

**Town of Somers
Advisory Committee for the Elderly
February 6 2018**

Present: Elaine Bemont, Dory Bynack, Ailene Henry, Phyllis Gwilliam, Deanna Schuetz, Joan Sizer. Pat Bachetti joined by speaker phone. Tim Welch sent an email.

No audience.

Chairman Deanna called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and thanked committee members for coming to a special meeting.

Deanna called a special meeting of the Advisory Committee saying in her email,

“We are holding this special meeting so that the Advisory Committee as a whole can hear just cause for the need to expedite implementation of a conduct/grievance policy.”

Deanna reported a concern that a frequent visitor to the Senior Center has been verbally abusive to several people, including staff, at the Senior Center several times over a long period of time and this conduct has escalated. Deanna has spoken to her and has spoken to the president of the Senior Club of which she is a member, without improvement. Deanna generated a letter which was seen by the First Selectman saying that the behavior cannot be tolerated and asking that the person meet with Deanna. The letter was ignored and the person has refused to fill out registration forms at the Senior center so there is no emergency contact.

Deanna has reached out to the Selectmen and town attorney. The attorney advised Deanna to meet with the Senior Club president if the offending person is part of the Senior Club, not to meet with the person directly. In January 2017, the town attorney said he would draft an official policy but this has not happened. In June 2017, two of the Selectmen met with the Advisory Committee and recommended that the committee write a policies and procedures manual with a code of conduct component.

A subcommittee of the Advisory Committee is working on the Policies and Procedures manual but Deanna and the committee feel that this issue needs immediate attention.

Dory moved and Ailene seconded the following motion: The Policies & Procedures Manual Subcommittee will cease work on all other sections of the manual and focus on the code of conduct/grievance policy *only* until the section is completed. This policy will be taken to the Advisory Committee for approval and then will be taken to the Selectmen and Town Attorney. When approved it will be implemented first, separately from the rest of the Policies and Procedures Manual. Motion carried.

The Town of Somers does not have a written code of conduct.

Deanna had sent to the committee by email, written codes of conduct from Ellington, Colchester, New Fairfield and Southbury. Several members of the committee stated that the Ellington document has a step by step approach to dealing with conduct problems and was quite complete in their coverage of potential problems. We agreed that our policies should also be complete including the banning of firearms.

The committee agreed that if Deanna meets with a person who has caused a problem a second person should be present. At this point, without a written code of conduct, Deanna cannot ban a person from coming into the Senior Center but she can call the State Police if she feels there is a danger.

We discussed and agreed that the Advisory Committee for the Elderly request that the Senior Club add to their by-laws immediately the following: All officers and members of the Senior Club must follow all policies and procedures of the Somers Senior Center.

Deanna will send a letter stating this to the Senior Club officers.

Deanna stated that her wish is that the Senior Center be an environment that is safe and happy for everyone.

Dory moved and Phyllis seconded that the meeting be adjourned 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Ailene Henry secretary

Minutes not official until approved at subsequent meeting.