Commission on Aging

Town of Weston, Connecticut

Minutes: Monday, January 4, 2021 at 930AM

Present: Commission members Bruce Lorentzen, Richard Wolf, Francine Goldstein, Alison McElhone, Terry Castellano, Don Gumaer ; SWCAA liaison and Senior Center Director Wendy Petty; Weston Social Services Allison Lisbon

Note: This meeting was held via Google Meet Video Call due to Coronavirus pandemic

The meeting convened at 9:35 AM.

The minutes of the last meeting (December 2020) were approved.

First item on the agenda was elections. Bruce was nominated and accepted another tem as president of the Commission. Richard was nominated and accepted the position of Vice President, replacing Helen who recently stepped down from the Commission. Alison M will stay on as Secretary.

Commission meetings will continue to be on the first Monday of the month at 9:30AM.

Wendy spoke about the Senior Center Reopening. As of now, there are no plans to reopen untilat least the COVID vaccines have been given to seniors. The Center will continue with the online programming. One of the staff is always present at the Senior Center during working hours. Richard stated that the most important thing the Senior Center can do at this time is to provide information about the vaccine. Specifically, need to provide an outline to seniors explaining how the vaccine will be distributed. Wendy has contacted the DOH and SWCAA. There is no information as of yet. Allison L reported the Norwalk DOH has a plan in place regarding the vaccine. Richard suggested we contact our state representatives, Tony Huang and Will Haskell, to get more information. Wendy will reach out to them this week.

Richard gave the facilities update. They are still waiting for the handicap bathroom sink. Wendy is also requesting a grant to have the sink in the other bathroom replaced. She also put another request into the capital budget expense. She will send us a copy. Richard is on the facilities optimization committee. The Senior Center is a lower priority for upgrades as it may be relocated in the near future. Allison reported there appears to be no plan to relocate the Senior Center in the next 10 years. The members agreed that we must keep asking for Senior Center needs. Wendy is asking again to increase her hours to FT. Allison stated we need to support Wendy getting FT status. Bruce is going to write a letter to Jonathon and Chris about this.

Wendy also noted the Social Services Dept is in the same position – putting in considerably more hours to address the needs. Richard asked Allison what hours she is putting in do do her job, versus what she is paid for. Allison is paid for 26.5 hours per week. The budget was increased for the COVID pandemic. She has asked to increase her hours to 30/week, to support her in doing assessments, supervising staff, fielding calls, staying up to date with resources. . She has also asked for an outreach worker (SW) for 14 hours per week to help with assessments. Social Services has been assisting households with many issues – not just financial. The issues include mental health, substance abuse, senior issues, domestic issues. Weston Social Services inc. The 26.5 hours for Allison and 19 hours for the administrative assistant does not compare with other towns.

Richard suggested we go before the Selectman at one of their meetings to discuss the issue about the hours for Social Services and the Senior Center. Bruce suggested we request time at the next Selectman’s meeting. It would be helpful to have a copy of the budget request for the Senior Center and Social Services.

Allison gave the Social Services report. Holiday meals, nonperishables were recently given out. Wrapped gifts were given to families with children. Gifts were also given to seniors in need. Girl Scouts helped with this. The Food Pantry got a new security system and was temporarily closed. Allison has been helping with energy applications.

Wendy reported the Friends is a 501C and they are working on setting up the ability for online donations. The Margaret Wirtenberg auction went well. The money raised will be for curbside lunches. Youth Services arranged donations of holiday cards/crafts from kids to seniors in Weston. Roy has been busy with medical appts and food deliveries.

The meeting adjourned at 1022AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison McElhone