

Commission On Aging

Meeting Minutes for March 5, 2024

Commission Members present: Gary James Kelly – Chair, Maria Potvin, Anita Morrison, Lorraine Kraft, Kathy LaBranche, and Jim Sundin

Absent: Eugenia Perry – Secretary

Guests attending: Laurence Burnsed-Ex Officio Member of Commission, Evelyn Gilbert, Yvonne Bacchus, Evelyn Boyce, John Prescull, Lorraine Trinks, Shirley Finney, Lisa Archie, Patricia Archie, Susan Gouin

Meeting Called to Order: at 2:03 pm

Approval of Minutes/Secretary's Report: The secretary was absent so Gary read the minutes from our February meeting. Anita took the meeting notes for this meeting. Jim made a motion to approve February's meeting minutes and Kathy seconded the motion.

Treasurer's Report: Gary reported that once again there were no financial transactions during this period therefore the balances remain the same.

Old Business: 1) Gary reviewed the discussion from last month about the federal reduction in heating subsidies to low income individuals and how it affects seniors. Gary was asked by the Commission on Aging from several area towns to support the effort to appeal to our state officials to address this shortcoming from our state surplus. Gary asked Laurence to elaborate since he is directly involved as the Director of the Health Department and they have various ways to address these shortcomings. Anita asked if Lillian was connected to the Social Services department regarding elderly financial services and programs and Laurence said yes. It was also noted that several agencies contribute to this effort. 2) Gary stated that he finished the draft report on the results of the town survey, completed the comment Appendixes, created an Executive Summary that makes several recommendations to address the concerns and issues, and provided a

final draft copy to the Health Department, Mayor's Chief of Staff, and the Mayor for review before finalizing the reports. 3) Gary announced that both he and Gena went to the Town Clerks office to be sworn in for their appointment terms being extended until December, 2026. He stated that they now supply a booklet showing the various Boards and Commissions and the requirements. 4) Gary created a new sign in form for guests and distributed it since the amount of guests is growing quickly. 5) Gary asked if any Commissioners had any information to add to the Senior Discount list since his plea last month for additions. This will be an important resource once the survey results are published. There were no additions. 6) Gary showed and distributed the updated Commission Events Flyer that was distributed last month for Commissioner's comments, and the updated copies. 7) Gary spoke about the upcoming Senior Picnic in September, explained the costs involved, and said we would discuss the price of the tickets in the upcoming months. A guest asked if we could buy tickets and give them to those who wish to attend but cannot afford the ticket price which has been \$10 for at least the past 6 years. Gary said that he and others do buy tickets for this purpose, and Lillian provides them to seniors since she helps them with financial programs. Kathy asked if we could sell tickets at locations other than the Senior Center and Gary said we should discuss and look at all events where we can use several facilities to reach seniors town wide.

New Business: 1) Gary stated that since we are producing so many copies of information for the survey results as well as other commission activities, we need to purchase replacement printer ink for approx. \$140 plus tax, 3 reams of printer/copier paper for approx. \$26 plus tax, meeting gavel for approx. \$26 plus tax, and report covers for the submission of the final survey results to the Mayor's office and Town Council members for review for approx. \$27 plus tax. Anita made a motion to approve and Lori seconded the motion. 2) Lori stated that her reappointment term extension is being discussed at tonight's Town Council meeting. 3) Kathy noted that the 2 events we have for Breakfast with the Mayor is filled within a few hours, and the same people sign up immediately for both. She asked if we could look at other ways in order to have more seniors attend or do it more fairly and sell tickets at other locations. Gary said that when he joined about 6 years ago, there were only 8-10 seniors that were allowed to sign up for budget reasons. He requested the number be increased each year while still adhering to the budget and the numbers slowly increased to allow 20, then 25, then 30 and has been 50 to 55 for the past few years. He also requested that we hold the event twice a year instead of once and we started that last year; this allowed more seniors to attend. He stated we will work with the Senior Center and our

own ideas looking for improvement as we do with all our activities and events. We will discuss again at the next meeting. He also stated that we have looked at other town facilities to hold events since we recognize there is a concentration of seniors at the center on a daily basis, and they average about 300 to 500 on a regular weekly basis, but we are trying to reach seniors town wide. He said he addressed this issue in the recommendations portion of the executive summary for the town wide survey results, which is why we had over 17 various locations involved in the survey distribution plan. Our breakfast events invite 50-55 seniors as well as Commission members, invited volunteers, and the Mayor's staff for a total of about 70 people at each event. He said the former prevailing thought was that many seniors relied on buses and transport vehicles to get to the senior center for events, and having the location changed might cause them not to attend. However, the survey showed that over 89% of seniors have access to a car so having events at other town locations does not seem to be an issue after all. Also, for those who rely on transportation to the center we could investigate a shuttle bus from the center to the various locations to resolve that issue.

Opportunity of guests to speak: Several guests spoke freely when recognized from the Chair during discussions, and seemed to be pleased with the responses. One asked Health Director Laurence Burnsed if seniors who receive funds for heating services, but do not use all of the funds allotted, are required to return the extra money. Laurence said they are not but the funding process is well scrutinized and over funding is not an issue.

Motion to Adjourn: Gary asked if there were any further comments or suggestions and attendees said no. Kathy made a motion to adjourn at 2:52 pm and Jim seconded the motion.