



**TOWN OF NEWTOWN**  
NEWTOWN COMMUNITY CENTER COMMITTEE

MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING

3 Main Street  
Newtown, CT 06470  
January 22, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.

**Present:** Kinga Walsh; Nancy Donniger; Bill Manfredonia; Fred Taylor; Jeff Tousignant; Rebecca Carnes

**Also Present:** Matt Ariniello, Community Center Director; Nolan, Liv, and Filippo, school representatives; and Christine O'Neill, Clerk

Miss Walsh called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

**Public Participation**

John Bocuzzi of 57 Queen Street came to the meeting as a representative from the Friends of Newtown Seniors. At their January board meeting, the Friends of Newtown Seniors discussed the fees associated with the Community Center and passed a resolution for Mr. Bocuzzi to come to this meeting. He said the Community Center fees represent a 600% increase over current Senior Center fees and asked that (1) fees not exceed those of 2018 and (2) reciprocity be granted on Senior Center/Community Center membership. A letter was also sent to First Selectman Daniel Rosenthal.

Helen Brickfield of the Newtown Chamber of Commerce said she was attending this meeting because she would like to be informed of Community Center progress. She receives many requests for programming that she is unable to accommodate as they are not under the bailiwick of the Chamber and so, in the interest of referrals, she would like to better understand what resources the Community Center has to offer.

**Approval of Minutes: January 8, 2019**

Miss Donniger made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting of January 8, 2019. Mr. Taylor seconded. Mr. Tousignant, having been absent at last meeting, abstained from the vote; all others were in favor and the minutes were approved.

**New Business: Membership Subcommittee Rate Proposals**

Mr. Ariniello had circulated and created documents regarding room rentals to the Committee ahead of the meeting. The documents were:

- #1 Rental Checklist
- #2 Kitchen Policies and Procedures
- #3 Rental Information
- #4 Rentable Units (tables, chairs, linens, bar)
- #5 Credit Card Authorization Form
- #6 Insurance Requirements & Rental Regulations
- #7 Community Room Rental Application (printed and distributed during meeting)

A lengthy discussion over the wording of Doc #1 ensued. It was determined that in the first paragraph of Doc #1, the second sentence should be removed and the final sentence should be rewritten as “*We cannot guarantee a reservation without a 25% security deposit (as required) or payment, and completed and signed paperwork.*” The numbered items should be corrected as follows:

1. Remains the same
2. Replace the first sentence with the exact language from Doc #7, beginning, “*25% of total charge is required...*”
3. Remove item entirely
4. Remains the same
5. Mr. Ariniello will need to look into regulations on police presence for events over a certain number of people, and will revise this item to include relevant information
6. Revise *submit a health form* to *submit an approved health form* and add *thirty days prior to the event.*

The Committee further discussed adding a cancellation policy at the bottom of the page. There was much discussion as to what this policy would contain, and although the language has yet to be decided upon, everyone seemed to be in agreement with the following: A cancellation made thirty days or earlier before the scheduled event will result in a full refund. A cancellation made within thirty days of the scheduled event will result in the collection of a 25% cancellation fee. Inclement weather cancellations will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the Community Center Director.

It was determined that all documents must make clear that there are different rates and policies for the Multipurpose Room and other event spaces for rent. Filippo suggested that each item in Doc #1 should have a “Multipurpose Room” line and an “other event space” line. Miss Carnes put forth that the Multipurpose Room should be referred to as such across all documents, to avoid confusion. Miss Walsh stated that while all documents should be consistent, they should also stand alone and not rely on others for them to make sense.

Mr. Manfredonia wondered how the Community Center would proceed if an organization renting space could not cover the reservation fee until the event itself – for instance, someone holding fundraiser. The Committee debated the merits of having such cases tender a security deposit and then the balance of their payment on the day of the event, without making things too complicated on the collection/accounting end.

The Committee was in support of Mr. Ariniello making judgment calls on special cases with payment plans and with cancellations, but also did not want to put Mr. Ariniello in a situation where he was “judge and jury” frequently having to make difficult decisions. The Committee was in favor of language expressing that the door is open for special cases, without putting too much of a burden on Mr. Ariniello.

