

NEWTOWN COMMISSION ON AGING

Special Meeting

Monday, July 20, 2020

Called to order at 3:02pm

NEWTOWN MUNICIPAL CENTER

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT 06470

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE COMMISSION ON AGING

Present: Anna Wiedemann, the following members were present via teleconference: Barbara Bloom, Joanne Albanesi, Ruby Ryles, Larry Passaro, Anne Rothstein, Cris Carvalho Fados, Clare Thuene, Curt Symes

Absent: LeReine Frampton, Bob Edwards, John Boccuzzi

Also Present: Director of Human Services Natalie Jackson, First Selectman Dan Rosenthal, One member of the public

Public Comment – None

Minutes – J. Albanesi moved to approve the minutes of the June 15, 2020 meeting. B. Bloom seconded, motion unanimously approved.

REPORTS

Director of Human Services update– N. Jackson reviewed her report (attachment A). They have 189 new resident memberships and 11 non-residents. It was July 19th last year that they opened the doors to the new Senior Center. When the time is right there will be a wonderful belated celebration. The patio furniture did come in but they are still waiting for some pieces for the umbrellas to arrive.

First Selectman update – D. Rosenthal reported that Covid is still front and center of what we are doing. The case growth in Newtown is small but there are positive cases coming from people that have traveled to other areas. He stressed the importance of taking the travel restrictions seriously.

They have held public meetings to discuss housing at FFH. The last one will be held remotely the end of September or beginning of October. There is developer interest to renovate two buildings on the FFH campus. It is intended that a question on the November ballot regarding housing at FFH.

Treasurers Report – No report – the fund have been frozen. The luncheon discussed at the last meeting is still in the planning stage. They would like to open it to non-members but with the current Covid situation, that is not ideal. A. Wiedemann and N. Jackson will work on the details for the luncheon scheduled for August 14.

Future approvals for gift fund spending – L. Passaro moved that future spending approvals include a contingency of 10% to account for overspending. J. Albanesi seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:42pm.

Respectfully submitted

Arlene Miles, Clerk

Attachments: Report from Human Services Director, Chair report and Treasurers Report



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: July 20, 2020

Hello members of the COA,

I hope this report continues to find you are yours well during these challenging times. On the Senior Center front we are continuing efforts to keep our members engaged. Weekly email blasts and special edition newsletters continue. Information shared ranges from COVID 19 related information and resources, special curbside lunches, Zoom opportunities for socialization and health and wellness, to weekly "trips around the world". Zoom participation continues to increase and we are looking forward to introducing opportunities for members to participate in outdoor activities as safety permits. We are currently working on a very special edition newsletter, *for our members by our members*. We have made a call to members to share a photo or note that we will compile into a newsletter this month. I would love to see the members of our COA contribute.

Challenges remain to keep those in need on our radar. Not having our regular in person contacts at the Senior Center with those more vulnerable or with those concerned about a family member or neighbor is difficult. We continue to need the help of the members of the COA and those in the community at large to let us know if there is someone in need, or someone who may just need a friendly check-in call.

The Department of Human Services remains committed meeting the immediate needs of residents who are either financially impacted by the pandemic or have limited access to basic needs due to sheltering in place. Resources to assist with energy, housing stabilization, and food security have been identified. Key efforts currently also include:

Newtown Helping Hands (NHH): This is the collaborative effort by many key organizations and individual volunteers to get food into the hands of those struggling and those who should continue to sequester, while supporting our local restaurant community. In early July the restaurant meal program was placed on hold as restaurants began to prepare for reopening and many were returning to work. If we see another surge in COVID 19, NHH stands ready to reemploy this program. Funds raised through Helping Hands are continuing to be used to meet individual food needs and will be held if the restaurant program needs to be instituted. If it is not all funds will be donated to local food pantries. The **Shopping and Delivery Service** for Newtown seniors (age 60+) and others in high-risk groups who should not be shopping remains running at this. Clients order 1-7 days in advance and pay for their groceries. Volunteers age 18-59 shop and deliver. There is no fee for the service. Volunteer shoppers stand ready to serve. Requests for the NHH can be made by contacting 203-270-4297 or at newtownhelpinghands@gmail.com.

