

Newtown Commission on Aging

Minutes of Monday June 19, 2023

These minutes are subject to approval by the COA members at the next Commission on Aging Meeting

The Newtown Commission on Aging, held a meeting on Monday June 19th, 2023 in the Newtown Senior Center. The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM by Commission Chairperson Anne Rothstein.

Members present: Ann Rothstein, Barbara Bloom, Claire Theune, Patricia Bailey, Judit DiStefano, LeReine Frampton, Michael Stern. Lia Levitte attended via Zoom.

Members absent: Tricia Gogliettino, Bill Darrin, Nicole Camporeale, Ziao Han

Also Present: Natalie Jackson, Director of Human Services; 1 member of the press

Public Comment:


Pat Ellul, 84 Great Plain Road, Danbury CT spoke to the group as a former Newtown resident and current Danbury resident of 7 years. She comes to the Newtown Senior Center and takes 4 classes per week. With the increase to \$4 per week that will cost her an extra \$80 per month. Create a petition and would like more people to sign. Asked that all members be treated the same and to not be discriminated against and to all be nicer to each other.

AnnMarie Macey, Swamp Rd, Newtown is a 22 year member of the Senior Center and family has been residents of Newtown for over 100 years. Newtown residents pay taxes to support the Senior Center in addition to the membership fee. Believes that Non-residents should have to pay their part in supporting more instructors and classes since Newtown's budget increased.

Margaret Posterano, 14 Watkins Hill Dr, Sandy Hook spoke of eligibility vs entitlement. Two ways of thinking = we are all not entitled to many programs and services and there are valid reasons for eligibility for some and not others. Margaret thanked the Senior Center, the Commission, and the staff for working so hard.

Ann Boland, 10 Clapboard Ridge Rd, Danbury CT – Danbury is a much bigger city however does not charge membership – all classes are \$2 each, for everyone attending. Had questions regarding how they came up with the \$4 increase and where does the money go?

Beverly Bennett, 17 Scenic View Dr, Newtown responded in reference to Danbury – it costs someone \$100 per year to take 50 classes throughout one year

Pat Ellul read a letter from Claudia Landewher, instructor for the Newtown Senior Center (see attached) (Attachment 

Minutes: L. Frampton moved to approve the minutes of the 5/22/23 meeting. B. Bloom seconded. All in Favor

Chair Report: A. Rothstein thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and encouraged public attendees to stay to hear the Members Comments regarding the increase in out-of-town residents' exercise classes at the Newtown Senior Center. As Chair she suggested looking into grant money to offset costs for those in need.

Director of Human Services: (Attachment A) N. Jackson reviewed her report. Newtown will be receiving a \$60, 674 Grant through the State of CT Aging and Disability Services. Funds will be utilized to expand the outdoor ares to be used for programming, dining, and general socialization.

Treasurer's Report: (Attachment B) L. Frampton reported no changes to last month's report

Old Business:

- a.) (*Attachment C*) C. Theune reported on the Regional Meeting of the area Commissions on Aging and Senior Centers Meeting held on June 17, 2023 at the Newtown Senior Center. Items discussed at the meeting included, Funding, Activities, getting around and the future. The next proposed meeting is Saturday September 30, 2023 at 10 am in Newtown.
- b.) Further discussion regarding the Public comments on the increase in exercise class fees for out of town residents. L. Frampton gave some history behind the increase in the membership fee to \$20/\$25. N. Jackson reiterated the value that out of town residents bring to the Center, however with membership increasing Newtown residents are having trouble getting in to classes. This was not taken lightly and a very high level review of surrounding areas took place before making this decision. P. Bailey encouraged all to look at other free programs offered through Silver Sneaker, NYA. M. Stern compared Danbury kayaking where no out of town residents can obtain access – each town has their own eligibility requirements for all activities. A. Rothstein will communicate with anyone who has questions and gave her email address to all who wanted to discuss further.
- c.) B. Bloom discussed the Newtown Arts Festival booth options. The Committee Vendor Chair, Jennifer Cebry will work with FONS and COA.

New Business: No new business

Member Comments: NONE

Adjournment: Having no further Business, Motion to adjourn brought by Mike Stern and seconded by Patricia Bailey. All in favor – motion approved unanimously at 5:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Cebry, Clerk



A

Department of Human Services

Supporting a high quality of life for the Newtown community through services, programs and information that promote mental, physical and social well-being.

