

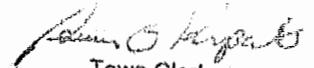
COMMISSION ON AGING AND DISABLED

JUNE 2, 2021

ZOOM MEETING – 6:00 PM

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
IN NEWINGTON, CT

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Town Clerk

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Karen Brecher  
Kathy Sobieski  
Chylene Pender  
Sandy Nafis  
Mary Udice

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Maureen Lynch  
Terri Lapenta-Duffek

**STAFF**

Dianne Stone  
Jaime Trevethan  
Gail Whitney

**TOWN COUNCIL LIAISONS**

David Nagel

**TOWN COUNCIL LIAISONS ABSENT**

Carol Anest

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Karen Brecher called the Commission on Aging and Disabled via Zoom meeting to order at 6:08 PM.

Dianne reported that Commission Clerk Gail Whitney has stepped down from this position after 35 years. The Commissioners thanked Gail for her service to the Commission.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

David Nagel reported that the best news is that Newington is in the gray level for Covid which means that things have started to open and depending on the building or business, as long as people are vaccinated they do not need to wear masks. At the last Town Council meeting, the Councilors adopted an affordable housing plan, details of which can be found on the Town's website. The Capital Regionalization of Governments had a presentation from AARP concerning livable and affordable housing specific for seniors which reconfirmed the housing need for senior citizens.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF APRIL 7, 2021**

The Commissioners approved the minutes from April 7, 2021.

**V. STAFF REPORT**

Dianne reported that the Senior and Disabled Center is working on plans to gradually reopen, especially since Newington's levels went from red to orange to yellow very quickly, and then the following week to gray which is the best color; no gray means the pandemic is over. As the infection rate decreases, the Center

will gradually reopen, but in the meantime there has been a lot of work done at the facility with the offices being painted, the whole building being painted, and replacing the rooftop HVAC units. The parking lot was done in the fall and looks great. The big project – window replacements – will take place over the next 2-5 months. Cabinetry will be replaced in the health care area. The Center did have a gradual reopening as of May 14<sup>th</sup> with selected individual in-person activities by appointment only. These appointments include meeting with staff like the social worker, doing things in the pool room, computer room, woodshop, fitness room, and seeing the foot care nurse. People do have to make an appointment to use the fitness room and only two people are allowed in the room at a time. There has not been a good response to use the pool room or the computer room, but the foot care nurse has a full schedule and is seeing people by appointment only. Dianne hopes to expand things every week such as starting in-person chair aerobics which would have about 14 people in the auditorium, and movies on Fridays. Everything will be done by appointment; no drop-ins will be allowed at the Center. On June 10<sup>th</sup> in-person Bingo will start, again by appointment, and the knitting group. Everyone will have to follow Covid safety protocols, completing a form, and wearing masks. Screening is no longer taking place, nor are taking temperatures. If you are not vaccinated, masks are required, but people who are vaccinated don't have to wear masks; however vaccination status is not being asked. People still have to scan into the Center. Central Connecticut Health Director Charles Brown asks that everyone remain vigilante and flexible, and if numbers change, then restrictions may be tightened again.

The annual volunteer dinner was held in May, once again delivering a chicken dinner to 58 people. There was a live show on NCTV and Karen Brecher demonstrated exercises on this live show. Therabands, and exercise diagrams were delivered with the meals, which had the Senior and Disabled Center logo with the theme Community With Strength. Volunteers were celebrated, including ones that have stayed home over the last year because the Center wanted to recognize them. Dianne stated that staff at the Senior and Disabled Center is just great and everyone has been working so hard.

May was Older Americans Month and programs included neurosize which was a brain exercise, hybrid programs with some people in the building and some via Zoom, craft program, and handing out Community With Strength goodie bags. There are so many people who can't come to the Center either because they are home taking care of grandchildren or in a longterm care facility, so these Zoom programs will continue since they have worked out so well this past year. The Connecticut Virtual Senior Center program, which is funded by AARP, has been holding healthy living collective programs for the past year. Newington is one of three towns participating in this program. In May, with the celebration of Older Americans Month, the program was with an author on how to write personal stories, and group activities with storytelling. On June 25<sup>th</sup> to celebrate Juneteenth, there will be speakers and storytellers. Other ongoing programs at the Center which are either high tech, low tech, or no tech continue such as meditation Mondays via telephone, telephone Bingo on Tuesdays, and as stated earlier, in-person Bingo starting on June 10<sup>th</sup>. Coming up on Friday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, there will be a program in the parking lot all about the baseball rivalry between the Yankees and Red Sox. At 3:00 PM hot dogs will be served along with a bag of popcorn. People can get out of their cars to get the food, and there will be boardgame to select which team you like; quite a few people have already registered for this.

