

NEWTOWN COMMISSION ON AGING  
Special Meeting  
Wednesday, April 22, 2020  
Called to order at 3:05pm

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, Curt Symes, Larry Passaro, LeReine Frampton, Anne Rothstein, Bob Edwards, Cris Carvalho Fadus, Clare Thuene, John Boccuzzi (3:30)

**Also Present:** Director of Human Services Natalie Jackson, First Selectman Dan Rosenthal, Maureen Crick Owen(via teleconference)

**Public Comment** – None

**Minutes** – L. Passaro moved to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2020 meeting. B. Bloom seconded, motion unanimously approved.

**REPORTS**

*Update from First Selectman* – First Selectman Rosenthal reported that most of his time has been spent is Coronavirus based. The town has responded very well. Most people are reaching out how they can help, even though they may be having a difficult time themselves. The staff has been working in split shift. The senior community is of particular concern because they are the most vulnerable. Support networks seemed to have held up well so far, people seem to have very kind neighbors. As things start to open up, there will still be a large part of the community that will still need assistance.

C. Symes asked how the Town is doing compared to surrounding towns. First Selectman Rosenthal responded that most surrounding towns have higher numbers than Newtown. The numbers may jump because of testing back log. The Director of Health is doing the contract tracing and making sure the people have the resources they need. The Town's website has a red banner on the top for Covid 19 and if you click on that it takes to the Health Department page. There is a link to the state portal that has the number of cases town by town.

C. Theune asked about the tax abatement deadline of May 15<sup>th</sup>. First Selectman Rosenthal explained that the Legislative Council will be acting on an extension this evening.

*Nunnawauk Meadows Update*– L. Frampton reported that they are doing well. The lunch program is being delivered directly to the residents. They had a local business donate fresh produce and meat for each of the residents which was much appreciated. The maintenance staff has been supplied with masks and will only enter a residence if there is an urgent repair needed.

Rec'd. for Record 4-24-2020  
Town Clerk of Newtown 830am  
Debbie Aurelia Halstead

*Director of Human Services update*— N. Jackson reported that they had more people asking if they can help than needed help. The senior meal lunch program is at capacity. Each week they order for the next week. That doesn't mean new people can't get in because it is by order. CW Resources is supplying the food and the Human Service staff is getting meals out to cars. It shows that people want and need the service. They have had amazing donations; today for example, they received muffins from Church Hill Village that were included with the lunches. N. Jackson gave a shout out to Faith Food Pantry, the end of last week they had tripled their numbers. They have received incredible donation, both financial and food. A challenge is getting the word out of the supports that are in place. She has checked in with the Lions Club and they only have 3 people signed up for a check in call. A. Wiedemann explained that she does 20 to 30 calls a day. It speaks volumes to the natural supports in the community. She wants to make sure that folks that don't have the systems in place know how to get them.

There are about 1000 people on the robo call list. If something comes up that is more important they use the system.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Pool table – J. Albanesi moved to approve \$550 for the purchase of a pool table. B. Edwards seconded. Motion approved with one abstain (Passaro).

*Approve overages – N/A*

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

Respectfully submitted  
Arlene Miles, Clerk

Attachments: Chair Report, Treasurers Report, Director of Human Services Report

April 20, 2020

Good afternoon everyone,

First off I hope everyone is well and safe. NO one other than myself, our clerk Arlene, Dan Rosenthal and Natalie will be allowed access into the Municipal Center. All other members must call in to participate.

Here are the instructions for Wednesday's meeting: **THE CALL IN NUMBER IS 203-270-4249**

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

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

I hope you are all managing as best as you can. For me, my type A personality has organized everything and thrown away a lot of "stuff"! Thank heaven for Meals on Wheels – poor Colleen Honan (one of the organizers for MOW) calls me when she needs a driver. I just answer YES, whatever you need, YES. If any of you needs anything – anytime, please reach out.

I'd say see you all soon, but each day (more like hourly) there are changes on the news as to when the ban will be lifted. I have to admit, it's nice having some down time. I know I lamented not having any snow to speak of this year to give me a day or two of self imposed time home. Be careful of what you wish for! LOL But seriously, I hope you have all stayed well and stayed busy. I know for a fact that Cris Fadus and LeReine Frampton have been sewing their hearts out making masks. I also saw a FB post that Vicky Boccuzzi has been making a lot of masks as well, along with her assistant John! Cris and her husband have delivered to Danbury hospital weekly, along with dropping off cleaning supplies (oh and dare I mention, dropping off the occasional treat to me!). I'm wondering if the "19" attached to COVID is similar to the Freshman 15 (or 30)? Gosh I hope not. But nice weather will hopefully soon be here to stay and we can resume walking outside at the very least.

I will leave a good portion of the time for Natalie and Dan to catch us up as requested in emails. I don't have much to report since everything has been at a standstill. I know that prior to closing, Jennifer Fairchild had begun working more on the Volunteer Handbook. Lots to tend to and looking forward to getting back to business.

I have to give a big shout out to Natalie Jackson, Jen Cebry and Judy Thomas who have held down the fort and helped so many people with a variety of things. From phone calls, the Congregate Lunch program, the multiple daily calls of people seeking assistance and information – their days have not been boring! I'm grateful for the phone updates from our Selectman as well. His calm voice with a clear message has been very comforting. Gratitude as well to all those making masks, checking on their neighbors and the Lions and FONS who make sure shopping is done for so many. My thanks to all those who are working in whatever capacity and putting themselves on the front line and to those who are embracing social distancing!

Keep safe and keep checking on your friends and neighbors. Stay well, Anna





## 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

**Special Meeting: April 22, 2020**

As I sat down to write this report to share with you all I felt the most important place to start was to express with my immense gratitude for all who are working tirelessly during this challenging and uncertain time. Most notably, for the purpose of this report, is to recognize the commitment and effort of my Human Services team members, the volunteers across the community and specifically those of you here, and the leadership and support of our Selectman. While no one had the playbook for how to navigate a pandemic or the changes to our lives it has created, I am in awe of this community's rise to meet the challenge.

During our meeting I will speak in detail to the efforts happening throughout the community to meet the needs of residents. While the list and individual shoutouts could go on and on, I will highlight some key efforts here:

- Continuation of the senior meal program now at full capacity each week, with distribution taken on by DHS staff as CW Resources can no longer fill that role
- FAITH Food Pantry's rise to meet the food needs of residents affected by COVID 19, tripling their previous distribution
- The work of Newtown Helping Hands, the collaborative effort by many key organizations and individual volunteers to get food into the hands of those struggling and those unable to leave their homes- while supporting our local restaurant community
- The *Resource Guide for Residents Effected by COVID 19* which is updated weekly as circumstances evolve new information is received

The feeling of walking into a quiet Senior Center each day, with all the programs we worked hard to schedule on hold is, in a word, indescribable. We continue to hold down the fort there, handling calls and fielding questions and needs, while looking toward the future and preparing for when we will again be a bustling hub with program rooms full and the pool table in action. I want to remind our Commission members that the DHS is here for you and your neighbors who may need us—we're a phone call way!

Stay well and let's keep looking toward the future!

Warm regards,

*Natalie*

Natalie Jackson, LCSW

Director, Newtown Human Services



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