

Sherman Commission on Aging

Feb. 25, 2013

Present: Jeanette Perlman, Lorna Barrett, John Jenner, Carol Voorhees, and Jill Finch.
Lynne Gomez, Clerk,

Minutes of the Jan. Meeting were accepted as read.

Social Services Director's Report: Beth reported that there will be a whole new insurance system in October which will help people to get insurance. It will cover Medicaid and Medicare. It will take effect Jan. 1, 2014. Social workers will be able to apply for everything on line. Department of Social Services in process of updating phone system and computer system so people will be able to apply on line.

Discussion followed on health care especially for seniors. Beth reported that Medicare is changing many ways. Doctors will be more likely to take Medicaid patients because they will receive income in line with Medicare patients.

Beth attended a grant workshop. She reported there is a lot of money out there for the Senior Center and for Social Services. Beth suggested investigating the agencies available for grant funding. The ins and outs of grant writing were explored.

Cindy went to a workshop on Crisis Management. Beth will report next month.

Budget: The Budget for the Senior Center and for Social Services has been submitted. Rationale includes moving Beth's job to Health and Welfare. Beth's salary had been split between Social Services and the Senior Center. Another change is recommending switching Suzette's title to Coordinator of the Senior Center. The union is negotiating her salary and new position.

Beth would be strictly doing social work for the town. It will not change her job but she would not be directing the senior center. Suzette would then be attending COA meetings.

Beth discussed savings anticipated including Visiting Nurse charges which will no longer be paid for by the town, but will be covered by Medicare.

Also in Budget is an increase in the van driver hours to 24. The Senior Center needs two people on van trips, which would include a driver and an assistant. Suzette noted that we haven't added the loop inductor to the proposed budget. This item is for the hearing impaired.

Grants: Grants were discussed. Beth noted that a grant paid for the TV, computers, printers and it helped with My Senior Center. And the bus was supported by grants. The transportation grant is submitted annually.

Discussion of office space alternatives to seek optimal confidentiality for social service clients followed. Jeanette discussed grant funding opportunities for social services. Jeanette was surprised that the Sherman Senior Center has no line item in the budget for programming. Jeanette will assist Suzette in getting grant monies for programming.

Jeanette recommended getting assistance from organizations to assist the seniors, re: volunteers, to support the trips as an assistant. One of the missions is to provide ongoing support services for people with various diagnoses.

Advocacy: Jeanette indicated that advocacy was a goal for the COA going forward. She encouraged commissioners to write to legislators, write locally, and also use the Aging Advocate column as an advocacy tool. John suggested the COA invite our congressman to come and meet with us. Commissioners should keep track of their letters and responses and report back to the body at future meetings.

Discussion of the limits of the present senior center followed. Suzette noted that she has every intention to use Firehouse and Library for senior center purposes as those facilities become available..

Housing Commission update: Jeanette discussed the Option 6 of the Iroquois Recreational Easement. The BOS will make a ruling on the Option at the Feb. 28 meeting. Survey, percs and deeps, have been completed. Once the Iroquois easement is settled, the commission will have a map that illustrates clearly where the proposed project can be placed.

A pending referendum will ask residents for permission to lease the land from the town. Leased land will enable the next phase of seeking federal and state funding. Zoning as it exists will not allow multiple housing. The Housing Commission will begin the process with Planning and Zoning.

Oral History: Oral History plans are moving forward. A date will be set for spring. Almost all of the photos and bios are done.

Aging Advocate: Lynne will bring list of pending articles to next meeting. Cindy Merritt, the West Conn Senior Intern, will do an Aging Advocate column on the Homework Club.

Motion to Adjourn: 10:10.

Next meeting: March 11 at 8:30 a.m. at the Senior Center. This is a special meeting to discuss the Symposium.

Submitted,

Lynne Gomez

