

**TOWN OF DARIEN  
COMMISSION ON AGING  
REGULAR MEETING  
JUNE 15, 2016**

**ATTENDANCE:** Joseph Pankowski, Chair; Jennifer Geddes, Anne Marie Rayhill, Christine Castles, Ron Heinbaugh, Ray Slavin, Gerri Genovese

**STAFF:** Olive Hauser, Human Services; Beth Paris, Mather Center Director

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Pankowski called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. A quorum was present.

Mr. Pankowski said that both the Republican and Democratic Town Committee were working on new appointees to fill the vacancies left by Ms. Squyers, Ms. Woods and Ms. Anderson-Broecking.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

**May 18, 2016 Minutes**

**\*\* MR. HEINBAUGH MOVED THE MINUTES OF MAY 18, 2016.**

**\*\* MS. GEDDES SECONDED.**

The following correction was noted:

Page 2, paragraph 4: please change the following from:

He said that he had just received an email from Ms. Terry Woods that the Commission of Aging has been combined with the Commission on Women and Children into a Commission on Children, Women and Elderly.

To: He said that he had just received an email from Ms. Terry Woods that the State of Connecticut Commission of Aging has been combined with the State of Connecticut Commission on Women and Children into a State of Connecticut Commission on Children, Women and Elderly.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MAY 18, 2016 AS CORRECTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**MATHER CENTER REPORT.**

Ms. Paris presented her report. (See attached)

## HUMAN SERVICES REPORT.

Ms. Hauser presented her report. (See Attached)

At the conclusion of her report, Ms. Hauser said that there was a new State law that would start on July 1st, which will make the Town responsible for any unclaimed bodies. While Darien only has had three incidents of this type, it is a concern. She pointed out that the most vulnerable people would be affected.

## OLD BUSINESS.

Mr. Pankowski said that the question of whether out-of-town residents should be charged a fee for using the Mather Senior Center was raised at the last meeting, with a decision on the Commission's stand deferred until this meeting. Mr. Heinbaugh said that he had asked a few people if they would be willing to pay \$30.00. They were not in favor of this. A suggestion had been made that the cost of a lunch be increased by one dollar. Mr. Heinbaugh pointed out that this would cost the Darien residents more money. A discussion followed about various amounts.

Ms. Paris said that she had spoken with other Senior Center Directors about this. Other Centers have capped the out of town participants at a certain percentage or a set number. Ms. Paris said that the Baldwin Center in Stratford charges non-residents \$5.00 a year, but they are capped at having only 1,000 non-residents per year. There are many people living in nearby Bridgeport that want to use the facility and attend the programs because it is closer to where they live and it is safer. Each Senior Center has its own particular nuances like that.

Ms. Paris said that there were two revenue accounts for the Senior Center, but that these were not actually revenue for the Center. Ms. Paris explained that there had been a policy set before she began working at the Center that half of the program money had to be returned to the Town every year and originally all of the food money. Later, the requirement about the food money was reduced to 75%. She pointed out that there were 17 volunteers who provide classes and the Center does not charge for the classes because the teachers don't charge the Center. There is a value to those classes.

She pointed out that the Town taxes all the residents for the education of the children and wondered why the programs for the seniors was not also handled in the same manner. The senior population is often on a fixed income and those who are not could easily find themselves on a severely reduced income due to a serious illness. The Senior Center budget represents 1.8% of the budget. This year's budget was reduced by 1.2% due to efficiencies that were a result of the move to the Mather Center.

Ms. Hauser pointed out that many of the out of town attendees pay to attend programs and also purchase lunches, which is actually revenue. Ms. Paris agreed. She added that

there was value in the fact that the people who attend the Center also connect with other people. At Christmas, many people have given the Center checks as donations.

Philosophically, it is important to consider the fact that the Center is a very small portion of the overall budget, Ms. Paris pointed out. She asked if the Town really wanted add another financial budget on the senior population who have lived in town, paid their taxes and are now on fixed incomes.

Ms. Geddes asked if the program fees remained in the program. Ms. Paris said that when the facility was on Edgerton Street, the Center gave the Town \$600 a week for the General Fund. Now in the new Center, the program is generating \$1,300 a week for the General Fund. The money goes back to the town. Ms. Hauser asked whether the fee for an out-of-town resident would go back into the General Fund or be used for Senior Programming. Mr. Pankowski said he would not be pleased if the town took the fees from the out-of-town residents for the General Fund.

**\*\* MR. HEINBAUGH MOVED TO HAVE THE FUNDING GENERATED BY OUT-OF-TOWN PARTICIPANTS REMAIN WITH THE SENIOR CENTER.**  
**\*\* MS. GEDDES SECONDED.**  
**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Pankowski asked if there was anyone who wished to advocate for charging the out-of-town residents a fee? Ms. Hauser asked what was the point of charging a fee for an out-of-town resident? She cautioned everyone that the goal should not be just raising revenue for the Town of Darien. Mr. Heinbaugh agreed. Ms. Hauser pointed out that charging a fee to the out-of-town participants would add a number of clerical tasks, such as tracking and handling the money and may require another part-time staff person.