Senior Meal program: curbside lunches continue to be distributed at the senior center in partnership with CW Resources. The program is now at full capacity each week. Distribution has been taken on by DHS staff as CW Resources can no longer fill that role. In addition, several "special Friday lunches" have been offered through very generous donations by community partners and local restaurants.

Lunches for children in the community: in partnership with the school district and EdAdvance the DHS is providing a bagged lunch and breakfast program for an additional 30 children in the community.

Brushed with Kindness: this program is currently up and running again. This is Housatonic Habitat's low-cost home repair and painting services for senior home owners. This past month DHS provided one resident with an application.

Renter's Rebate: State law provides a reimbursement program for Connecticut renters who are elderly or totally disabled, and whose incomes do not exceed certain limits. Persons renting an apartment or room, or living in cooperative housing or a mobile home may be eligible for this program. Renters' rebates can be up to \$900 for married couples and \$700 for single persons. The renters' rebate amount is based on a graduated income scale and the amount of rent and utility payments (excluding telephone) made in the calendar year prior to the year in which the renter applies. Application may be completed with the DHS through October 1st. Residents can contact DHS at 203-270-4330 to discuss the application process.

In closing, I can't help but think as I write this report it was one year ago that we opened the doors to our new Senior Center home at 8 Simpson Street. This past spring we had begun planning for a celebration to mark this milestone, as well as having 1,000 members. With the incredible work this community is doing to keep our seniors and the community at large safe during this time I know we will one day have a truly incredible celebration, even if a bit belated.

Stay well,

Natalie

Natalie Jackson, LCSW

Director, Newtown Human Services

July 20, 2020

COA Chair Report

I hope everyone is still doing well and staying safe. Once again, just a gentle reminder that no one other than myself, our clerk Arlene, Dan Rosenthal and Natalie Jackson can attend the meeting at the Municipal Center on Monday.

Here are the instructions for Monday's meeting: **THE CALL IN NUMBER IS 203-270-4249. The meeting will start at 3PM. You can call in a few minutes prior.**

Per FOI, you have to own your comments, so because it's by phone, you have to identify yourself when speaking every single time. Any comments, motions, or anything else, you'll need to let anyone participating in the meeting know who you are.

The capacity for incoming calls is around 24. From a clerking aspect, members need to be noted as present, via teleconference (and identification rules apply to those calling in as well) or absent.

Surprise, nothing new to report. Well, that's not true. Since we last met, we had a new grandson. As I'm typing this, Kaden is one month old today!

It's nice to see that some programs have been added for outdoors (in a safe, socially distant, masked manner) activities. Once again, I would remind everyone to participate, but be mindful of the number of people allowed to attend and make sure you are feeling well and remember your masks. I'm excited each week to read the email from the Senior Center and look forward to the new ideas for links on the computer, recipes, updates, etc. I have to give both the Senior Center and the Library (along with lots of other organizations/businesses) a huge shout out. They have offered a wide variety of options, programs, links and resources. They are truly thinking outside the box in an effort to keep everyone socially connected and engaged.

I am done with the CHOICES training. I have to admit it was a most enjoyable course. I have to complete the test. I look forward to their next task. We had good instructors who presented a lot of information and left plenty of time for questions.

Once again, thank you to our Selectman Rosenthal for continuing to keep us all safe round the clock. I also appreciate his reading books on Sunday nights – a highlight for my grandkids and myself. It's nice to see Jen Faircloth back. My deep thanks to Natalie Jackson and her staff. They have continued to amaze me with their energy and ideas.

Talk to you all on Monday. Stay cool – I hear the weather is going to get a bit (ahem) warm this weekend. Keep checking on your friends and neighbors.

Stay well and stay safe, Anna

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1			CO/SENIOR SERVICES GIFT FUND			
2						
3					FRANK KNOTTS	
4	DATE	RECEIPTS/DISBURSEMENTS	C/D	C/R	TRUST FUND	BALANCE
5						
6	7/1/20	Beginning Balance				31,654.57
7						
8						
9						
10		NO ACTIVITY				31,654.57
11						
12		Less approved items to be booked:				
13		Pool table	(550.00)			
14		Sr lunch	(720.00)			
15		Clocks	(50.00)			
16						(1,320.00)
17					\$	30,334.57