

Town of Somers

Meeting of Advisory Committee for Seniors

September 12 2017

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

The meeting was called to order at 1:31 pm by chairman Deanna Schuetz.

Amendments to August 08 minutes: Eileen requested that the information about Woodcrest read, "Eileen has welcomed 15 new people over the past three months and given them information about services and events available as resources at our Senior Center."

Deanna pointed out that the policy of our Dial-a Ride service has always been "curb-to-curb" but this has recently been more strictly enforced. Fran Golden's complaint was not being able to sign up for the National Senior Citizens' Day event.

Tim moved and Pat seconded the motion that the minutes of the August 2017 meeting be approved as amended.

Dory moved and Phyllis seconded the motion that the August 30 meeting minutes be accepted as written

Audience: Sue Marshman, Marie Williams

Tim moved and Dory seconded the motion that this be an open meeting allowing audience participation.

Committee Updates:

a. Chairman's Report:

I. Senior Center Policies and Procedure Manual Sub-Committee: Deanna reported that the sub-committee is getting underway with Joan, Pat and Phyllis as members. Deanna is a non-voting member and will act as advisor and assist with agenda logistics. Their first meeting was 09/12/17. They will meet every two weeks and will keep the larger committee informed of progress.

II. Transportation Policy: Before today's meeting, Deanna sent copies of the old and revised transportation brochure to members by email.

Change on the Senior and Disabled Transportation column –addition of "Drivers are not permitted to enter driveways". This has always been the policy but has not been enforced until recently.

Change on the "Registration/Cost" column – addition of "The Town of Somers reserves the right to deny or discontinue transportation to residents who are deemed inappropriate for service or who demonstrate any inappropriate conduct."

Discussion: Elaine asked if the enforcement of the "curb-to-curb" rule has made a change in ridership. Deanna said no. Joan suggested under the Registration/Cost column to add "proof of Social Security disability". Tim asked about use of seat belts. This is not a requirement. Tim suggested we add under "Scheduling Transportation" that unscheduled stops are not permitted and that passengers, when scheduling, say if an aide will be travelling with them.

Donations can be given to a driver but it is preferred to give donations by check to the Senior Center. We discussed that passengers should be able to load and unload shopping bags independently and should not purchase more than can be easily managed but decided not to include this in the brochure at this time.

Sue Marshman expressed a concern about the “curb-to-curb” service saying this is a hardship for passengers. She had researched the policies of other towns comparable in size to ours. The towns she contacted allow “exterior-door-to-exterior-door” service. Deanna said this should be discussed with the Town of Somers Operations Manager and the Selectmen.

Deanna had looked into ADA regulations and is now the Town of Somers new ADA compliance officer.

III. Upcoming Senior Center Trips/Events/Programs: Deanna distributed a list of September and October events and trips. Complete list is available on request.

The facilitator from “Home Helpers” who was leading the Alzheimer’s caregivers’ support group would like to open the focus of the group to be a more inclusive senior support group.

b. Meals on Wheels: The program is going well. We discussed the definition of “homebound” and talked about the criteria for becoming a MOW recipient. Deanna suggested that for our next meeting each committee member should come with a statement of criteria for becoming a MOW recipient. Deanna stated that MOW will be included in the holiday Season of Giving program. Eileen asked if the Senior Club has been asked for a donation. Pat suggested that a presentation be made to the Senior Club. Ailene will draft a letter on behalf of the Advisory Committee asking the Senior Club for a donation for MOW.

c. Senior Support: Pat is in touch with 12 people. She will continue her support with holiday gifts and cards.

d. Senior Citizens’ Club: Dory reports 164 members. Deanna stated that the September newsletter will be the last to contain info about the Senior Club. Deanna has received proof of the Senior Club insurance/liability coverage. This has also been given to Ann Logan, town clerk. The first issue of the Senior Club quarterly newsletter has been published and mailed satisfying needs and concerns. The next step will be to see who is willing to receive the letter by email.

e. Publicity: No report.

f. Woodcrest: Eileen will be soon welcoming another 3 units. A Housing Authority meeting is coming up soon.

Old Business:

Emergency Registry: Deanna checked with CERT and the Somers fire department. At this time, an emergency registry that would contain a list of the town’s most vulnerable citizens does not exist. Our fire chief stated that it is a problem to keep such a list secure and up to date. Pat talked with CERT who said there is a problem with liability and keeping a list up to date. Pat also said that CERT encourages neighbors to check on neighbors when there is an emergency situation. Considering the problems, Elaine moved that we not proceed with an emergency registration at this time. Phyllis seconded the motion.

Continuing concern from Marie Williams: Marie asked that the committee rescind the motion made at our last meeting upholding Deanna’s decision to keep the sign-up list as is for the trip to the Goodspeed Opera house on Sept. 20 even though an error was made in allowing some non-residents to sign up before Somers residents. The reasoning was again explained and the motion was not rescinded. Marie was complimented on bringing this concern to our last meeting since it led to a policy change in signing up for trips and events that is fair to residents without being exclusionary to non-residents.

Marie also had a concern about how the wait list for trips is written. Deanna said she would amend this to have one wait list for residents and another for non-residents thus clarifying the situation.

New Business: none

Next meeting October 10.

Moved by Dory and seconded by Phyllis our meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Ailene Henry secretary

Minutes not official until approved at subsequent meeting.