

THE WINCHENDON COUNCIL ON AGING
Date: August 24, 2023
Minutes of the Meeting

Accepted
9/21/2023
JMM
WINCHENDON TOWN CLERK
RCUD OCT 10 2023 AM 8:03

MEETING OPENED AT: 9:30 AM

PRESENT: AnnMary Smith, John Webber, Nancy Romanowski, Brenda Kosakowski, Sue Kuchta, Diane Alexander, Sheila Bettro, Director, Lynn Murray, Gail Casavant, Asst. Chairwoman, Phil White, Jean Joyal.

VISITOR: Bill McKinney, Interim Town Manager

EXCUSED: Judy Mizhir

PRESIDING: Gail Casavant, Asst. Chairwoman

Secretary's report was reviewed and accepted.

*A clarifying statement by Ms. Romanowski and confirmed by Ms. Bettro is that the reason for no driver at the CAC is the lack of liability insurance.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Repairs on the building are underway. (Big cheer) Wet weather has been a deterrent. I am pleased with the progress so far.

July MEALS	MILES	MED RUNS	LUNCH RUNS	SHOPPING	OTHER
2114	2780	86	67	2	2

This is 292 more meals, 477 more miles, 30 more med runs, and 31 more lunch runs than in 2022.

*We are serving more and more elders all the time with only 2 drivers. The large van holds just 14 people. There is a currently a waiting list of @ 3 people.

*For activities we are trying an 'Out To Eat Club'. We will be going out at @4PM locally as much as possible. We had appetizers recently at Lickety Splits which was fun. One man had never had fried mozzarella cheese sticks before. He seemed to really enjoy them.

*We have been entertained by Bob Jordan on the guitar. He has been popular at the gazebo. There is another guitar player coming this Wednesday who plays oldies like Johnny Cash, Elvis Presley, etc. The people love to sing along with them. Mostly what people love to do is come here to socialize.

*We have a lot pf pickleball players coming in. We have about 15-20 people coming for line dancing.

*Yoga has discontinued for now.

*The exercise room is utilized often, usually in the morning. Another few come in the afternoon.

*We had a movie day, something with Elvis. We will have more of them.

*Wee bowling is ongoing and popular.

*We will be putting on a yard sale in the future, but on a somewhat smaller scale than before.

We have a lady coming in to help with Senior Tax write off. She is excellent and in the future, likely the end of October, she may help with an indoor yard sale.

*I will be taking a vacation in September to go back down to the Carolinas for awhile. Cindy is very capable of running things in my absence. She has said that she will probably retire in January, having been at the Senior Center with me for 11 years. She has very positive personality and has done a great job. Our whole staff here is compassionate with the elders, taking time to talk and know their likes and dislikes, problems, etc. They really go above and beyond.

- *The SHINE representative still comes in once a month even though open enrollment isn't 'til October. Then we will have two representatives coming in to assist with filling out insurance applications etc.
- *We talk with elders every Friday about scams that are going around and warn people about them, how financially devastating they can be, and how to respond to them.
- *There are drop-in services to assist with SNAP, Fuel Assistance, Mass Health form filling out & returning, etc.
- *There will be a vaccine booster clinic on the 29th. This will be our 4th clinic.

Motion to accept the Director's report was made, seconded, and accepted unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS: Building repairs coming along. The weather has slowed the projected finish date some.

NEW BUSINESS: Mr. White addressed the Policies and Procedures article and proposed an update to include Honorary Members as Article XI. This would be included in the Policies and Procedures manual. This inserted article would provide for any member of 6 years or more who has found it difficult to continue being active for personal reasons may become an honorary member to attend meetings and participate, but will no longer have voting power. The proposal was put to a vote and accepted unanimously.