Commission on Aging Report: June 19, 2023

Hello COA members,

Earlier this spring Governor Ned Lamont and Aging and Disability Services Commissioner Amy Porter announced that the Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability Services has been awarded \$10 million in funding from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) that will be used to support upgrades and enhancements at senior centers statewide in Connecticut.

The state is designating \$9 million of this funding to be distributed to municipalities. The municipalities can use the funding to support upgrades at their local senior centers through facility improvements and programming.

The remaining funds will be used by the Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability Services to support its statewide senior center activities. This includes items such as improving online services for senior centers, supporting senior center events, and developing media campaigns that promote engagement at senior centers.

All allocations contain two parts: the base allocation and a formulaic allocation. All municipalities receive a base allocation of \$5,000. The remainder allocation is calculated using Census data on Town demographics, including share of population aged 60 and older, race/ethnicity status, disability status, poverty status and whether the town is in a rural location. Newtown's calculated allotment is \$60,674. The proposed use of funds must connect to combatting the effects of the pandemic on our senior population. We will be using our funds to expand our outdoor area to be used for programming, dining and general space for socialization. We will be creating an outdoor patio space in the front of the building which will include both covered and uncovered areas. I am currently in the bid process and working on the completion of the grant application. I look forward to continuing to share updates as the grant process continues.

Last week I was connected to Michelle Puzzo, Executive Director of UR Community Cares. UR COMMUNITY CARES helps fill in the gaps of traditional at-home care services by mobilizing residents to care about and connect with each other. Their goal is to link people who can help to those who need help. Using their secure website, interested Volunteers and Community Members each create an online profile. When a Community Member submits a request for a Community Deed, local registered Volunteers are notified by email/text then sign into their account to view and accept or decline it. To help ensure safety and security, all Volunteers and Community Members are enrolled via the website and must pass a background. Tasks can range from respite care to relocation packing and moving, smartphone or other device assistance, and much more. UR Community Cares believes they can help solve a current unrecognized crisis. In the U.S. there are 10,000 persons retiring daily, so in the next 5-10 years this population will be challenged to physically care for themselves and "age in place" with limited ability to perform activities of daily life. Michelle is willing to join our next meeting to share more about the organization. I'd like to propose we add her to the agenda next month to learn more about how this might be an opportunity for Newtown.

At the start of the month we had a brief hiatus of the lunch program for a week due to funding issues with the grant that subsidizes our congregate lunch program. Thankfully funding was reallocated through WCAAA and the lunch program has resumed. The partnership with Nick's Catering has been great. They were able to roll with the last minute pause and then restart. Member feedback is that people are loving the delicious meals!

Respectfully submitted,

Natalie

Natalie Jackson, LCSW
Director, Newtown Human Services

People that were active between 05/19/2023 and 06/16/2023

Age Range as of 06/16/2023	Count	Percent
Ages 60-64	23	8.1%
Ages 65-69	44	15.4%
Ages 70-74	81	28.4%
Ages 75-79	65	22.8%
Ages 80-84	42	14.7%
Ages Below 55	2	0.7%
Ages Over 85	28	9.8%
Totals	285	100%
City/Town	Count	Percent
In Town	214	75.1%
Out of Town	71	24.9%
Totals	285	100%