As the Commission decided, the membership fee will be waived again this year, and the membership renewal forms will be sent out soon. A party will take place in the parking on Wednesday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> to celebrate the membership with prizes, activities, and entertainment. People will be asked to bring chairs to sit in. Dianne will be asking for funding for a fried dough food truck later on in the agenda.

A wellness program where 21 people did their own walking and called in to report on far they walked has taken place the last few months. The goal was to walk across the State of Connecticut and this goal was attained in the first week of the six week program. The goal was then changed to walk across the country

and in six weeks they made it to New Mexico, so the program was extended one week, and the 21 people involved walked to California in seven weeks.

## VI. OLD BUSINESS

### A. Purchase Requests

As Dianne stated earlier, she would like to request funding for a fried dough food truck to serve 100 people at a cost of \$850. There are other items to be purchased for the membership celebration party on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, but these are well within the \$500 limit. **MOTION: Chylene Pender made a motion to allocate \$850 for a fried dough food truck for the membership celebration party, Sandy Nafis seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion passed with a 5-0 vote.**

Dianne commented that as the building gets cleaned up and starts to reopen, things are being noticed such as the auditorium chairs are falling apart. Nothing is lined up at this time for a purchase request, but just a heads up to the Commission that there may be a list of requests as things get refurbished throughout the building.

The garden is doing great and is fully planted; no purchase requests at this time because big purchases were made last year for the greenhouses and fencing. The gardeners will be applying for another grant.

Kathy asked about the craft kits that were distributed in March and April, and if the money from the Cares Act was reimbursed. Dianne responded that yes the Center was totally reimbursed, however one set of kits couldn't be reimbursed because it had food in it and that wasn't covered under the Cares Act. These kits were incredibly popular and six or seven different kits were distributed to 75 people; there are some journals left over.

## VII. NEW BUSINESS

Mary Udice informed the Commission that she was moving out of Newington and therefore would no longer serve on the Commission on Aging and Disabled. She said it has been her pleasure serving on the Commission. Chylene Pender also told the Commission that she will be moving to Florida and she would no longer serve on the Commission. Dianne thanked Mary for her service and all the ways she has served the Town. Dianne also thanked Chylene for her service to the Senior and Disabled Center and her volunteer work earning her a place on the Wall of Honor, along with all the work she has done on the Hunger Action Team and the Greater Federation of Women's Clubs.

Dianne commented that the Commission will be short on members with Mary and Chylene leaving, and there will be problems making quorum. Mary indicated she would mentioned this to the Democratic Town Committee at their next meeting. David Nagel stated that he will remind the Republican Town Committee Chairperson about this.

Kathy asked if the snack bar area will be reopening. Dianne commented that both the gift and coffee shops rely on drop-in traffic and if the Center is not completely open, then their openings will be delayed. One of the last things to bring back will be in-person dining because it is impossible to social distance. Dianne is hoping that by September bringing back the lunch program, but it could happen sooner. Once that is open, then she sees no reason to not have the coffee and gift shops reopen. Kathy asked about past concerns with CRT funding. Dianne responded that she has been told there is money to maintain these programs; one positive note from the pandemic is the realization that more attention was brought to older adult programs like nutrition.

Dianne reported that Dial-A-Ride was only providing medical trips during the pandemic, but that has been expanded now to hair dressing and pharmacy trips, although few calls are received for those trips as people have found other ways to get there over the last year or so. The grocery shopping program will end. There is an open Dial-A-Ride driver position, however no applications have been received.

**IX. AGENDA FOR SEPTEMBER MEETING**

There were no changes for the September agenda.

**X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no Public Participation.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION: Mary Udice made a motion to adjourn, Chylene Pender seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion passed with at 5-0 vote at 7:00 PM.**

The next meeting of the Commission on Aging and Disabled is Wednesday, September 1, 2021 at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Gail Whitney, Commission Clerk