

**Town of Somers**

**Meeting of Advisory Committee for Seniors**

**February 13 2018**

**Present:** Dori Bynack, Phyllis Gwilliam, Ailene Henry, Deanna Schuetz, Joan Sizer, Tim Welch. Eileen Fedorowich a late arrival. Pat reported on community outreach by email.

**Absent:** Pat Bachetti, Elaine Bemont,

**Audience:** none

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm by chairman Deanna Schuetz.

Amendments to January 09, 2018 meeting minutes: Deanna researched whether there are other CT towns that have an independent MOW program (rather than a non-subsidized program).

Tim moved and Phyllis seconded the motion that the minutes be accepted as amended. Motion carried.

Amendments to February 06, 2018 special meeting as follows: Deanna reported a concern that a frequent visitor to the Senior Center has been verbally abusive to several people, including staff, at the Senior Center several times over a long period of time. This conduct has continued and has recently escalated. Deanna has spoken to her and has spoken to the president of the Senior Club of which she is a member, without improvement. After a significant incident on 12-1-17, Deanna generated a letter to the person, which was seen by the Board of Selectmen and the Operations Director, saying that the behavior cannot be tolerated and asking that the person meet with Deanna. The letter to the person was ignored and the person has refused to fill out registration forms at the Senior Center so there is no emergency contact.

In January 2017 Deanna reached out to the Selectmen and town attorney. The attorney advised Deanna to meet with the Senior Club president if the offending person is part of the Senior Club, not to meet with the person directly until a policy is drafted. In January 2017, the town attorney said he would draft an official policy but this has not happened. In June 2017, the current First Selectman and one of the other Selectmen met with the Advisory Committee and recommended that the committee write a policies and procedures manual with a code of conduct component.

Dory moved and Phyllis seconded the motion that the minutes of the Feb. 06 2018 meeting be approved as amended.

**Committee Updates:**

**a. Chairman's Report**

**I. Medicare Savings Program Update:** In a special session on Jan. 8, the state legislature reinstated the original income guidelines for the Medicare Savings Program with an extension until the end of the fiscal year, July 1, 2018. On Jan. 16, Gov. Malloy vetoed this. On Jan. 31 the general Assembly overturned the veto. At this time the MSP remains at the current income guidelines until July 1, 2018.

Deanna reported that in the Woodcrest newsletter there was no encouragement for residents to get more information about MSP or seek counselling from a CHOICES counsellor. Residents concerned with MSP changes were encouraged to go to a program offered by a representative from Anthem Health Insurance. Programs like Anthem and MSP are unrelated.

**II. Budget:** Deanna presented a budget for the upcoming fiscal year to the BOS and Board of Finance which was basically unchanged from the last fiscal year. However, the budget was cut

by \$16,000, a 6.7% decrease. There will be no change in staffing but programs and events will be affected. This will involve cuts to the budget for the newsletter. The present cost of a monthly newsletter with the existing company which does printing and postage is \$7000 to \$8000 per year. Deanna feels that it is not in our best interest to continue to mail the newsletter. It is difficult to keep an up-to-date mailing list. Deanna has researched other options and will meet with a representative from LPi (Liturgical Printing) which does newsletters for many other Senior centers and churches. They will do the printing for free and will deliver the newsletter to the Senior center. Their income comes from advertising so our newsletter would contain advertising. The newsletter could be picked up at the Senior Center or other locations in town. If this happens it would be effective with the July issue. If we think a particular ad is not appropriate for our publication the company will honor this.

There will also be cuts to the transportation budget. At present we have 3 buses – a 2016 bus grant funded at 80%, a 2013 bus which the town owns outright and a 2006 bus which Deanna feels is not safe for transporting seniors. A useful life for a service bus is considered 5 years or 100,000 miles. The 2006 bus is over both of these criteria. Both the 2013 bus and the 2017 bus have been inspected and are safe. At present two drivers and two buses are needed daily for routine trips to doctor appts, adult day care etc. This leaves no bus available for day trips which the seniors enjoy or no back-up bus in case of breakdown.

In the summer of 2017, the town was approved for a grant of \$48,000, 80% of the cost of a new service bus. The town would need to fund \$10,000 to \$12,000 for the cost of the bus. In Nov. 2017 an agreement package was signed off on by the BOS. Now the Town of Somers CFO says a third bus is not possible. Deanna has sent the 2006 bus for inspection. Cost to put the bus in safe running condition will cost over \$5000.

Having a third new bus would allow us to maintain our present program and allow growth of our transportation programs. Committee members felt that giving up an approved grant for a new bus is not cost effective.

- b. Meals on Wheels:** Deanna emailed a copy of the application for MOW clients to committee members so we can consider amending it as necessary. Discussion of this was tabled until our March meeting.

After consulting with Deanna, Ailene purchased, packaged, labelled and delivered a snow day meal to all MOW clients explaining the purpose. Cost per meal was about \$3.00. DG Graphics made 3" x 5" refrigerator magnets designed by Deanna for MOW clients with the Human Services phone number asking clients to call that number if they have problems. DG graphics did not charge for the magnets.

- c. Senior Support:** Pat reported by email that she has reached out to MOW clients with Valentine cards and will continue with a monthly greeting.

- d. Senior Citizens' Club:** Membership is 175. 24 members have not registered with the Senior Center (MySeniorCenter). Dory will continue to encourage sign-up. The Senior Club received the letter asking that the Somers Senior Citizens' Club add to their bylaws the following. "All officers and members of the Somers Senior Citizens' Club must follow all policies and procedures of the Somers Senior Center." This was discussed at their executive board meeting and will be brought to the members at the next membership meeting.

- e. Publicity:** Nothing to report.

- f. **Woodcrest:** Eileen asked for an amendment of the 01 09 18 minutes relating to Woodcrest. She would like it to read “The issue of the increase of the propane maintenance bill has not been resolved. **The management company, REDI, continues to say that they will be seeking legal advice regarding this problem, but nothing has been forthcoming on this issue. Harvey Edelstein, President of REDI, had previously advised residents not to pay this maintenance bill in its total.** The Woodcrest management reported to the Housing Authority and resident attendees that the CO and fire alarms only had a shelf life of five years and that they were attempting to find a company that will replace them.”

Since the 01/09/18 minutes had already been approved we reopened this agenda item. Tim moved and Phyllis seconded that the minutes be amended as above. Motion carried. The management of Woodcrest deems that there is nothing that can be done about the increase of the propane maintenance fee. At the last meeting of the Housing Authority there was nothing brought up about the CO and fire alarms.

**Old Business:** none

**New Business:** Coffee Talk: We discussed having a “coffee talk” in April with a suggested topic of changes at the Senior Center as a result of the budget changes. We will discuss this at our March meeting.

Next meeting: March 13, 2018

Moved by Tim and seconded by Eileen our meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted  
Ailene Henry secretary

Minutes not official until approved at subsequent meeting.

