

Commission on Aging
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Monday, February 28, 2011

The Commission on Aging held a regular meeting on Monday, February 28, 2011 at the Senior Center, 14 Riverside Road, Sandy Hook, CT. Chairman Thomas Dwyer called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Members Present: Thomas Dwyer, James Bernardi, Joan Plouffe, Curt Symes, Sheila Torres and Anna Wiedemann.

Members Excused: Karin Aurelia, LeReine Frampton, Mary Ellen Lydem, Carol Mattegat.

Support & Advisory Present: Aida Reiske, Assistant to the Director of Senior Services filling in for Senior Services Director Marilyn Place who was unable to attend because another work related commitment; Ann Benore, Assistant to the Municipal Agent for the Elderly filling in for Municipal Agent for the Elderly Ann Piccini who was on vacation; Bob Sharpe of the Senior Action Committee.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION. No members of the public were present.

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS. None noted.

MINUTES The minutes of the regular meeting of January 24, 2011 were unanimously accepted as presented.

TREASURER'S REPORT. Mrs. Reiske distributed copies of the February, 2011 Senior Services Year-To-Date Budget Report prepared by the Finance Department (Attachment A to original minutes) and noted that the balance in the COA's Gift Fund presently stands at \$41,834.26 with the Trip Account at \$900.00. Upon motion of Mr. Dwyer, the Treasurer's report was unanimously accepted as presented. Mr. Dwyer commented that in his opinion the Gift Fund balances should be reported by the Finance Department to the COA's Treasurer rather than to the Director of Senior Services and he will bring up this matter for discussion at a future meeting when the Director and our Treasurer are present.

DIRECTOR OF SENIOR SERVICES REPORT. Mrs. Reiske distributed copies of the Director's report for the period January 25, 2011 to February 28, 2011 (Attachment B to original minutes) and requested that \$475.00 be withdrawn from the Gift Fund to pay the actor Richard Clark who will be performing his one man show "Atticus" at the Senior Center on April 12th. Mr. Bernardi moved that \$475.00 be withdrawn from the Gift Fund for this purpose, the motion was seconded by Mrs. Wiedemann and unanimously carried. Mrs. Reiske reiterated what Mrs. Place had told the commissioners at previous meetings about the need to replace the Senior

Center's van and distributed a document (Attachment C to original minutes) containing information about the availability of a Vehicle Grant from the State of Connecticut. Mr. Sharpe, who is the van's driver, reported that it's owned by the Town, is almost fifteen years old, the roof leaks and a new one would cost about \$59,000. In reply to a question as to why the Center doesn't rent vans when needed Mr. Sharpe replied that they would have to be handicap accessible and this type is not generally available for rent. Mr. Dwyer read an email he had received from Mrs. Place wherein she requested the COA's opinion as to whether she should apply for the Vehicle Grant grant this year or next. As the information about the grant states that it takes approximately 15 to 18 months for grant awarded vehicles to be delivered, and the deadline for 2011 grant applications is June 10th, it was agreed that Mr. Dwyer would ask Mrs. Place why she suggests a delay in applying and report back to the commissioners.

MUNICIPAL AGENT FOR THE ELDERLY REPORT. Mrs. Benore distributed copies of the Municipal Agent's report for the period November 2010 to January 2011 (Attachment D to original minutes) and stated that her office has been receiving a lot of requests from seniors for guidance with their finances. In reply to her query as to whether there was a resource in the Town to help these seniors Mrs. Reiske stated that the Senior Center helps at this time of year with taxes. Mr. Symes suggested that a pilot program be established to help the seniors with financial issues which was followed by discussion as to whether the Senior Center or the office of Social Services/Municipal Agent for the Elderly should facilitate this type of program. It was agreed that the subject be discussed at a future meeting when Mrs. Place and Mrs. Piccini are present.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

NEW BUILDING. Mr. Symes inquired as to where things stood regarding a new senior center and Mr. Dwyer replied that although a stand alone building is still desired a request for the construction of one is not presently in the town's Capital Improvement Plan.

NEW BUSINESS. Mr. Dwyer announced that Mrs. Piccini will be one of five Newtown residents honored by the Newtown Unit of Church Women United for her work on behalf of human rights at a ceremony in the Booth Library on March 6th and it was agreed that he should congratulate her on behalf of the COA.

Mr. Dwyer suggested that we invite Costas "Gus" Thanasoulis, who heads up the Western Division of Senior Helpers, to give us a brief talk about the services his organization provides to seniors and all agreed to this. Mrs. Weidemann pointed that Senior Helpers is a national organization and that Mr. Thanasoulis has a franchise from them that covers our general area.

Mr. Symes noted that Geriatric Care Managers (GCM) are also very helpful to seniors and Mrs. Wiedemann stated that she is creating a list of other organizations that provide assistance to seniors.

ADJOURNMENT. The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.