**\*\* MR. HEINBAUGH MOVED TO ADVOCATE NOT TO CHARGE THE OUT-OF-TOWN RESIDENTS FOR USE OF THE SENIOR CENTER.**  
**\*\* MR. SLAVIN SECONDED.**

Ms. Castles expressed concern and asked what would happen if the program kept on growing. Ms. Genovese said that it would be sad to see those who are out-of-towners being blocked out of the programs. These people need the comradery they find at the center. Ms. Hauser said that there would also be the issue of reciprocity between the centers. Sometimes residents are more comfortable at other centers and find their niche.

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Pankowski pointed out that sometimes the out-of-town residents bring in valuable skills and benefits. Beth pointed out that three out-of-town residents started the Mahjong games and now that activity has grown and many Darien residents participate. Discussion followed.

**NEW BUSINESS.**

Ms. Hauser said she would like to caution everyone about taking calls from firms that they are unfamiliar with. The IRS will send people a letter, they will not contact people via the phone or email. There is another group out there offering to fix computer problems via remote access. This is also a scam. Mr. Pankowski cautioned everyone to never give their credit card number out over the phone.

Ms. Castles said that she had left a meeting one night and the lighting on the stairs down to the lower parking lot was not working. Ms. Hauser said that there was a Cue alert on the Public Works website where people can let the department know about the problems. She said that she had spoken to Public Works about this and someone had checked the lights and replaced some bulbs.

**ADJOURNMENT.**

**\*\* MR. HEINBAUGH MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* MS. GENOVESE SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services

## **Darien Senior Programs**

Commission on Aging Report

June 15, 2016

Respectfully Submitted: Beth Paris, Director

The Statistics for Membership and Renewal are almost complete. With the assistance of several volunteers we were able to compile a "list of reasons" folks that are non-residents utilize Senior Programs in Darien. An unexpected result of this endeavor has been a more accurate number of non-residents. We found that there were folks that have moved out of the area, abilities declined making them unable to participate or they are deceased. We are hoping to have a final number and statistical report by September.

Stamford Hospital held Community Health Need Focus Group with 10 Darien residents gives them feedback about program services.

- Project completed for Goals and Objectives to be written that would be in line with Board of Selectman; still in the discussion phase of revenue accounts for Darien Senior Programs.
- Food Satisfaction Survey started June 1<sup>st</sup> will end June 30<sup>th</sup>- will be utilized to assess current food program and look forward to future planning and development.  
Attendance is brisk with folks already beginning to visit family for the summer months.

**Highlighted & New Classes:** Author *Jane Barrett* will discuss her book "They Called Her Reckless"; Weekly Line Dancing with Elizabeth Hall

**Health & Wellness:** *VNA & Hospice*-Sex and Intimacy and Isolation\*\*;  
*RVNA* – Mental Health and Resilience; *Walgreens*- Immunizations; *Stamford Hospital*- How to Prepare for a Physical Exam w Dr. Joshua Herbert; Kelly Johnson LCSW, *Family Centers*-Good Lit, Good Life! ; *Ct Pharmacy*- The Benefits of Chocolate

**Educational:** *Stamford Hospital* Focus Group on Community Wellness; *Art Gottlieb LCSW* –Margaret Bourke-White; Reminisce with *Geri Genovese*; Caregiver Educational Support Group-Planning for the Summer Months; *Darien Library*- TBA

**Creative Pursuits:** Wednesday Craft Classes; Ongoing Art Classes Oil, Acrylic, Watercolor; Stain Glass; Knitting and Crocheting

**Entertainments:** *Bob Gianotti* Musician Extraordinaire; Monday at the Movies

**Services:** Blood Pressure *VNA & Hospice of Fairfield County* 1<sup>st</sup> Monday Morning of the Month –Third Thursday Afternoon of the Month; Ask a Social Worker every Wednesday *Darien Human Services*; Ask a Lawyer by appointment only; Supportive Options Counseling as needed/requested.

**Program Days:** 22

**Caregiver Educational Support Group:** 7

**Human Services Referral:** 10

**At Home in Darien:** 6

COMMISSION ON AGING  
Darien Human Services Report

June 15, 2016

1. The Renter's Rebate program is under way and will be open for applications until October 1, 2016. This is a program that offers a rebate on rent and utility payments to low income seniors and the disabled who rent. Hartford has placed a warning on the application that the grants may be reduced due to cuts in the state budget. Grants run anywhere from \$50 to \$700.
2. This has been a good year for energy assistance. With the price of oil and the warm weather, most clients were able to make it through the season without additional help. The state did extend the application period so we were able to help the late comers and those new to town. Operation Fuel continues to offer \$500 grants to families and individuals who over asset for the conventional fuel assistance program or have missed the enrollment date.
3. Ali Ramsteck and the Fire Marshal's office attended a conference on hoarding. Human Services has developed a data base that is on private drive that cannot be shared or seen by any department or person that is not given permission. Presently only Human Services and the Fire Marshal's office have access to the data base. The data base will allow us to have all our information on very case I all in one place. Our case count is currently, 10.
4. Ali has been very busy helping seniors with the daunting paper work associated with any state or federal program and to review their eligibility for any other programs that might be helpful to them.
5. For those who don't know, Darien Domestic Abuse Partnership has become a private 501C3 and is now known as Darien Domestic Abuse Council. This Incorporation will allow the council to set their own agenda and distribute funds without having to "run it by" another organization.
6. Our Senior Resource Directory and Elderly Housing and Adult Day Care in Southwestern Connecticut directory have been updated and ready for distribution.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Olive Hauser