

Senior Services Commission

January 8, 2024

The meeting was called to order by Anne Kaiser at 10:30 a.m.

Present: Judy Benvenuto Deirdre Daly Ann Jordan
Anne Kaiser Patricia Snow Bonnie Sprague
Judy Norris

Absent: Linda Worden, Steven Falco, Mertie Terry, Sal Nesci – Director of Public Health

Others: Amy Saada – Senior/Human Services Director
Al Waters- Town Council
Paula Luna – Town Council
Kathleen Cartwright – Cromwell Resident

Approval/Amendment of Agenda

Motion to Approve by Judy Norris, seconded by Deirdre Daly. All in favor. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2023 Regular Meeting made by Judy Benvenuto; seconded by Patricia Snow. All in favor. Motion carried.

Director of Public Health Update – Sal Nesci

Sal Nesci was absent, but provided Amy Saada with 2 updates:

1. Its Radon Month and the Health Department has Radon Test kits for residents.
2. There will a Vaccine Clinic on February 7th in the Gym with RSV, Flu & Covid vaccines.

Council Liaison Update – Al Waters

Councilman Waters discussed the current situation at 100 Berlin Rd. He stated that the Town approved a Tax abatement. The demo will cost over \$3M.

Councilman Waters stated he had concerns about the need for more storage for food. He would like to see money put towards a Community Center to address lack of space.

A discussion occurred and Deirdre Daly stated with the current tax increase she believes a Community Center plan will be turned down. She said taxes went up without people knowing it wasn't for the new school yet. She stated through a previous conversation with Doug Sienna, Community Center is in the 5-year plan.

Al Waters stated there is an \$8 Million plan for sports complex.

Senior/Human Services Director's Report – Amy Saada

Grants/Funding Updates

\$2880.00 Tai Ji Quan, Moving for Better Balance Grant was extended and class will begin in February.

Some 2023 Statistics:

54 Outreach Clients, 32 receiving home visits

840 people were active at the center

13 Attended our LGBTQ+ events

13,088 check ins at the Kiosk

49,215 miles traveled on our busses

1370 rides provided for medical appointments (1-way trips)

7,798 total rides provided

93 went on 9 Friendship Tours Trips

Summary of Food Donations for 2023:

14,573 Pounds of food donated, plus 11,563 pounds of food from food drivers, total 26,136 pounds!

Staff including drivers were trained in:

(all staff) Identification and Mandatory Reporting of Elder Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

(all staff) LGBTQ+ training supporting LGBTQ+ Older Adults, Preventing Bullying and Transgender Aging

(some staff) QPR Suicide Prevention, Mental Health in Muslims, Substance Abuse Prevention, Opioid Overdose and Naloxone Training, Food Safety

January Updates:

01/11- Department to present to Town Council on what we do and goals for FY25

We are excited to announce we have hired a new Part Time Driver, Royal Sawyer. His first day was 01/02/24.

01/03- Technology Tips & Tricks- social media, amazon, Netflix, ordering meds online and more!

01/22- Scams Targeting Older Adults- presented by the Better Business Bureau of CT

01/24- Paint & Snack event, a Snow Winter Theme

Looking for Coordinator for AARP Tax Program to do taxes for individuals upon appointment. We are scheduled to take appointments beginning Jan 22nd for February 2024.

Thursday March 7th from 12:00-4:00 we will have AAA Driving course, \$15.00

Local Trips this Month

01/10- McGivney Pilgrimage Center and Lunch at Olives & Oil in New Haven

01/17- Shopping at the Paper Store, Barnes & Noble, Lunch at Bricco Trattoria

01/24- Saddlers Ordinary & Marlborough Barn

01/31- Lessard Lanes- indoor mini golf and 2 games of bowling and lunch

Friendship Tours Upcoming Trips:

March 16, 2024	Fireplace Feast at Salem Cross Inn	\$147
March 27, 2024	The Orchid Show at New York Botanical	\$124
May 1, 2024	Daffodil Days Narragansett Bay	\$139
May 14, 2024	Neil Diamond The Tribute from Las Vegas	\$94
June 21, 2024	The Naugy Scenic Train, Naugatuck River Valley	\$124
June 16-23, '24	Bermuda Cruise from NJ	\$1449
September 5-16 '24	Escorted Mediterranean Cruise	\$3799
November 9-23, '24	Escorted Repositioning Cruise Southern Caribbean	\$2549

- Conversation on connecting with Covenant Living for trips and a suggestion was to publicize trips in the paper for the Friendship Tours. Our trips are publicized in our newsletter and in the senior center currently. Friendship Tours pairs us up with another town and we split the bus seats. The trips have all been full so it hasn't been an issue thus far. Residents at Covenant Living are more than welcome to participate in all senior center activities and they do- including trips.

Old Business

A. Senior Center ARPA Funding Project Space Needs-

Wall will be removed by pool tables expanding the Senior Center space a few feet and storage cabinets will be installed. Work will be completed by a couple different companies to lower cost. More storage is needed for both programming and food storage. Amy explained that this will help with food that is in hallways or on floor during peak donations.

Anne Kaiser said she spoke with Knights of Columbus and the individual stated that is the time of year they do the collection/drive and won't consider moving the food drive to another time of year when donations are lower and if they can't deliver when they typically do they will not do it next year. The holidays are a time when Human Services/ Senior Center receives many food donations which they temporarily are unable to be stored due to lack of space and line the hallways.

New Business

A. UR Community Cares-

This is a volunteer organization that is seeking funding support from the Town to expand their volunteer services into Cromwell. The funds would go towards background checks, mileage reimbursement etc for the volunteers. UR community cares match volunteers to seniors in need of such things as a ride to a medical appointment, to religious activities, or for someone to talk to when they are lonely and others may need help with things such as chores around the house or yard. It's a successful program in other towns.

A discussion on volunteers occurred and a suggestion to connect with the churches on what we do as they may know more folks that need home delivered meals and services and possibly volunteers to help.

B. DOT 5310 Senior and Disabled Transportation Audit-

In late October, the Department of Transportation conducted a site visit (the first time Cromwell had been selected for an in-person visit) and the final review of our Site Visit for Section 5310 for The Town of Cromwell was as follows:

"According to this audit and subsequent documentation submitted by The Town of Cromwell, we find this transportation program to be in Section 5310 compliance. You have filed all of your quarterly reports, have your pre-trip inspection reports in order; have your ADA required written policies regarding allowing passengers with service animals, passengers traveling with respirators or portable oxygen, passengers traveling with or without a mobility device who wish to use the lift to board your vehicles, and do not have restrictions on passenger boarding time. You are in Title VI compliance, have Title VI information and a form for complaints on your website and have posted Title VI signs in prominent places both inside your agency and on board your 5310 vehicle/(s). The CTDOT Title VI office is satisfied with your Title VI. There is no further action requested for The Town of Cromwell, from the Traditional Section 5310 Team at this time".

Citizen's Comments

Kathleen Cartwright asked about a Free/Reduced lunch program at the schools. There is a free/reduced lunch program. Amy discussed that a food pantry had been set up at Cromwell High School just last week. It will be managed at the school by the Homeless/School Climate Liaison out of the guidance department. The students are going to have a naming contest to bring awareness and reduce the stigma of utilizing a food pantry.

Deirdre Daly had asked about adhering to the bylaws as there have been board members who have had numerous absences, some have been reappointed for 4 months. Anne Kaiser stated she will check with James about this to see how people are reappointed. D. Daly suggested writing a letter to the individuals and possibly changing the term limit.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Anne Kaiser; seconded by Judy Benvenuto. Meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Olivia Lespier