Mr. Tousignant brought up a concern about collecting payment for cleaning, specifically with the kitchen (cf. Doc #2). The thought was to have a credit card on file that could be charged with a range of \$100 - \$300 depending on how much cleanup was needed, while any damages incurred would be dealt with through insurance. This could be added as a seventh item to Doc #1.

In discussing Doc #3, Miss Carnes pointed out that all documents should bear the NCC logo. She also asked about the last sentence in the “Food and Beverage Catering” section, which seemed out of place. Mr. Tousignant suggested using the wording from Doc #1 regarding a Certificate of Insurance and moving that sentence somewhere else to avoid confusion. He also said the “additional fee” for serving alcohol should be defined within the document.

Mr. Manfredonia wondered how the “list of approved food and beverage caterers” mentioned in Doc #3 would be determined, to which Mr. Ariniello replied that the Health Department has a list of food vendors they have worked with before. If a renter wanted to use an out of town vendor, that would be permissible but they would need to go through the Health Department (Miss Brickfield, from the audience, contributed that the Health Department does charge a fee for approving food vendors, as was her experience with Chamber of Commerce events). This would only apply to events that are open to the public, as opposed to a private party like a wedding.

Mr. Ariniello stated that he would make all the changes discussed during the meeting to the documents, and redistribute them before the following meeting two weeks later upon final vote.

#### **New Business: Program Pricing Categories**

Mr. Ariniello initiated a discussion about access for 12/14 organizations and families. A conversation about further accommodations to be made for 12/14 organizations and families resulted in the agreement that each should be treated the same, i.e. receive the same amount of free or discounted hours at the Community Center. The committee will continue the conversation next month.

The discussion turned to general programming and costs. Miss Walsh reminded the Committee that the Community Center must be as revenue-neutral as possible not to burden the tax-payers after the bonded funds were exhausted. An idea had previously been put forth by some community members that an option should exist wherein a flat-rate could be paid at the beginning of the year for access to all programs, but not use of the pool. Ultimately, Miss Walsh determined that this fell within the domain of the Programming Subcommittee and should be discussed there.

Filippo brought up the notion of using a punch-card, as is done at the Treadwell facility, to track usage of both the pool and programs. A subsequent discussion determined that programming is too complex to be kept track of via punch-card but it may be a good idea for the pool. Mr. Ariniello stated that the idea of punch cards for programming has been discussed and an avenue they will continue to investigate.

#### **New Business: Childcare**

Mr. Ariniello posed the question to the Committee: do we want to offer babysitting at the Community Center during certain programs? Miss Carnes suggested that, in the spirit of the Center’s multigenerational initiative, teens and seniors could be recruited as babysitters. Mr. Ariniello stated that at least two people would need to be present with the children at all times and that there were liability issues to consider. Filippo made the suggestion that the NYA bus start to be marketed as the NYA/Community Center bus, and the idea was well-received.

**Old Business: Construction Update**

Mr. Ariniello shared that the sheetrock had been put up, the HVAC units delivered and installed, and that installation of the pool, plumbing, and electricity was underway. The Senior Center roof has been completed. Mr. Ariniello confirmed that the Committee would not be able to tour the building until May due to liability issues during construction. The Town has a rep who tours the building to monitor trade work.

**Old Business: Director's Report**

Mr. Ariniello shared that interviews are in progress for Program Director, and that the plan is to ask the final candidates for a start-to-finish design of a plan for a program creation. There is also full slate of interviewees for the position of Aquatics Director.

Mr. Ariniello also stated that a free "Aging Mastery" program would be provided by a grant through Anthem and the RYWCT to be held for "active older adults" to learn about improving their health and financial security.

**Old Business: Review of FHA Master Plan Review Committee Meeting**

Miss Walsh attended the meeting, which she said had a great discussion. She asked that the Master Plan Review Committee keep the Newtown Community Center in mind and that the plans for Fairfield Hills complement what the Community Center will have in place.

**Subcommittee Updates**

The Membership Subcommittee will be meeting this Thursday, January 24, 2019.

The Programming Subcommittee will be sending out emails to determine the details of the next meeting as soon as a coordinator is hired.

No other subcommittees have set meeting dates at this time.

**Adjournment**

Miss Carnes made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Taylor seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was closed at 8:56 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Christine O'Neill, clerk*