increase is large percentage wise, the public has taken it in stride and HART has received minimal complaints, noting the cost of \$1 per ride is still very reasonable. The HART Bus serves Danbury and the surrounding towns, New Fairfield, Ridgefield, Brookfield, Newtown, and New Milford. New Fairfield and Ridgefield have commuter busses connecting to

local Metro North stations. New Fairfield has a bus running Monday thru Saturday, noting there used to be two busses and due to budget cuts one of the busses was eliminated. There is an opportunity for public participation at every Board meeting. The Commission discussed receiving monthly ridership reports for their regular meetings, and by doing so hope to become a better advocate for the HART bus at budget time. Further discussion focused on the length of time patrons need to wait for a ride. Discussion followed as to why this is, noting the Commission's position is they are glad they have the bus and it is certainly worth the inconvenience of having to wait. The Commission thanked Mr. Russell for his time.

2. Housing:

Next month Reverend Dick Sears of the Washington Housing Trust will come to speak at our meeting and outline the process of purchasing blighted homes and turning them into affordable senior housing. The Commission discussed inviting the area clergy to join us. Last month they spoke about Washington purchasing blighted homes and fixing them up for affordable senior housing. It is not the town that is fixing them up, but rather the churches. A Citizen News article dated September 7, 2011 regarding Sherman is in the process of constructing elderly housing was handed out and discussed. Further discussion focused on the Lutheran Church has dropped the project of developing senior housing and the Dubes are not very involved with any projects at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Senior Center Report

Kathy Hull reported. Senior Center month went great. The numbers are off in the Senior Center report because due to Hurricane Irene the scanners were down for several days. Patrons were asked to sign in manually, but not everyone did. During the days following Hurricane Irene many people came to use the showers at the Senior Center and the Army Corp of Engineers attempted to reach the elderly and give them non perishable foods.

2. Yellow Dot Program

Katy Johannssen reported People's Bank has a program where participants put a yellow sticker on the rear windshield of their car. This will alert EMT's to go into your glove box and get medical and emergency contact information. This way they will know right away what types of medication a participant is taking or if they have a history of heart disease or diabetes and who to contact on the participants behalf.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Our next meeting is October 25. Please let Maureen Salerno know ASAP if you cannot attend.

ADJOURN:

Cindy LaCour made a motion to adjourn at 8:40pm 2nd by Katy Johannssen vote 8-0