Event Occurrences from 05/19/2023 to 06/16/2023

Category	Event	# of Event Hours Sch Unduplicated		
F - Class/Workshop				
	Art Class (Tuesday 10:00 AM)	4	8	16
	Knitting	5	5	21
	Sewing Crew	4	6	6
	Spanish Class (Thursday 10:30 AM)	4	4	14
	Technology with Zack	1	1.5	0
	Total	18	24.5	52
F - Health/Fitness				
	Broadway Burn (Friday 10:30 AM)	5	5	35
	Chair Pilates (Thursday 9:00 AM)	4	4	30
	Chair Yoga A (Monday 2:30 PM)	3	3	20
	Chair Yoga B (Thursday 1:00PM)	4	4	49
	Deep Stretch (Wednesday 9:00 AM)	4	4	25
	Flex Fit & Tone (Tuesday 10:00)	4	4	41
	Floor Yoga	8	8	37
	Kevins Line Dance Exercise (Thursday10:30 AM)	4	4	29
	Line/Country Dancing (Wednesday 10:30)	3	3	30
	Move and Groove	4	4	26
	Tai Chi (Monday 10:00AM)	3	3	27
	The History of Fairfield Hills W/Ann Marie Macey &	1	1	0
	Zumba (Monday 1:00 PM)	3	3	27
	Total	50	50	154
F - Nutrition				
	Daily Lunch	6	6	36
	Total	6	6	36
F - Rec./Entertain				
	Billiards	20	100	10
	Corn Hole	2	2	7
	Total	22	102	14
F - Social Activity/Event				
	Cards	8	48	5
	Lunch and Learn	2	2	50
	Matts Ballroom	4	4	11
	Ping Pong	2	2	1
	Poker	4	12	7
	Special Event	4	6	61
	Special Event (Thursday) 10 Tips for Stress and	1	1	22
	Special Event (Friday) Spring Fling at 4:00 - 7:00	1	3	29
	Total	26	78	120
F - Socializing				
	Socializing & Just Visiting	21	178.85	39
	Total	21	178.85	39
F - Special Events				
	(Monday) 11:00 AM Essential Oils on the Limbic	1	1	21
	(Wednesday) 2:00 PM Wellness Wednesday	1	1	20
	Speaker	3	3	19
	Speaker AM	1	3	0

Total	6	8	36
F - Special Groups			
	1	1	16
Silver Tones	2	3	8
Womens Discussion Group Chicken Soup for the	1	1	9
Total	4	5	29
F - Trips			
Tours	2	5.42	23
Total	2	5.42	23
P - Health Screenings			
Blood Pressure Screening (Thursday 9:30 AM)	1	2.42	0
Total	1	2.42	0
P - Health/Fitness			
Walking With Wendy	1	0.75	3
Wellness Wednesday	1	1	10
Total	2	1.75	11
Grand Totals	158	461.94	285

Event Statistics from 05/19/2023 to 06/16/2023

Category	Duplicate	Unduplicated	Hours
F - Class/Workshop	148	52	196
F - Health/Fitness	947	154	947
F - Nutrition	77	36	77
F - Rec./Entertain	79	14	359
F - Social Activity/Event	262	120	448
F - Socializing	139	39	1183.82
F - Special Events	70	36	70
F - Special Groups	37	29	43
F - Trips	29	23	79.92
P - Health/Fitness	13	11	12.25
Total Event Signins	1801	285	3415.99

COA/SENIOR SERVICES GIFT FUND

DATE	RECEIPTS/DISBURSEMENTS	C/D	C/R	FRANK KNOTTS TRUST FUND	BALANCE
7/1/22	Beginning Balance				42,131.47
7/21/22	Lions Bleeker- Pizza for Presentation Program by Zack & Larry	(170.74)			41,960.73
7/25/22	July P-Card- Holy Cow- Ice Cream for Trivia with Zack & Larry	(56.35)			41,904.38
7/25/22	July P-Card- Amazon- Replacement bingo cards	(44.97)			41,859.41
7/25/22	July P-Card- Amazon- Bingo set & display Board	(92.05)			41,767.36
8/2/2022	Qtrly Distribution Knotts Trust 200-12			767.00	42,534.36
10/7/2022	Ck #51758- Newtown Comm. Center- Senior Pottery Class	(225.00)			42,309.36
10/28/2022	Qtrly Distribution Knotts Trust 200-77			767.00	43,076.36
10/31/2022	Deficiency payment for Knotts Trust 12/31/21 200-85			650.10	43,726.46
12/23/2022	Donation- Bazaar 220-15				44,955.46
12/31/2022	Nov P-Card- Lion's Bleeker- Pizza Lunch-Senior Center	(45.52)	1,229.00		44,909.94
1/12/2023	Ck #52986- Bee Publishing-craft fair ads	(121.60)			44,788.34
1/18/2023	Donation- In memory of Larry Passaro- 220-15A				45,788.34
1/30/2023	Qtrly Distribution Knotts Trust 200-160		1,000.00	590.00	46,378.34
1/31/2023	Dec P-Card- Restaurant Depot- Food for Holiday party	(250.00)			46,128.34
1/31/2023	Dec P-Card- Lions Bleeker-Lunches for craft boutique volunteers	(51.61)			46,076.73
1/31/2023	Donation- In memory of Larry Passaro- 220-22		100.00		46,176.73
3/23/2023	Feb P-Card- Uline- Art Tables and chair dolly **	(863.82)			45,312.91
3/31/2023	Donation- Bazaar 220-40		526.00		45,838.91
4/21/2023	March P-Card- Barnwood- Lunches for craft volunteers	(174.93)			45,663.98
4/30/2023	Qtrly Distribution Knotts Trust 200-238			590.00	46,253.98

