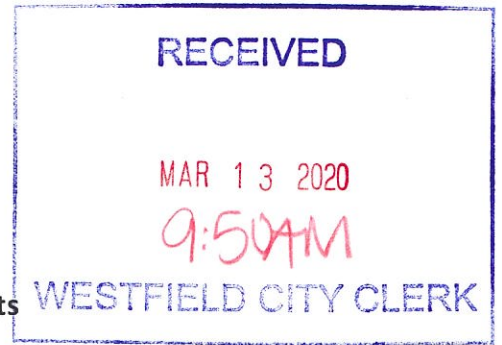


City of Westfield  
Council On Aging  
Monthly Meeting, March 9, 2020  
City Hall, Room 201  
Court Street, Westfield, Massachusetts



- I. The Meeting was called to order by the Chair, James V. Liptak at 1:01 p.m.

Board Members present were: Elizabeth Boucher, KerryAnn Kielbasa, James V. Liptak, Alan Sudentas, and Barbara Taylor. Eileen Rockwal and William Brown were absent. Tina Gorman, our Executive Director and Ralph Figy, our City Council Liaison, were present.

II. **Approval of Minutes of the February 10, 2020 Meeting:**

Upon Motion duly made by KerryAnn Kielbasa and seconded by Alan Sudentas, it was unanimously VOTED: To approve the Minutes of the February 10, 2020 Meeting.

III. **Public Participation:**

Ed Ekmalian was present but said that he had no questions or comments. Tom Sharp and his sister, Joanne, arrived late and asked to speak. See Section VII.

IV. **Items for Discussion/Information:**

A. **Highland Valley Elder Services (HVES):**

Mr. Liptak provided the following report of the HVES monthly Board meeting:

- Julie Pierce, Protective Services Supervisor, attended the meeting and provided an overview of the nursing home ombudsman program. Ms. Pierce shared two handouts at the HVES Meeting: 1) Nursing home residents' rights and 2) Elder housing continuum. She also advised that she is leaving her position to take another job. Ms. Pierce reported that HVES is receiving approximately 70 Protective Services (PS) intakes per month.
- The ASAPs (Aging Service Access Point) have formed an Administrative Services Unit (ASU) in order to exchange and share information. The cost per ASAP is \$8,000. Ms. Gorman questioned the purpose of the group and whether it is to share information or share services. More details will be provided in the future. The Director of HVES is very involved in the formation of the group.
- HVES is still working on improving home-delivered meals alternatives. A new nutritionist has been hired. This type of position has a large turn-over rate. As of March 20, 2020, HVES will start to provide cold meals for the warmer weather.
- HVES is going to offer twenty '5-College Seminars' for a total fee of \$300. So far, they have not had a lot of takers.

B. **Tax Work-Off Guidelines, Ordinance Edit Draft:**

Ms. Gorman revisited the two draft copies of the Tax Work-Off Ordinance with different possible changes as follows:

1. City of Westfield Code of Ordinance Sec. 11-94: Requirements for Senior Citizen Property Tax Work-Off Program: Change maximum tax abatement from \$500 per individual to \$800 per individual per fiscal year and change the number of participants from 40 to 25 per fiscal year. Should there be additional monies budgeted, the program may increase the participants accordingly at the \$800 rate.
2. City of Westfield Code of Ordinance Sec. 11-94: Requirements for Senior Citizen Property Tax Work-Off Program as follows: Change maximum tax abatement from \$500 per individual to a graduated maximum abatement for the fiscal years 2021 to \$800, 2022 to \$850, 2023 to \$900, 2024 to \$950, and 2025 (and beyond) to \$1,000. Change number of participants to "limited to no more than the annual appropriation divided by the maximum abatement for the appropriate fiscal year as detailed in 11-94 (e)(2).

Mrs. Gorman advised the Board that since last month's Board discussion, she has had conversations with COA City Council Liaison Ralph Figy as well as some City Councilors about their concerns that the budget for this program will likely not be increased to allow for more participants. The COA Board members reiterated their concerns with the second plan which was suggested by City Councilor Dave Flaherty. If the total program allotment remains the same at the current \$20,000, by 2025 the total number of participants would drop to 20. If the money for the program is increased, the members of the Board think that additional monies would be better spent for increased staffing, potentially helping a greater number of the City's older residents. Therefore, the Board unanimously recommended that Option #1 be submitted to the City Council for approval.

Mrs. Gorman also told the Board that some possible tax work-off participants are asking COA staff to help them with tax abatement applications. These are under the purview of the Assessor's Office and she is referring them to that office for guidance on their eligibility and the appropriate applications to complete. COA staff can physically assist with completion of the forms for those who need assistance.

### **C. Inclusion Planning Update**

Mrs. Gorman advised the Board that the Open House/Breakfast for the LGBTQ community held on Saturday, February 29, 2020 was a great success with 60 people in attendance. Mr. Liptak also attended the event. Interaction was free-flowing and Mr. Liptak said that there were some students from Westfield Technical Academy there. Some of the staff members gave tours of the building as some who attended had never been to the Senior Center before. Attendees were given information about COA services and programming. Mrs. Gorman said that there will be a Steering Committee meeting later this week to review the completed event surveys and plan a strategy for future programming. More information will be forthcoming.

