

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

MINUTES

Meeting

February 25, 2014

A meeting of the Commission on the Aging was held on Tuesday February 25, 2014 at the New Fairfield Senior Center. Maureen Salerno called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. Secretary, Laurie Busse, took the minutes.

Present: Kathy Hull, Katy Johannssen, Janet Loya, Stephanie Shaughnessy, and Julia MacMillan

Absent: Maureen Salerno, Chair, Cindy LaCour, Vice Chairman, Roberta Ilardo, and Jeannette Sweeney

MINUTES:

Julia MacMillan made a motion to accept the Minutes to the January 28, 2014 meeting as presented, 2nd by Janet Loya, Vote 5-0.

CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

NEW BUSINESS

Katy Johannssen made a motion to bring the Ridgefield VNA presentation to the top of the Agenda because the guest speaker has a long ride home, 2nd by Julia MacMillan Vote 5-0

1. Ridgefield VNA Presentation:

Eloise Barron, Director of Community Health and Wellness for the Ridgefield VNA explained there is a health care crisis because patients are getting older and sicker, while simultaneously hospitals and rehabilitation facilities are under pressure to push the patients out sooner and sicker. Like other home health care agencies the pressure is on Ridgefield VNA to dismiss patients sooner and sicker. There are many aging in place communities popping up throughout the country, noting they are mostly in affluent areas such as Beacon Hill in MA, and "Spry in Rye, in NY". Eloise Barron discussed a survey had been done and 86% of those surveyed said they would like to remain in their homes, noting their concerns were money, healthcare issues, transportation, and maintaining their homes. The Ridgefield VNA's mission is to offer free essential services to as many people as they can rather than offer all services to those who can afford it. To do this they would need support from the surrounding towns. For example in New Fairfield we can add medical professionals to the COA's provider directory thus making it a comprehensive resource directory. A 24/7 call center is also in the proposal. Certified aging in place specialists would reach out to the community. A sample newsletter was passed around and discussed. The newsletter had lots

of topics such as “Happy at Home”, “Medicare Minute”, “Care Givers Corner”, “Life Line Story, Words to Live By”, and an insert on hot topics and programs that will be taking place. The COA asked about where the funds would come from and if the call center would be able to address different levels in income. The funds will come from the Ridgefield VNA, and be dependent upon volunteers. A grant writer could look to see if there are any grants available. The COA talked about the Sweet Hart bus being under-utilized and their concerns about providing transportation when there already is modestly priced transportation available. Eloise Barron stated she understands that the Sweet Hart bus is under-utilized. She said that the feedback she has received regarding the Sweet Hart bus is the shocks are bad and the bus ride is bumpy. If a rider was incontinent, this could lead to a potentially embarrassing situation. The fumes are bad and are bothersome to those with respiratory issues. Some of the riders have walkers and are slow to get into their seats. They have the fear of falling while using their walker, and there is also senior bullying where quicker, more agile passengers are intimidating or making those who are slower to sit down feel bad. The time issues were also discussed regarding the ½ hour window waiting to be picked up. Sometimes going to the mall for 3 hours is too much for some seniors. Eloise Barron ended her presentation by saying she would like to come back for another evening program.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Spring Community Forum "The Other Talk"

Dr. Nancy Humphreys has agreed to be the guest speaker at the spring community forum. She is not sure if she can attend the April 26 date. The Commission discussed other possible dates of May 3, May 10, or May 31. Possible titles were discussed including “Dollars and Sense”, “The Other Talk”, “Do it for Each Other”, and “The Other Talk, Getting it Done”. If possible the forum will be held down stairs in the Senior Center and we will ask Ray Juskiewicz to video it as well.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Senior Center Report:

Kathy Hull discussed the Senior Center Report. Some of the popular classes were Foot Reflexology and Round Table Discussion with Murphy & Murphy. Green Funeral Home offered a Funeral Planning class. The Senior Center was closed for 5 days last month, 2 full days and 2 half days were due to snow. So far they have been closed 6 days in February for snow. The New Fairfield Housing Trust had a presentation, however due to inclement weather it was not well attended.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

ADJOURN:

Stephanie Shaughnessy made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35pm, 2nd by Julia MacMillan, vote unanimous.