** over amount approved.

B

C

REGIONAL MEETING OF COMMISSIONS ON AGING and Senior Centers

JUNE 17, 2023, 10 a.m.

Hosted by the Newtown Commission on Aging

Held at The Newtown Senior Center

8 Simpson Street, Newtown, CT 06470

Participants:

Patricia Smithwick and Mary O'Leary of Bethel;

Patricia Weiner of Danbury;

Roberta Ilardo of New Fairfield;

Anne Rothstein, Barbara Bloom, LeReine Frampton, Claire Theune, Bill Darrin, Michael Stern, Xiao Han, Pat Bailey; and Natalie Jackson; of Newtown.

The attendees from the four towns introduced themselves and described their membership ---ranging from about 1,200 to almost 1,900 members---with generally more women than men in every center. Some younger seniors who are not members may still be working or working part time. Many people are not on social media. Handouts of each participating town's Healthy Aging demographics profile were provided.

Funding:

There is a wide variety of funding mechanisms, namely, primarily funded by each town, and also from non-profits, grants from the state of Connecticut, legacy-type gift funds, membership fees, and

fees charged for enrolling in certain individual programs, such as \$6 per class for Tai Chi, but no charge, say, for larger free exercise classes geared to seniors. Beginning July 1, one of the senior centers plans to begin charging non-residents a small fee per class.

Most of the social services offices are located nearby the senior centers in most of the towns, there is ease of access.

The senior centers also seem to be well-staffed.

Activities:

Most senior centers offer a broad range of activities.

One COA offers activities on Saturday as well.

Another mentioned they offer an investment club and cooking classes. Another is focused on intergenerational musical events between Western Connecticut students and seniors. Another mentioned considering a Wii bowling challenge via Zoom.

Cruises are offered by an independent company and may include destinations as far-flung as Alaska, Greece, and the Caribbean.

Getting Around:

Transportation for seniors was mentioned. Two of the towns still offer FISH services, while others do not. One senior center says it provides a van with a suggested donation of \$2 to drive residents to appointments. The Hart bus is being asked to do more, yet costs are increasing, as there is lots of demand. All of this stems from aging-in-place trends. A new van ordered through the help of grants is on order at one senior center yet is delayed because of a chip shortage.

Someone commented, Maybe there are still funds left over from COVID money to help in these areas?

Transportation safety was mentioned regarding seniors who may have to rely on private car services to make it to medical appointments and their high cost.

The Future:

Safety and security in regard to scams targeting seniors and elder abuse were discussed. "Never say, 'Yes,' on the phone." Interested police departments may combine with senior centers to produce a live senior webinar perhaps via Zoom regionally, maybe on a Saturday or a Sunday, or even with a multi-generational audience, so grandparents and caregivers can watch it together.

Another inter-town idea was Trivia via Zoom, with the theme of current events full of good news.

Discussion moved also to best practices, strategic planning, what are our goals? A Planning for the Future grid was provided in the hand-outs, using a SWAT chart (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) to help organize ideas.

The next proposed regional meeting---which may be a hybrid meeting in person and on Zoom-- is Saturday, September 30th, 10 a.m. – 1 pm at Newtown.

D

as an instructor (not a member) I can only give my opinion based on members comments to me. The people in my classes always say how much they benefit by coming to Newtown Senior Center classes. Classes have always been included in the annual membership fee. Instantly going from \$0 - \$4 per class will be a hardship to some and they will have to look for more affordable options. Exercise is important for seniors health and well-being, both mind & body. Perhaps a more gentle approach could be \$1 per class? I feel we might lose many out-of-town memberships, losing money for the center instead of gaining. We need to find a happy medium. Let's keep our seniors active!

Claudia Landwehr