#### **D. Strategic Plan, Review of Draft:**

KerryAnn provided samples of Core Values and Vision Statements from three different Senior Centers in order to have a starting point for our own strategic plan. After a lengthy discussion, the Board decided on the following:

**Vision:** Helping older adults to engage, enrich, and empower their lives.

#### **Values:**

Caring: Empathetic, supportive,

Inclusiveness: Diversity, cultural values and beliefs, fairness, promoting equality and upholding dignity

Independence: Autonomy and freedom of choice to participate

Innovation: Imagination, creativity, and valued aging

Accountability: Confidentiality, integrity, wellness, and safety.

Ms. Kielbasa also reminded Board members to review the goals listed in the Strategic Plan, and under each goal, designate who is responsible for the goal (Board, Director, staff, Friends group, a subcommittee). Board members should e-mail their lists to Ms. Kielbasa prior to April 13.

**V. Items For Action:** None

**VI.** Executive Director, Tina Gorman, then presented the **Director's Report**, copy attached.

#### **Review of Programs**

- 'Sweet Relief' Diabetes Support Group
  - o Third Wednesday of the month from 1 to 2:30 p.m. (February 19)
  - o Facilitator: Jennifer Giffune, Registered Dietician and Licensed Nutritionist
  - o Very successful with 30 in attendance and extremely positive feedback
  
- Vet-to-Vet Café
  - o Fourth Tuesday of the month from 2 to 3 p.m.
  - o Very successful with 40 in attendance
    - Kick-off was in November and this was the first official café
    - Rep. Velis attended and will sponsor the March 24 café with donuts from Mrs. Murphy's
  
- Wacky, Tacky Pajama Party
  - o Positive feedback about the entertainment (Richie Mitnick and Brad Shepard) and meal (roast turkey dinner)
  - o More than half got in the spirit with pajamas, robes, and slippers
  
- Primary Election: Tuesday, March 3
  - o Officer Mark Carboneau assigned to Senior Center
    - helped with breaking down tables and stacking chairs when polls closed

- Retire the Fire! Week
  - o March 2 through March 6 – front page articles in The Westfield News
  - o Lunch & Learn:
    - Guest Speaker: Deputy Fire Chief/Fire Prevention Officer Ben Warren
    - Topic: Preventing Electrical Fires
  - o Presentation at Hampden Village

## Upcoming Programs

- *Lunch & Learn: 'A View From the Bench'*
  - o Thursday, March 12 - Judge Mark D. Mason
  - o From Trial Court Communications: "March is National Judicial Outreach Month in Massachusetts, the Trial Court's annual community outreach effort when our judges engage with communities across the Commonwealth about the importance of an impartial and independent judiciary governed by the Rule of Law. This is a major effort by judges to build community understanding and trust in the judicial system and the court's commitment to equal access to justice."
- *History Talk: Holyoke's Mountain Park*
  - o A partnership with the Westfield Athenaeum
  - o March 17 from 2 to 3 p.m.
  - o Presenter: Jay Ducharme
    - Author of two books about the park
- *Beach Party Indoor Picnic*
  - o Thursday, March 26; Entertainment: Spunk N Sass
  - o Picnic Menu: barbequed pulled pork, potato salad, baked beans, coleslaw, cornbread, root beer float
  - o Sold 58 tickets the first day (58/112)
- *Fly Tying Class*
  - o Four Fridays in March from 10 to 11:30 a.m.
  - o Class limited in number to six
- Special Election for State Senate
  - o Tuesday, March 31
  - o Great Room will be used for Ward 2 polling; No lunch or coffee
- *Friends of the Westfield Senior Center, Spring Fundraiser*
  - o Jimmy Mazz "Songs Across America" Show
  - o Sunday, April 5 at 2 p.m.
  - o Lottery Tickets Spring Bouquet, 50/50 Drawing, 350 Celebration books on sale
  - o Ice Cream sundae to go

Before ending the meeting, Mr. Tom Sharp, asked if he could speak. Chair Jim Liptak consented. Mr. Sharp asked the Board about their plans to keep seniors safe at the Senior Center during the COVID-19 crisis. Mrs. Gorman advised him that she is in constant communication with Joe Rouse from the Westfield Health Department. She will abide by whatever recommendations are given to her from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs or the Mayor. She also said that, as is the policy with inclement weather, if the schools close, the Senior Center will close.

Mrs. Taylor also asked Mrs. Gorman about people participating in events during this "scare". Mrs. Gorman advised that all precautions normally taken during flu season are being implemented during the COVID-19 outbreak.

**VIII.** The Chair reminded the Board that our next meeting will be held on Monday, April 13, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. at City Hall.

**IX.** There being no further business to come before the Board, upon Motion Duly made by Barbara Taylor and seconded by Alan Sudentas, it was unanimously

**VOTED** to adjourn at 2:15 p.m.

**List of Exhibits:**

1. Sample page of CORE values and vision statement
2. Director's Report

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Elizabeth Boucher, Secretary

