

## **Sherman Commission on Aging**

Feb. 27, 2012

**Present:** Carol Voorhees, Lorna Barrett, Jeanette Perlman, John Jenner. Beth Trott, director of the Senior Center and Sherman Social Services. Lynne Gomez, clerk.

**Minutes:** Minutes of the Feb. 6 meeting of the Commission were approved as read. John Jenner moved and Jeanette Perlman seconded.

**Director's Report:** Beth reminded Commissioners that snow closings are reported on Channel 3. If the school is closed or delayed, the senior center is closed or delayed.

The Triad Spring Conference is March 28 in Bridgeport. Good opportunity to learn about Triad.

Beth sent the budget to BOS. Proposals include increasing hours for transportation and assistant. Beth and Suzette will meet with Clay tomorrow. Increases requested are for increased need and to be in compliance with state disability and discrimination laws and Teamsters Union requirements. For example, ADA laws require 2 people on every trip to be in compliance. If increase is not granted, senior trips will have to be cut back.

**Energy Assistance:** Good news and bad news. Good news is the mild winter and people are getting more assistance than expected. Bad News: the government is referencing this mild winter for next year's needs.

**Emergency Management:** Diana Nunez, student intern, continues to work on Sherman Emergency Management, including the type of heat people have.

**Sherman Oral History:** John will meet with Peter and Louise Edwards with a list of 20 potential interviewees for next round.

**Old Business:** Housing Commission Update: Jeanette reported that the Housing Commission welcomes, supports and needs the proposed COA Symposium on Housing. Target date: Early May. The goal of the symposium will be educating public on options, benefits, etc. of senior housing that is affordable. Lynne will see if JCC is available on May 5 or April 28. Discussion ensued on the existing climate in town regarding projects – proposed or current. Jeanette noted that the COA has a responsibility to provide information to the public and identify a priority of needs. Primary needs: housing and transportation. It was again emphasized that the state requires that towns devote about 10 percent of their available housing to affordable housing. The town is not in compliance with that state mandate. The housing examined by the Housing Commission would not be a town project, but rather operated by a non-profit entity.

Discussion on housing continued. Lorna Barrett questioned how this symposium would be different from the last symposium on housing. Jeanette noted it would be an update illustrating also how the seniors market has changed. Beth Trott noted that a developer could come in from outside and develop senior housing that the town has no control over.

The main focus of the symposium would be to educate: regarding the alternatives, benefits, challenges if senior housing is NOT available. Beth Trott noted that there are many who need senior housing. These long-time Sherman people will soon have to move out of town. Lorna noted that the needs are also connected to transportation. Discussion of transportation available in neighboring towns ensued.

More discussion followed on the myth and reality of senior housing. Part of the symposium would be to dispel misinformation that has emerged. Discussion of attracting people to the symposium followed. Discussion of the loss to Sherman when people who have history and roots and commitment to Sherman move away.

***Symposium:*** The plans for symposium on housing include highlighting a real Sherman resident, Q & A hand-outs, signs for advertising, photos of existing housing alternatives, and columns in the paper. Detail to follow. Perhaps a raffle. Refreshments?

***Aging Advocate:*** John will have ready a column on the Fire House by end of March. Upcoming advocates are: Red Hats, April. Library, May. COA, June.

***Other business:*** At the next meeting, a discussion of COA charge, focus and goals.

***Next meeting:*** March 19 at 8:30 a.m. at the Senior Center.

Submitted:

Lynne Gomez  
Clerk