Mr. White also gave an update on the newsletter to be put on hold as he is leaving in about a month for the Winter. He has had a lot of experience doing this sort of newsletter and it is nearly ready to go, but for some changes as proposed in a meeting with Judy Mizhir, chairwoman, and we will likely be finalizing it in the Spring, also considering the transition period taking place at the end of this year. They may have additional ideas and we want to work with and support them as well. This newsletter will receive donors to pay for materials and this is all in the works.

The current newsletter will continue to be created and distributed as usual.

Meals on Wheels has been complimented by many recipients lately. It seems that Trio, the company who does them, has changed their location and has 3 new chefs, who are creating some wonderful new meals.

A report of the Nominating Committee was given by new chairwoman, Diane Alexander. Copies of the meeting minutes explained the decisions and updates involved and were distributed. One change in phone # was made. Slate of officers was explained. Voting on these minutes will take place at the next meeting.

Ms. Casavant brought up concern expressed at a community partnership meeting, held at the CAC expressing concern that the Senior Center building is not being used to its full potential. There was a list given of things that they would like to see accomplished and I found it eye-opening that the Senior Center was at the top of the list. She offered to help by giving me information to pass on to the public. I noted that there are certain areas of the bldg. that can't be used due to no heat. It was noted previously by the Director that the heating bills have gone way over the budget. Also there is no A/C and the building is closed by 3PM. There are also a lot of concern about security.

Their list suggested increased interaction between Beals Memorial Library. Ms. Bettro countered that we do work with the library. They come in for an hour or hour and a half and bring books for people to

take home and bring back and we currently offer several bookcases of books here to be loaned as well. Due to lack of interest the visits were discontinued. We have used our vans for transportation for book signings. Much of the library's agenda is not geared toward seniors. We enjoy working with Manuel and the ladies there whenever we can.

Another point that was raised was for the Senior Center to meet the increased demand for services including staffing and equipment. Ms. Bettro reminded us that she has a budget that does not allow for much more of that. All our present staff members are all part-time. One staff member works 11 hrs/wk., one who works 24 hrs/wk., and two who work 25. Within the time we are open other programs are limited. I come in at @ 6:30AM or 6:45AM to get accomplished what I need to. I don't have to be here until 9. I leave at 2, 3, or 4PM every day. The kitchen leader will be on vacation next week so I will be in the kitchen, meaning that I will be taking paperwork home so that it will be done. If the secretary, Cindy Knight, is out I need to be at that position. We do need more staff, which will be up to the town to provide.

Ms. Kosakowski pointed out that library books, puzzles, etc., have to be returned and who will go after them if they fail to be returned from here? Also, many elders need transportation and how will that be provided after hours? There are also insurance issues.

Ms. Bettro reminded us that when we took over this building back in 2007 it was designated to be a Senior Center and not a community building. However we have welcomed things such as holding meetings on the third floor with the housing authority, etc. There has been voting here, vaccine clinics, and health fairs. Again security issues prevent us from having the building open regularly to other venues.

Mr. White noted that we are required by law to keep the kitchen sanitized at all times, which raises a concern about sharing it.

Ms. Kosakowski noted that an annual license is required to keep the kitchen functioning and that we are responsible to keep it up to code.

Ms. Murray suggested that we give a tour to the person (s) who are questioning the usability of the building to educate them as to the condition(s) of the building and all activities going on here.

Robinson/Broadhurst has provided grants to meet some needs. Security still stands as a large issue with no cameras, etc., and there are issues remaining due to the large number of entrances, etc.

Ms. Bettro noted that with the help of Don O'Neil a security camera company came in, but their concern was that the large thickness of the walls prohibited the use of cameras. I can look into trying to find some kind of cameras (we would need 16-20 cameras to secure this building) that might work.

Mr. McKinney stated that he is now hearing from all town departments as to what they really need and want; not necessarily what they will get, but what is needed. Then we will look at sources, whether it is grants, free cash, or where. It really all needs to be identified and then we can try to do obtain funding.

Motion to adjourn was made and accepted.

MEETING CLOSED AT: 10:20AM.