

**COMMISSION ON AGING**

**May 3, 2021**

**Regular Meeting Via Zoom**

**Minutes**

**Present:** Jennifer DiSette, Gayle Kataja, Denise Weeks, Beth Hillson, Philip Markuszka, Daren Hill

**Liaisons Present:** Patti White, Senior Services Program Supervisor  
Thomas Phillips, Consultant  
Barbara Evans, AARP

Meeting called to order at 5:31 p.m.

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**MINUTES:**

Minutes of the meeting held on April 5, 2021 were accepted as written.

**COMMUNICATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None

**LIAISON REPORTS:**

**AARP:** Barbara Evans reported that the local chapter had been informed by the national AARP office that they can't hold any in-person activities until September, 2021. The grant application deadline for Chapter Awareness had been extended to May 28<sup>th</sup> with the recipients notified in June and awarded in December.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

Patti White informed the members about the programs and services provided by the Social Services Department as follows: 77 Food Bank requests were processed, Energy Assistance and Homeowner's Tax credit programs application deadlines were extended by the State and some program procedures were extended, making applications easier to process. Patti stated that community donations to the Glastonbury Gives Fund continue to be very generous as well help from the Glastonbury Interfaith group. The "Eye Openers" low-vision support group met and had a presentation from the ADA Paratransit service which was very well received by the members.

Patti White informed the members that the department had begun to provide in-person programming including: Tai Chi, Powerful Aging, Line Dancing, Billiards, and Bingo in the building, and pizza parties and movies outside on the patio. Patti also stated that plans are underway to provide a lunch program in June, and that the department had and will continue to offer many virtual activities.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

### **Chores Program**

Patti stated that the Chores program was now operating and that two residents had recently been served. Patti stated that there was a need for volunteers to help do large scale yard work and that Matt Snyder, the Chores program coordinator was reaching out to Youth and Family Services to organize youth volunteers. Denise Weeks recommended that the religious/church service groups be contacted, and Phil Markuszka suggested that local landscaping contractors be contacted to see if they might be willing to help as well.

### **Ageism Training**

The members who had taken the training indicated that they had found the curriculum to be of benefit to them. Patti stated that the next steps were to offer the training to the department staff and volunteers.

### **AARP Challenge Grant**

Patti reported that the AARP Challenge grant was submitted. The request is for \$25,000 to purchase ADA compliant benches and picnic tables to be placed in strategic locations linking trails in town. Also included in the request are solar powered charging stations and a shade screen for the back patio at the RCC, to allow for movies and programming to take place outside when needed. Grant awards are scheduled for June.

### **Age Friendly Update**

Thomas Phillips provided an overall update on the draft documents of the Age-Friendly Action Plan that included; the Executive Summary, History of the AFC initiative, Governance, Mission and Core Values, Action timeline, the Town Profile, Building on Current Work and the Eight Domains of Livability recommendations.

Members of the commission offered suggestions for edits and additions to the documents including the following:

- Add a core value of the town seeking to provide many affordable and appropriate housing options to allow all residents to remain in town.
- Include that COA is both voluntary and chartered.
- Add housing recommendation that includes creating a housing resource manual to assist residents and future residents in their housing search for appropriate and affordable housing.
- Change colors of action plan design to blue and gray
- Include language for town to provide both bike and auto rules safety training.

A motion was made by Denise Weeks to approve documents with recommended changes. The motion was seconded by Daren Hill.

Those voting yes: Phil Markuszka, Daren Hill, Denise Weeks, Beth Hillson, Jennifer Disette & Gayle Kataja. Motion passed unanimously. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Universal Design Development**

As a follow up to the discussion at the April 3, 2021 COA meeting, a motion was made by Denise Weeks for the Commission on Aging to send a letter to Community Development Manager

Jonathan Mullen with suggestions and questions regarding universal design development in town that would also include a suggestion that the proposed development on Main Street be looked at for the inclusion of Universal Design principals. The motion was seconded by Phil Markuszka. After a brief review by Denise of the history of the Universal Design language included in the POCD and the possible inclusion of it in the recent development proposal on Main Street, Gayle Kataja offered an amendment to the motion to include language in the letter as, “such as the proposed development on Main Street.” A revised motion was made by Beth Hillson to include Gayle’s suggestion, with the recommendation that Denise work with Patti White on a revised letter to be sent to Rebecca Augur, the new Director of of Planning and Land Use Services, referencing Age-Friendly Community and Universal Design values. The motion was seconded by Gayle Kataja.

Those voting yes: Phil Markuszka, Daren Hill, Denise Weeks, Beth Hillson, Jennifer Disette & Gayle Kataja. Motion passed unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Denise Weeks suggested that the COA find a way to enhance communication of information germane to the work of the commission outside of the actual meetings. Jennifer DiSette stated that the sending back and forth of emails was very time consuming and can be confusing. All agreed that information brought before the commission for review should be provided in a timely matter and made clear in the communications that it will be discussed at the meetings.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Patti White, Acting Secretary

