

**Commission on Aging
Date: December 13, 2023
Location: Heritage Center**

Present: COA Commissioners: Ruth Moran (chair), Kathy Brandt, Peggy Zamore, Hilda Rhodes, Sarah Atwood, Sal Armato, Jan August, Sarah Cummings, Garner Lester, Peter Cody, Mary Dale Lancaster

Staff: Angelica Fontanez, Margherita Pilato, Michelle Stillman

Members of the Public: Tina Armato

Meeting called to order: 9:05

1. Approval of the Minutes: Kathy Brandt, Peggy Zamore

2. Social Services Report: Angelica Fontanez. Holiday is busy. RES raised almost \$1,500 for the gift cards. Energy Assistance busy but running a bit more smoothly than in previous years. Energy grants, however, are smaller. Some families may have to apply for separate grants. New people have qualified, and have also qualified for the Medicare Savings Program (MSP) program. Suggestion to have information session for MSP qualification. 97 trips with the van – many for social reasons. Meadow Ridge “adopted” two families. Blue Santa (Redding Police) and Redding Fire Department also want to sponsor a family. Budget – met with Jim Sanders and Krista Kramer – will request an increase for senior programs for \$45,000 to \$50,000. We have already more than 50% of the amount we are expected to raise, due to robust programming. EARLY VOTING: Will be very invasive for Senior Classes – 25 days of programming would be directly impacted. Ruth suggested that we document how senior programming will be impacted, and present this to Julia. Concern about Senior Programs bearing the brunt of displacement.

4. Director of Programming: Margherita Pilato. Class income is well over 50% - between 60 and 80 % of instructors’ salaries covered by participant fees. Great attendance overall. Clay class is over-subscribed. Clay has gotten very expensive due to shipping rates. May need to reconsider fees for materials. If repair for HVAC system is repaired, it is possible that an additional clay class could be added in the future. Gilbert and Bennett may at some point may be used for activities. Lots of special events – brain/health nutrition lunch, knitting workshop, meditation, talking books, Mozart Opera talk, Thanksgiving centerpieces, and fraud awareness lunch with pizza in the newly expanded room. Communication issue – lots of newsletters to residents are going to spam. May need to reconfigure how message are sent out. Tai Chi Juan class to come again – balance class for older folks. Contact PT providers and VNA’s.

5. First Selectman: Julia Pemberton. Will review early voting schedule. Registrars have a difficult schedule to fill. Possible study in future for an overall study of use of town facilities for various uses, including senior center use. Possible use of ARPA funds that have not been planned or expended in a timely manner. Angelica was asked to analyze senior center use. Park & Rec will be asked to do the same.

6. Chair's Report: Ruth Moran

Motion: Meeting schedule for next year – approved. Garner Lester, Kathy Brandt.

COA to have four interest groups – A, C, F, T. A - Aging group. C – Communication group. F – Food and Fellowship group. T - Transportation group. Each COA member was assigned to a group. Aging Group will present in January. Communication group might report in January as well – Sentinel advertisement? Tina Armato's request to be part of the Communication group was warmly received. Publicity idea: have an "arts" open house next year. Transportation and Food and Fellowship groups to present in February. Sarah Atwood will become an alternate on the COA; Jan August will become a full-time member. Jan has offered to serve as a co-chair with Ruth this upcoming year and Ruth has agreed to this.

5. Old Business: Name for Double Room – will have a contest to name room. Will put a contest to the BLAST.

6. New Business: Potential Fashion Show featuring senior models.

7. Meeting adjourned: 10:35. Garner Lester, Sarah Atwood.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 9 am at the Heritage Center.

Minutes taken by Mary Dale Lancaster