

**COMMISSION ON AGING
MINUTES
OCTOBER 21, 2020**

- Attending: Patricia Burns, Presiding; Carol Burns; Kip Burgweger; James Dougherty; Ann Marie Hynes; Steven Katz; Ellen Wolfson
Staff: Lori Contadino; Laurette Helmrich.
Guest: Christine Edwards; Jenny Larkin (Town of Greenwich)
- Call To Order: The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. The meeting was held by Zoom.
- Minutes: Minutes of the September meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. A typo was noted in line 3 of the Nathaniel Witherell Report - the word “bard” should be “Board”. With that correction a Motion was made to approve the minutes. The Motion was seconded and carried by unanimous vote.
- Chair’s Report: P. Burns reported that renovations are now progressing. Preliminary plans for the kitchen, service line and dining room have been approved. The project will go out to bid in January, work should begin in the spring and should be completed and open in January of 2022.
- Strategic Plan: Ann Marie Hynes and Steven Katz presented the draft Strategic Plan. The Vision Statement has been shortened to one, concise sentence. There are six strategic priorities. A suggestion was made that a specific age should be given to define “older persons”. After discussion it was decided to leave the term as is to provide flexibility with the ability to set specific ages for specific programs or services. The input of Lauren Rabin was noted. It was noted that in several places the year 2022 was incorrectly listed as 2002 and in one place it was listed as 20022. With these date changes and meeting input a final version will be prepared. A Motion was made to adopt the Strategic Plan with the discussed changes. The Motion was seconded and unanimously carried.
- Dept. Of Human Services: E. Wolfson reported that the Department met last night. 409 clients are being served, a new high, with many needing rent assistance. It was noted at the meeting that the Commission on Aging and Greenwich Country Day School are working with them on a program to enhance the technical skills of older adults.
- Nathaniel Witherell: E. Wolfson reported that Nathaniel; Witherell is in much better financial condition than it had been in.
- SWCAA: A.M. Hynes reported that the annual meeting of SWCAA was held last week. The grocery bag program has been very successful. The virtual grant program has been completed. They gave a program on how to do virtual Medicare consulting.
- Friends of the Senior Center: P. Burns reported that there have been some member changes.

Senior
Center:

L. Helmrich reported that the credit card setup is almost complete. New card readers had to be ordered. There will be a Halloween bag drive up for members. The mailing of the first 299 packet was sent to over 900 people. The next mailing will go out in November. We are in the process of getting a video intercom and surveillance system installed to allow viewing of who is at the doors. This has always been a security issue but the need has increased with the doors being locked and staff being unable to see when deliveries are made. The cost is approximately \$14,400. There is money in the budget due to decreases in certain lines, particularly transportation and food, to cover the expense.

Commission
Directors
Report:

VIRTUAL HEALTH INSURANCE COUNSELING

Open Enrollment for Medicare D October 15 - December 7

1. All counseling is being conducted virtually via telephone, FaceTime or Zoom
2. Clients are creating personal accounts on MyMedicare.gov or are receiving assistance from staff/counselors in creating an account
3. Online fillable forms on the Commission on Aging webpage has helped streamline the process

Counseling Waiver signed, request for appointment submitted

Beneficiary Contact form which is the State mandated form all counselors need to complete has also been digitized so we've eliminated the cross handling of paper documents. Plan Cost Comparisons and Enrollment Confirmation documents are being saved and attached to the Beneficiary Contact form. Minor modifications to the process since we've gone "live."

Many of the adopted procedures have enhanced operational efficiency and will remain post COVID.

4. 5 volunteer Counselors have been coming to the Center to conduct sessions.
5. A COVID screening tool was created and all volunteers are screened upon entry into the building. Volunteers also have signed waivers in order to conduct sessions on-site.
6. As of 10/19/20, we have been notified by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Administration for Community Living (ACL) that there is incomplete information in the Medicare Plan Finder tool on Medicare.gov. We understand that CMS, as well as companies that offer these plans, are working to fix these issues.

Specifically:

- o Not all plans are displaying full drug costs, including plans offered by Cigna-Healthspring and Express Scripts.
- o Not all plans are displaying accurate pharmacy network information
- o Beneficiaries entitled to Extra Help/LIS may not be able to view accurate cost-sharing.

If clients enroll in a plan at this time:

- o We cannot guarantee that the plan they enroll in is the lowest cost option
- o We cannot guarantee that they will be able to change plans due to incorrect cost information in the Medicare Plan Finder. However, in the past, beneficiaries who

have enrolled in the wrong plan due to inaccurate information on the Plan Finder have been granted a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) to enroll in a new plan after Jan 1.

SWCAA/CHOICES Recommendation:

At this time, the CHOICES Program recommends that we wait until the Medicare Plan Finder issues are resolved and the information is complete before meeting with clients and enrolling in a Medicare Part D Plan. Significant issues with two companies (Cigna and Express Scripts) have put all counseling sessions on hold until the issues are remedied.

Maria is rescheduling clients and counselors have shifted to assisting residents in creating their MyMedicare.gov accounts.

7. SWCAA secured a special Zoom phone account for use by Counselors.

Three dedicated numbers have been created for the Commission on Aging

SPONSORS and SPECIAL DRIVE THRU EVENTS:

Commission on Aging Sponsors are providing goodie bags and assorted treats for Senior Center member Halloween Loot Bags. 10 Sponsor volunteers will also be assisting us with the lunch and goody bag distribution for both Halloween and again for Thanksgiving.

WEBSITE ENHANCEMENTS:

Expanded information about Medicare Supplemental Policies and Rates; and cost sharing for 2021

FOOD SECURITY

The COA will be meeting with JFS, Meals on Wheels, CCI, Department of Human Services, River House and At Home in Greenwich to discuss current utilization of food support programs and a plan as we move deeper into the Fall and Winter.

BUDGET

Working on 21-22 Budget which will be presented to the CoA Board for approval at the November 18th Board Meeting.

AGE FRIENDLY GREENWICH:

Meeting with the designer to design and ultimately publish the Action Plan which was put on hold with the community shut-down due to COVID.

CAREGIVERS CIRCLE AND DEMENTIA FRIENDS EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS:

Convening a meeting of the Dementia Friendly Task Group to begin Dementia Friends Educational Sessions. Greenwich Country Day School has requested Dementia Friends training for faculty and students.

A Caregivers Circle program will be offered in November in collaboration with Greenwich Library. Details will be shared once confirmed.

Senior Tax

Relief: K. Burgweger reported that there was no report.

Transportation:

C. Burns reported that there was no report.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Commission will be at 8:30 on November 18, 2020

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by unanimous motion at 9:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James B. Dougherty
Secretary