

COMMISSION ON AGING
MINUTES
JUNE 21, 2023 V.2

Attending: Anne Marie Hynes, Presiding; Kip Burgweger; Amy Jurkowitz; Heidi Nolte; Ellen Wolfson

Unable to Attend: Steven Katz, James Dougherty

Staff: Lori Contadino

Call To Order: The meeting was called to order by Anne Marie Hynes at 8:38 a.m. The meeting was held in person

Minutes: Minutes of the May 17, 2023 meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. A motion to approve the minutes as distributed was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

New Business:

Share-the-Fare Transportation Policy:

Anne Marie Hynes introduced Lori Contadino to present the new business topic, but first she reminded the Board that any Board member who had a financial interest in any Town transaction worth more than \$200 was required to make an Ethics Disclosure Filing before July 1, 2023. Lori then reported on the Share-the-Fare Policy.

The new policy covers subsidized rides for Greenwich residents age 62 and older with Uber and with Greenwich Taxi. The age is the same as membership in the Wallace Center. We will subsidize 40 percent of the cost of a ticket. The subsidy for Greenwich Taxi will no longer be 10 percent. We will sell \$50 worth of tickets and vouchers for \$30. The new program will limit each sale of tickets and vouchers to \$100, unlike the previous program that was capped at \$200. The cap is set to be sure the program stays within the budget and could be revised if the budget is not exceeded. We will pre-purchase Uber tickets and Greenwich Taxi vouchers. The Town does not allow us to use the credit card to make these purchases, so we will need to use purchase orders. We will draw down after tickets are sold.

We will assist residents who need instructions on how to order an Uber ride. For residents who do not have internet access and need to be able to order a ride by telephone, we have Greenwich Taxi.

The previous program had territorial limits. The new program will not, but residents must pay cash for any distance greater than the tickets or vouchers being used. There will be a surcharge for extra riders. The owner of Greenwich Taxi is considering publishing a set of zones showing starting points and destinations with the cost of such a ride. The suggested fares appear to be more expensive than Uber's. Lori will discuss this proposal with the owner.

Rides will be curb-to-curb only. The program will become effective on July 1st if the program is approved by the Board today.

The program is not intended to serve as the sole source of transportation for seniors. Rather, it is a benefit for members. The Commission on Aging has no responsibility for Greenwich Taxi fares.

There followed a discussion of the way the policy was worded on the second page addressing finality of sales. It was decided to insert a heading reading "Terms of Use" above the fourth bullet point from the bottom of the second page and including the first bullet on the top of the third page.

A motion to approve the policy as revised was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

Reports:

Department of Human Services & Nathaniel Witherell: Ellen Wolfson stated that there was nothing to report on Nathaniel Witherell.

Ellen Wolfson reported on the Department of Human Services. The DHS met last night. The Town is creating a Fair Rent Commission. It has been approved by the Board of Selectmen and will be going to the RTM. The DHS will try to mediate disputes between landlords and tenants. Demetria Nelson, the DHS Commissioner, noted that FOIA (the Freedom of Information Act) allows people to access various public records, and if someone sought access to the Commission on Aging's records, that access could extend to Board members' personal emails if that Board member used a personal email address for Commission correspondence. A discussion followed on whether the Town had created Town email addresses for Board members and whether the Town email addresses were available. Lori Contadino offered to check this out.

The DHS showed a YouTube video about one minute long of photos taken of the services offered by the DHS. The DHS has changed from TAG to Door Dash for delivery services at a substantial saving. The DHS is working with a group of large gift donors for affordable housing. Developers are interested in the proposal.

As part of our Tech Connect program, we bought 55 I-pads from Costco for use by lower income seniors. Students from Greenwich Country Day School will be involved in teaching the use of these I-pads. Funds used were ARPA funds.

Southwestern CT Agency on Aging: Anne Marie Hynes reported that SWCAA in June analyzes grant applications and votes on fund allocations. The grant recipients have not yet been identified. This year is SWCAA's 50th anniversary year, and special events are being planned.

Friends of the Greenwich Senior Center: Anne Marie Hynes missed the last Friends' meeting due to pneumonia.

Commission on Aging Director (L. Contadino)

Director's Report (L. Contadino): Lori Contadino delivered the Director's report. We are evaluating the programs offered by the Wallace Center. We have a new memoir writing program. We are undertaking a cardio drumming program and various art programs. Lori has been in contact with Stamford, Darien, Westport and Ridgefield senior centers and is planning to visit each of them. Several Board members expressed a strong interest in joining Lori on those visits. These other centers have more resources than we have, including budget, staff and size. Our available square footage is about one-third as large as the other communities. Later in the meeting, we discussed the possibility of utilizing the Meeting Room on the second floor of 299 on the Ave for our programs. The Arts Council uses the Meeting Room, and we would need to coordinate regarding available times.

We are looking at other methods of delivering programs, including offering seasonal programming and sessions. We now have water aerobics at the Byram pool. Each available session is fully subscribed. Members of our staff are checking attendance records to ascertain if any participants are not registered.

We are currently making progress on replacing the Wallace Center Administrator. We hope to have the replacement start work on August 31st.

Heidi Nolte reported on the kitchen. Bricks are going up on the walls. Equipment is being acquired and assembled. Lori Contadino is currently working with the Purchasing Agent on specifications for the architects and funding for the Wallace Center.

Under the Tech Connect Program, The Muse and Hill House are getting involved in outfitting for internet connectivity. The Muse is further along in having housing containing the necessary technology. It is contemplated that The Muse and Hill House will serve as congregant centers for tech work. GCDS students will meet with and teach the residents how to use I-pads. GCDS will examine Hill

House to estimate the cost of necessary wiring. Hill House residents pay for their internet services. Residents who do not qualify for free I-pads will still be able to attend the tech educational classes.

Marketing: Amy Jurkowitz reported on marketing, particularly the new website. Her presentation energized the Board members. Amy had her laptop which she opened to a working model of the new website. She will send all Board members a link to the site for members' review and comments. The website will address many topics, including our resources, Medicare, consultation, scheduling of times for programs and events, donate button for donations to the Friends, membership in the Wallace Center, the café, Share the Fare and other transportation options. We will be able to share the website with other senior centers.

Amy Jurkowitz reported that the newsletter has been completed and is an exciting piece of work. She also mentioned that we will be able to produce podcasts. The newsletter will publicize the Commission's website.

We still need to decide what to include on the Town's Government website.

Lori Contadino reported that we have a strong relationship with the Library. She explained the she and Heidi Nolte will be giving classes in the Learning Lab in August and later. The classes will be on items of interest to seniors.

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting. Seconded. Carried.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kip Burgweger
Acting Secretary