

NEWTOWN COMMISSION ON AGING  
Special Meeting  
Monday, August 17, 2020  
Called to order at 3:00pm

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: Joanne Albanesi, Larry Passaro, LeReine Frampton, Anne Rothstein, Cris Carvalho Fadus, Clare Thuene, John Boccuzzi, Curt Symes, Barbara Bloom

**Absent:** Bob Edwards, Ruby Ryles

**Also Present:** Kaki Taylor from the Library, Dolly White, Tim Baily from Church Hill Village, Director of Human Services Natalie Jackson, First Selectman Dan Rosenthal

**Public Comment** – Tim Baily from Church Hill Village would like to work with the COA and see how they can work together to help Newtown seniors. There will be an open house on Thursday, August 27<sup>th</sup> in 30 minute time slots. Kaki Taylor from the Library reported that they are excited to have curbside pickup at the Library and they have had the library on the patio as well. They are still trying to put a plan together for reopening.

**Minutes** – J. Albanesi moved to approve the minutes of the 7/20/20 meeting. L. Passaro seconded, motion unanimously approved.

## REPORTS

*Chair Report* (Attachment A) – A. Wiedemann asked members to try to come up with ways that they can do a memorial for Bob Sharp inside the building. He was big on cards and puzzles and enjoyed seeing kids.

*Director of Human Services update* (Attachment B)– N. Jackson reported that Friday's curbside lunch was by far the largest turnout. It was a nonstop parade for almost an hour. The question as to when they are opening is being discussed daily. The Health Director did get an email from the State DPH and that there are health guidelines coming down for Senior Centers. When they come out, they will be ready to go. C. Symes reported that September is normally national senior center month. If they do open in September, they would want to capitalize on it and celebrate national senior center month. J. Boccuzzi is glad they are going on the side of caution opening the senior center. As a commission, they should look at a study being done regarding nursing homes. There were some that were hit bad and others that had none.

*First Selectman update* – None

*Senior Shopping Guide Subcommittee* – L. Passaro reported that well over a year ago he brought the topic up to the commission. Christal Preszler in EDC would send out an e-mail to the businesses to see what they could offer. It has been on hold because of COVID. The Newtown Bee said they would do

an article about it and he went to the Chamber of Commerce to see if they can help. They have been looking for volunteers for the subcommittee. He has heard that some businesses are getting negative publicity and this could help him. A. Wiedemann suggested that in the future they may want to do a card as a fund raiser. If you have the card, you get 10% off of services. B. Bloom, L. Frampton, L. Passaro and A. Wiedemann will be the subcommittee.

*Treasurers Report* (Attachment C)– They received a contribution from the Knotts Trust in the amount of \$637 bringing the total to \$32,721.57. There are committed funds of \$1,320 which brings the actual total to \$30,951.57. C. Symes moved to file the report for audit. J. Albanesi seconded, motion unanimously approved.

John Boccuzzi reported that they received a grant for \$5,000 for small repairs in homes and support the home fit program. October 1 they will have the funds available. N. Jackson will handle the review to make sure there is a need. The intent is to help people that need support to remain in their homes. There is liability insurance that will cover the volunteers.

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

Respectfully submitted  
Arlene Miles, Clerk

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

## Attachment A

August 14, 2020 Newtown Commission on Aging Chair Report

By now I hope besides everyone's power being restored, you also have your phones, cable and internet back. I filled in for Sue Marcinek and was in awe watching our Selectman Dan Rosenthal and Human Resources Director Patrice Fahey and too many other staff members to list, listen to everyone's concerns, reach out to EverSource (or as folks were calling them NEVERSOURCE!) and try over and over again to get a good response and get people help. I think Fred Hurley and I are now best friends. He was the one I called to report downed trees on wires. Where they could safely, the highway department assisted with removal and continue the massive clean-up. And of course, our PD and Communications Director Maureen Will. The PD got many calls transferred from our office and went to check on numerous citizens. Maureen Will got lots of calls and provided updates. Some people didn't realize that when they signed up for the calls from the Town that it would be prudent to list their cell phones as well. Some weren't sure if they had signed up. To see everyone work together, calmly (I know some were seething internally because of the lack of response) and diligently, was wonderful to see. That said, I'm happy it's Friday and Sue comes back Monday 😊

I would like to resume meetings for two subcommittees. One is Senior Discounts. Larry Passaro is the chair. I will let him talk about this on Monday. I did have the pleasure this week of speaking to a member of the SC who is interested in serving on any advisory boards. I'm going to suggest that Mr. Passaro reach out to her for this subcommittee. If any other COA Commissioner would like to help, please let Mr. Passaro know. The other is one we had started pre COVID. It's the Volunteer/Policy Handbook. I know that one of the staff members, Jennifer Faircloth had been working on this as well. I'm hoping to hold a meeting in the not too distant future to see where we are. My hope is that when we reopen we may have this task finished and have something we can hand out/email to members. JoAnne Albanesi is the chair of this subcommittee.

