

COMMISSION ON AGING
Minutes
5/18/2022
Via ZOOM

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/UdYJLjml_I53RR_N9mk3ThP36q7zWm7eRcIDaEmTr6RYV-LLWGJMCmq49SRzYuhl.sNar7-WvaRxxWJcei

Passcode: pWQj8Z!+

Present: COA Commissioners: Mary Dale Lancaster, Kathy Brandt, Hilda Rhodes, Sarah Cummings, Sarah Atwood, Peggy Zamore, Ruth Moran, Garner Lester, Jean Rexford, Kathleen Brandt (Note-taker)

Staff: Angelica Fontanez, Margherita Pilato

Members of the Public: John Reilly, Sarah (no last name)

First Selectperson: Julia Pemberton

Meeting called to Order at: 9:03 am

1) **April 6th Minutes approved by:** Kathy Brandt, Sarah Atwood

2) **Public Comment: None**

3) **Social Services Report:** (Angelica Fontanez). Following historic patterns, food pantry visits are down in spring and summer (six visits in a month). Cost of oil is very high, so those costs are up. New referrals to Social Services from Park & Rec as well as families in crisis (through police). Working with United Way and the Salvation Army. Van is active, 56 trips. New van will be delayed until 2023 due to computer chip shortage. Some per diem van drivers are available. Part-time social worker Dev Patel is leaving, the present college intern can replace him for the summer. Come fall, a new college intern will be in place. Angelica will need to find a new per diem social worker for the year. Budget is OK. Continue to work on transition from food bank to gift cards. (This transition being made, as previously discussed at length, in line with Fairfield County towns as well as in meeting needs of Redding residents (dignity, increased participation, convenience, choice). Further thought to amount of \$ given in gift cards to

donees will be taken. Historically, amount distributed per gift card has been conservative. Discussion ensued.

4) **Director of Programs:** (Margherita Pilato). Program budget is low but we should be able to meet the budget requirements by the end of the fiscal year. We did a lot more programming this year. More clay classes, Ti Ji Quan. Getting instructors in general has been tough, in part because the rate of \$40 per hour is low, especially if traveling from a distance. Discussion to follow re: pay rates. Vietnamese lunch was a big hit. Hopes to have outdoor lunches in next few weeks (due to COVID picking up again.). New Spanish class has been very popular. Another Tia Ji Quan class may be starting at the end of June. Tag Sale this weekend, with Bagels from Pop Up Bagels. June 1st Highstead Arboretum Walk - all spots are taken. Discussion of instructors and financing ensued. Consideration of an annual membership fee in lieu of class by class payments was discussed. Further discussion required. COVID once again limiting participation.

5) **First Selectwoman:** (Julia Pemberton). Budget passed, including capital items. Tennis courts will be replaced and will also have lines for pickle ball. ARPA working group is continuing. Ruth Moran questioned if multiple bids were required (regarding the movable wall project); they are not really necessary for that project. Social Services is following all the appropriate ARPA procedures. When using the EZ IQC, it is not necessary for competitive bids. Ruth can get another bid if she wants, but we have satisfied the purchasing procedures that we have. Mary Dale question: some concern with ARPA about the small project of retractable door and larger study of architecture which will take a very long time to complete. This is really not a competition, right? Julia: no reason not to do retractable wall in the interim. Heating and air conditioning are separate projects. Town meeting for ARPA re: Heritage Center project, if approved in June, will be in July.

6). **Communications report:** (Peggy Zamore). Pat Sovern has resigned and no longer on committee. Needs a new communications partner. Peggy has looked on-line, impressed with what information Margherita gets out. New newspaper, Redding Sentinel, is now available. Redding Sentinel can be subscribed to for \$6 for two months - published by Susan Clark. Next issue is out today. Previously, a good article about Angelica. Peggy reached out for list of people ages 60 and over so as to increase the BLAST communication; she was told she has to go to

voter registrar to get that list. Jean: Heritage Center website picture and possibly text outdated. COA to redo.

7) **Architecture Report** (Ruth Moran & Sarah Atwood): Ruth spoke at ARPA meeting to discuss retractable wall. There were no questions from the ARPA committee. Now in a hold pattern. Decision on this project will be made in June. If the committee approves, it goes to the selectman meeting, (3rd Monday in June), then, if they approve, it moves to public meeting in July. The community needs to become aware of just how tiny the Heritage Center rooms are, and the smallish part of the building it occupies. Ruth & Margherita may talk to discuss how to bring community members in to see this building. Contact Ruth if you want to work on an event to try and get community members to see this building.

8) **Food Pantry Report:** Sarah Cummings: Sarah has drafted protocols that need to be refined. Then, we can distribute it to various places and news outlets, maybe in flyer form. Can distribute in places like the library, post offices, houses of worship. Also, an article would be good. Can give history of pantry and provide the reasons for moving to a gift card system. Maybe get it into the Redding Sentinel. Currently have a buildup of food. Request Angelica's permission to ask Tina Armato to make a flyer. Also, if people still feel they want to donate food, flyer to post alternate donation centers.

9) **Programming:** A lot of valuable information is out in the web-universe. It can be difficult to get help, so online webinars offered by various organizations can be helpful. There are online programs we could direct people to. Links could go into the Blast. For instance, Jean found a program that starts 5/31, about taking charge of your own healthcare, 5 steps to self-advocacy. Margherita will put a link in the next blast. Jean volunteered to be in charge of September Church Fair if Hilda will coordinate with fair chairperson. Ruth: is the town having a Memorial Day parade? Julia; Yes, the Saturday before Memorial Day. Ruth would like to have banner and senior van go into the parade. Fun event and brief. Decision to try and participate, will need to coordinate through Hank Sanford. Alice Smith can let Hank know. Ruth will coordinate, and ask Heritage Center users to participate.

10) **First Selectwoman :** (Julia Pemberton -continuation from 5): On Saturday 6/25 , there will be the Redding Summerfest, Redding Road Races at 3p.m.,

starting at Community center to Putnam State Park, Rock & Roots, music, and town sponsored fireworks, 200 spots for cars, limited participation, \$30 per car. Even at Historical Society. Music starts at 4 p.m., 4 bands – will feel like an early 4th of July and great summer kickoff. Food trucks are welcome. Otherwise, free food only provided to runners who compete in the race. Foodtrucks, (?) and bring your own food and beverages.

11) **Chairperson:** Mary Dale Lancaster: All points of interest discussed earlier in the meeting.

12) **Old Business:** None

13). **New Business:** None

Meeting Adjourned: 10:30 am. Next meeting on June 8th, 2022. TBD if live or via Zoom.

Minutes taken by Kathleen Brandt, COA commissioner.