

## Town of Somers

### Meeting of Advisory Committee for Seniors

November 14 2017

**Present:** Pat Bachetti, Elaine Bemont, Dori Bynack, Eileen Fedorowich, Phyllis Gwilliam, Ailene Henry, Deanna Schuetz, Tim Welch

**Absent:** Joan Sizer

**Audience:** Tina Toohey

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm by chairman Deanna Schuetz.

Tim moved and Pat seconded the motion that the minutes of our 10/10/17 meeting be approved as written.

Tim moved and Phyllis seconded the motion that audience participation be allowed.

#### **Committee Updates:**

##### **a. Chairman's Report**

**I. Budget Reduction:** Because of state budget cuts to municipalities, the Town of Somers asked all departments to cut budgets by 5%. The Human Services budget is 86% salaries and the rest is for programs, events and supplies. The cut has been modified a little but budgets still must be reduced. This means that some Senior Center December events including the New Year's Eve celebration must be cancelled. The newsletter will decrease from monthly to every other month. Staff hours will not be cut back but we need to identify other ways to save money. We discussed having a small charge for events.

**II. Legislation Impacting Seniors:** The state budget passed in October will have a significant impact for seniors.

- 1. Property Tax Relief for Low Income Seniors:** For 2017, the Town of Somers expected to get \$59,000 from the state for a program helping seniors to pay property taxes. This has been cut. If this is an unfunded mandate the town will have to come up with the money. If it is not a mandate the town may cut the program.
- 2. Renters' Rebate Program:** The town was scheduled to get \$42,000 from the state to help low income renters. Previously the State Office of Policies and Management sent checks to eligible renters and this has not been done for this year. The new statute says there is an immediate shift to municipalities so no one knows yet how this will be managed.
- 3. Medicare Savings Program:** This helps qualified low income seniors pay Medicare B premiums. It puts them on a program that helps pay for prescriptions and, for the lowest income seniors, picks up the 20% of medical costs that Medicare does not cover. This program has been cut.

These changes will be financially devastating to many people. There are many questions at this time and Human Services doesn't know how to help people. Deanna suggested writing to our legislators and will put their addresses in the next newsletter.

**III. Upcoming Senior Center Trips/Events/Programs:** Deanna distributed a list of November and December events and trips. Complete list is available on request. Since Blair Manor is closing, the programs that they hosted will end. The cost of the Mohegan Sun trips is going up. It is now \$25. If the trips continue to be on a Friday the cost will be \$35. If it is on Mon. thru

Thurs. it will be \$30. Deanna sent a questionnaire to people who go regularly on this trip. The majority wanted the \$30 option. The Committee decided on Tuesday as the best day.

**b. Policies and Procedures Manual Subcommittee Update:** Each member of the subcommittee is working on several sections. There is a lot of information to process and it is time consuming but they are making progress and there is no time limit for completion. We discussed whether the larger committee would like to see the sections already finished or wait until the committee finishes their work. The consensus was to wait until the manual is complete. Minutes of their meetings are available on line. We discussed having a coffee station outside the kitchen to avoid congestion in the kitchen. Pol and Pro subcommittee may include this in their kitchen use section.

**c. Meals on Wheels**

Eligibility Criteria: At our last meeting each member came with a list of criteria for MOW client eligibility. We discussed these lists and the definition of "Homebound". The Pol and Pro subcommittee will take these suggestions and come up with eligibility criteria. Last month we learned that the Hometown Kitchen Restaurant was going to prepare a monthly menu of MOW meals. We have not received this. Deanna will ask if this monthly menu can be sent to us.

**d. Senior Support:** Blair Manor is scheduled to close. Pat will try to keep in touch with as many of her people as possible.

**e. Senior Citizens' Club:** Membership is 167. Their Christmas Part will be limited to 70. The letter sent to the Senior Club from our committee asking for a donation to MOW was read at their board meeting this morning. The request will be presented to the larger membership at their lunch on 11/15/17.

Deanna commented on the new Senior Club Facebook page. It has good info about the club menus and events. She asked that the picture of the Senior Center be replaced by a picture relating to club activities. Dory will ask Sue Marshman to change this.

**f. Publicity:** No report.

**g. Woodcrest:** Eileen has resigned as a commissioner on the Housing Authority but plans to continue to attend meetings as a resident of Woodcrest. The issue of the increase of the propane bill has not been resolved. Eileen has made a complaint to the Better Business Bureau and will continue to pursue other issues at Woodcrest.

**Old Business:** none

**New Business:** none

Next meeting: December 12, 2017.

Moved by Dory and seconded by Tim our meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted  
Ailene Henry secretary

Minutes not official until approved at subsequent meeting.