I'd love for John Boccuzzi to either send out a short report or give a quick update on Monday on all FONS has been doing. It truly does take a village!

Today we hosted the COA curbside lunch. We looked into a variety of lunch options. We chose hotdogs and are also putting snacks and cookies in each container. We kept the cost down so that we could reach out to more members. A very special thank you to Cris Fadus who came Thursday and prepared all the packages on her own and showed up Friday, along with Larry Passaro to help prepare and hand out. And to Vicki Boccuzzi who came to help in John's absence as well as my husband who tag teamed it with me so I could head back to work. I appreciate all the help. We also hope that when the Center does reopen we could have an ice cream social or something else to welcome back members as well as celebrate two milestones: our Human Services Director, Natalie Jackson had her one year anniversary on May 8<sup>th</sup>, and the Senior Center had its one year anniversary on July 19<sup>th</sup>.

Have a wonderful weekend. Keep checking on your friends and neighbors, Anna





## Attachment B

### 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: August 17, 2020

First and foremost, I'd like to express my thanks to the Commission on Aging for sponsoring last Friday's curbside lunch at the Senior Center. We had almost a hundred members come by to pick up their hot dog lunch. It was wonderful to see so many of members and the smiles on their faces at pickup. In addition to the curbside lunches, which have proved a very successful way to keep members engaged, we are continuing efforts to grow our virtual and outdoor program opportunities. Weekly email blasts and special edition newsletters continue. Early this month we put out a special edition newsletter, *for our members by our members*. The notes and photos submitted by our members were very much enjoyed.

Efforts continue to be ready to reopen our building. The Director of the Health District did receive an email from CT DPH regarding impending recommendations for the reopening of senior center buildings. We will be ready when the state wide recommendation to reopen comes. In the meantime, we hope those who are ready join us for outdoor programming when possible and remain engaged virtually and by phone check-ins. Our membership drive for 20/21 continues. Since July 1 we have had 303 individuals renew their membership (285 residents and 18 non-residents).

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:

**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, "special Friday lunches" continue to be offered through generous donations by community partners and local restaurants.

**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.

**Energy Assistance:** The Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) benefits thousands of homeowners and renters throughout the state. A vulnerable household (households which have one or more members who are elderly (age 60 or older), or who have a disability, or are under the age of 6.) may be eligible for up to \$725 in basic winter heating benefits this winter, compared to \$670 for a non-vulnerable household. Minimum basic benefit level is \$340 for CEAP households. Applications for the Energy Assistance program in Newtown will begin August 31, 2020. Residents can contact DHS at 203-270-4330 for an overview of documentation required and next steps.

**Home repair for seniors:** DHS continues to partner with Housatonic Habitat's Brushed with Kindness program. We currently have one application in process for a resident senior. DHS will also be more actively involved in the Chore Services program through FONS, assisting with verification of financial need and compliance with State required paperwork for the new grant awarded to FONS.

**Lunches for children in the community:** in partnership with the school district and EdAdvance the DHS provided a bagged lunch and breakfast program through the summer school program for an additional 30 children in the community, who were not participating in summer school. Approximately 90 meals were distributed weekly.

**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](mailto:newtownhelpinghands@gmail.com).

Stay well,

*Natalie*

Natalie Jackson, LCSW

Director, Newtown Human Services

# Attachment C

## COA/SENIOR SERVICES GIFT FUND

DATE	RECEIPTS/DISBURSEMENTS	C/D	C/R	FRANK KNOTTS TRUST FUND	BALANCE
7/1/20	Beginning Balance				31,634.57
7/22/2020	Qrtly Distribution- Knotts Trust 200-16			637.00	32,271.57
	Less approved items to be booked:				
	Pool table	(550.00)			
	Sr lunch	(720.00)			
	Clocks	(50.00)			
				Balance 8/17/20	(1,320.00)
					<u>\$ 30,951.57</u>