

Northampton Council on Aging Meeting Minutes 9/13/18

at the Northampton Senior Center, 67 Conz Street, Northampton

Present: Kathie Bredin, Gerriann Butler, Deborah Epstein, Michael Ford, Casey Fowler, Dennis Helmus, Jeanne Henry Hoose, Cynthia Langley, Bob Montague, Donna Park, Kathy Pekala Service, Jean Petty, Marie Westburg

Excused: Mary Lastowski

Absent: Mark NeJame

- Gerriann Butler called the meeting to at 3:32 PM.

Public Session – No one was present from the public.

Approval of minutes from the previous meeting

- Motion made by Kathie Bredin, seconded by Cindy Langley, to approve the 7/12/18 minutes as written. Minutes were unanimously approved as written.

Old Business

1. **Vote on Policy Committee's review of the Code of Conduct Policy and COA By-Laws:** Dennis Helmus said the policy committee met to review code of conduct and by-laws and update them. Final drafts were handed out to the Board to review. There was no vote taken because the changes have to be posted on the website for at least two weeks prior to a vote. Also there was a discussion on the Golden Age Meals Tax exemption. This is an exemption of tax for those 60 and over. There are stipulations to receive this exemption. Marie is looking into this further. The issue relating to the By-Laws is does the Golden Age tax exemption require that the mission be to serve those 60 and older. Then there was a discussion on serving those 55 and under. Marie is redrafting the rental policy and looking at all procedures to make sure they are all focused on the mission of this agency. Cindy Langley brought up a recommendation to discuss at the next meeting our funding sources, not just as an outsource of a By-Laws discussion. Through the framework of the By-Laws, we want to protect what our mission is: i.e. serving seniors first. In the By-Laws, there is an update to Section 4 regarding terms of service. Members can serve two terms and serve on only one City committee at a time. After two terms, a council member can rotate off and then back on. Members are appointed to the Council on Aging as COA Members. This will be discussed in October after By-Laws and Code of Conduct are posted as per open meeting laws.
2. **Update on Age-Friendly/Dementia Friendly Initiative, i.e. AARP and Tufts Grant Applications:** We are applying for a Tufts Foundation Grant. This is worked on by a subcommittee. Age-Friendly committee is working on meeting with community partners for the Age-Friendly status. The Mayor will host a meeting and invite community partners to become involved. This is a chance to get more community involvement.

Highland Valley Elder Services Report by Kathryn Pekala Service

Kathy Pekala Service said there will be an annual meeting at Hadley Meeting House. All are welcome. Vendors will be there. It is October 4th, a Thursday, from 4 to 5:30pm. The purpose is to help people understand Highland Valley Elder Services better and how they can help them age well.

New Business

1. **Pilot of Expanded Hours starting October 1st, partnership with Hampshire Regional YMCA:** There will be a year-long pilot of expanding evening and weekend hours that will show us if there is a need. This is to improve access to those seniors who are still working; thus are unable to get to the Senior Center now. We are expanding the Fitness Center hours on Tuesday and Thursday nights and Saturday mornings. When the

Farmers Market is open, the Fitness Center will be open but separate from this public event. On Tuesday and Thursday nights there will be more programming. YMCA will be offering some classes designed and taught by their staff. Dance and Sculpt for older adults and Zumba/Yoga will be offered on Saturdays. Cooking, fitness and health counseling programs will be coming. Marie wrote a grant for funding these programs. Live Strong Health Smart programs are part of YMCA. A YMCA instructor is taking over a class that is currently peer-led.

2. **Report on changes: Staffing, assessments of fee structures, new rental policy, financial aid:** We will not be renting the building during open hours. We will reserve our parking and resources for seniors. A request of \$3000 from the gift fund will be put before the City Council to be approved for a Financial Aid fund. We will still have Five College Learning here as it relates to the mission. Marie wants all seniors to have access to all programs regardless of economic ability and support inclusivity. We will make sure people know we have financial aid. Seniors will only be screened once per year or if income changes. There should be no barriers or stigma for any senior to access programs. Marie is looking at all fee structures here and would like to streamline them. She is talking to the Y and other senior centers as to how they structure their fees. Staffing: Janis Levy left. There is an opening for Program and Media Coordinator. A custodian will be coming on soon and be dedicated only to the senior center. Marie is starting a local trip program. Our vans will take people places once a month for those who are homebound or don't drive and need socialization.
3. **Program Developments: Food, Trips, Classes, Entertainment:** Kim Park is looking at putting together two focus groups looking at programming and arts and culture. She would like input from council members. Also, there will be a policy and procedures focus group. Kim is working on orientation packets as well as ongoing training for volunteers, coffee shop training etc.
4. **Vote: Golden Age Meals Tax Exemption:** Discussed earlier. Marie asked Council Members to look at the Chronicle and see what is going on. How can new seniors access all information? We want Council Members input. Information kiosks were going to be put in one place. We started sending a constant contact email out to 1400 people. Ice Cream social had 112 reservations from the Constant Contact email.
5. **Grand Opening of the Bistro is the 9/20/18 from Noon to 1pm:** The Hampshire County Sheriff's Office will be here as well.

Other Business

1. A list of Board Members was given out.
2. Parking – Decided to have Election Workers park at the Gazette. Upcoming Election Day will be discussed.
3. There was supposed to be parking at the WWII Club. Council Members thought that was voted on at a previous Council Meeting to be able to park at WWII Club and a sign was to be made.
4. Seamstress-Has there been anyone found for that? Suggestions were given for options.
5. Michael Ford said one of the refugees who recently settled is a very talented tailor. We should have his information to be able to share with those who query.
6. It was brought up to discuss the policy of who should be using the Center. Council would like to have a slightly generous definition of what that means. Example of senior who is 55 plus but friend/spouse is not. Thing about how and what best serves seniors. Some grandparents are parenting grandchildren.

Adjourning the meeting

Casey Fowler made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Dennis Helmus seconded it at 4:48 PM. Motion was unanimously approved.

Announcements

- **Next NCOA Board Meeting:** Thursday, October 11th, 2018, at 3:30 at the Northampton Senior Center.

Respectfully submitted by _____

Linda R. DeMercurio