

Town of Sherman
Commission on Aging via ZOOM
Monday, January 25, 2021 at 4:00pm

Members Present: Janet Wey, Sheila McMahon, Art VonPlachecki, Jeanne McRoberts, Carol Sperling, Rick Hudson, Lynda Lee Arnold, Ed Hayes

Members Absent: Juan Garcia

Also Present: Don Lowe – First Selectman, Suzette Berger – Sherman Senior Center, Lynne Gomez – Sherman Social Services

Clerk: Ruth Chen Byrnes

The meeting was called to order at 4:09pm by S. McMahon while Chairman J. Wey worked to resolve computer (ZOOM) issues.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve the minutes of the regular monthly meeting of November 16, 2020 by
A VonPlachecki

Seconded by J. McRoberts

Vote For: Unanimous

Senior Center Report: S. Berger welcomed Lynne Gomez as the new Social Services director. In early December Western Connecticut Area Association on Aging (WCAAA) announced that they were suspending delivering meals. With only 2 weeks notice, S. Berger negotiated with American Pie and IGA for meals in order to ensure food security while supporting local businesses. So far, 155 meals have been delivered to 31 clients with 2 new clients. No paperwork is needed since it's only for Sherman residents. Additional benefit is that they are able to refer some clients to the Matthew 25 program via Social Services.

Holiday Decorated windows was a huge success. It allowed for residents and community organizations to help decorate. 80 bags were handed out for those who came by to view the windows and also delivered to homes. A puzzle swap program is in place. Transportation resource guide sent out.

S. Berger applied to the State under the CARES Act and was approved for \$2500 for various COVID related items (automatic hand sanitizer, HEPA air ventilation for van, large screen TV). The plan is to slowly open once the staff is fully vaccinated.

Suzette will look into automated phone system that will allow for messages to go to seniors.

Social Services Report: L. Gomez has been inundated with calls about the COVID vaccine. Currently seniors over 75 need to register in the VAMS system which is not an easy system to navigate. R. Hudson and J. Wey offered to assist Sherman seniors with navigating VAMS. L. Gomez will provide R. Hudson with the glitches that she identified in VAMS along with the corrections. R. Hudson and another volunteer have offered to provide transportation to vaccination appointments. The Town's insurance policy covers volunteers providing rides, however to date no one has asked for transportation to a vaccination appointment.

Old Business:

Discussion on possible photography show: Decisions need to be made if art show will be strictly photography, with the idea that it would prompt seniors to take nature themed photos, or to allow for other mediums. Volunteers (particularly those with technical and computer skills) will be needed to help compile and upload the submissions onto a platform where people could view the artwork. Need to decide on when virtual show would be held; April may be too soon. J. Wey will contact the Sherman Library about timing of the art show and if the show will be hosted on the Library's website or some other one. It was decided that the art show will include all mediums and artwork that is done since the start of the COVID pandemic.

Discussion of drive-thru lunch and learn: L. Lee Arnold presented in Newtown where participants use their car radio to listen to a presentation. Cost of transmission system unknown. Topics such as estate planning or long term planning are often requested. D. Lowe shared that he has a PA system if COA decides to move ahead.

COA agreed to hold a drive-thru lunch and learn when the weather is warmer. Will start planning now for the event to take place possibly in June.

New Business:

The following members were reappointed to a 3 year term ending on 1/1/2024: S. McMahon, J. McRoberts, R. Hudson, J. Garcia.

2021/2022 Budget Submission to Town: All agreed with J. Wey that the COA budget could remain at \$2000 for next fiscal year. Ed Hayes noted that the COA budget is listed under the Senior Center, and has concerns that it is imbedded under a town agency. This could be problematic as COA is not meant to be a financial provider for the Senior Center. D. Lowe stated that although it has been this way for as long as he remembered, COA is the only commission attached to a town agency, and will speak to the town attorney.

Motion to submit the \$2000 budget request for fiscal year 2021/2022 by A VonPlachecki
Seconded by J. McRoberts
Vote For: Unanimous

Comments by Commissioners: A VonPlachecki inquired about the Housing Commission's recommendations for senior housing. D. Lowe shared that it is on the Board of Selectmen's agenda for this week's meeting. The Housing Commission concludes that they can go no further. Their work is done and submitted. A VonPlachecki noted that the Housing Commission and senior housing was initiated from the COA.

S. McMahon noted that there is no public transportation in Sherman, whereas other area towns do. HART was not interested in servicing Sherman when former First Selectman Cope inquired. R. Hudson suggested that since it's been several years, it is worth looking at again. D. Lowe agreed to follow up with the appropriate State agency.

Adjournment:

A.VonPlachecki moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:17pm.

C. Sperling seconded the motion.

Meeting was unanimously adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Ruth Chen Byrnes

Next meeting: Monday, February 22, 2021