



Town of Sherman Commission on Aging

Monthly Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 21, 2022

Members Present: Lynda Lee Arnold (Chairman), Janet Wey (Vice Chairman). Commissioners: Juan Garcia, Ed Hayes, Rick Hudson, Sheila McMahan, Art Von Plachecki, Carol Sperling

Members Absent: Suzette Berger, Jeanne McRoberts

Also Present: Lynne Gomez – Senior Services Director, Don Lowe – First Selectman

Clerk: Christine Aruza

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 PM by Chairman L. Arnold.

Motion made by: R. Hudson moved to approve the minutes

Seconded by: J. Wey

Vote For: Unanimous

Guest Presentation

L. Arnold introduced Dr. Jeff Melendez (Superintendent & Principal – Sherman School). Dr. Melendez was invited to speak to the commission about to get Sherman seniors involved with Sherman students. Dr. Melendez referenced the school's long-term plan (created in 2018) and associated goals. Part of the plan, Goal #13, is to engage members of the Sherman community to contribute to our school district and its future.

The plan includes actions steps and the action steps targeted for the 2021-2022 school year are as follows:

13.2 – Invite members of the community and alumni to a career fair for middle school students. [They have already started to work on this step and reach out to people with careers that might be of interest to the students.]

13.3 – Invite community members into classrooms as guest speakers and/or to lead activities. [He believes this action step would pertain nicely to this discussion.]

13.4 – Organize grade-level field trips to volunteer in the community. [He believes this would also relate well for opportunities for collaboration.]

In the past the school has had a number of members from the community come in and speak. They had speakers come in and talk about their experiences during the Holocaust. They have had people come and speak about their work on the Hubble Telescope who is a resident of the community. They have been fortunate to have people with real-life experiences that are very meaningful and important.

A. Von Plachecki talked about a prior experience whereby they worked with eight-graders. They had a mock town meeting with the students about a cell antenna being placed on the playhouse tower. Group discussion centered on how to move forward and find opportunities to work together inter-generationally. The suggestion was made to perhaps survey the community about potential topics where synergies could be found with the school curriculum.

J. Wey raised that there are other ways to collaborate. She referenced when students would help seniors with technology or would invite seniors to the art show or a play. Dr. Melendez shared that the next capstone project (XP Expo) will be in June where students demonstrate their learning and works (what they built, wrote, designed).

L. Arnold inquired if teachers would also be willing to put together a list of what topics/experiences they feel would be beneficial for their students. Dr. Melendez agreed that the teachers and the commission could generate subject lists and then compare to find common ground. The commission and Dr. Melendez agreed that a potential collaboration would likely occur in the fall due to ongoing COVID concerns. The school's June expo will be open to all students' families and will be a test run for conducting more in-person events with the broader public.

The commission agreed to come to the next meeting with potential first-pass topics to discuss for the next school year.

Senior Center Report:

The Sherman Senior Center continues to become increasingly more active. Seniors enjoyed an Irish party with live music sponsored by Candlewood Valley Health and Rehab and Synergy Health Care. This was the first larger event since the pandemic closures. The center appreciated the state trooper assisting with the crosswalk.

The shopping trips and exercise classes continue to see increases in attendance.

Two-months-notice has been given to all senior meal delivery clients that will be transitioning back to Wednesday luncheons and are discontinuing the Wednesday and Friday meal deliveries. The center will continue the American Pie senior dine deliveries two times a week at least until summer time.

The Senior Center will continue utilizing CW Resources, Inc. (CWR) for the Wednesday luncheons starting in May. CWR will supply all needed paper goods. Most importantly the center

doesn't want to jeopardize the ability to have the American Pie senior dine breakfast discounts in the restaurant and lunch delivery program as this is all with the same company. The center may decide to switch to the New Milford Culinary School food in future months after further study.

The Senior Center had a successful staff training March 11th. Each member completed the mandated reporter training for elder abuse. Senior center staffs are required by CT law to report any suspected elder abuse within 72 hours or they could be fined \$500.

Upcoming programs of note include:

The Senior Center will host a Corn Hole Tournament on March 25th at 12PM which is being organized by intern Ryan Khoury.

Lynda Arnold and her firm Czepiga, Daly, Pope & Perri have offered to provide a Lunch and Learn titled, "What the Heck is a Trust and Do I Need One?" which will take place May 25th from 11am – 12pm.

Social Services Report:

L. Gomez provided an update on social services. She inquired what the commission would like to hear about in future reports. Whether it was something the commission needs support on instead of what she has done as not all of her service activities are senior related. She advised next month she will attend a training on dementia and then on conservatorship. In addition, she is also meeting with the local mental health association and with the Salvation Army on the prospect of creating a food bank for Sherman's seniors and income challenged population.

It was suggested that perhaps she could keep the commission apprised of what's new or trending legislatively that could impact Sherman seniors. It could also be helpful to know general trends she sees in the services provided to 65-85 population or if there are special cases that need additional help.

L. Gomez shared as a general FYI, that in New Milford (as part of the RVNAhealth ComfortWELL) there is a bereavement group that has started. It will meet monthly. She also shared with the group a journal from 15 years ago that the Commission on Aging (COA) put together on getting one's affairs together for final planning. It could be a good reference source down the road.

The commission asked if there were needs in the community that they could assist her with. While many cases are private there are general needs such as companionship or transportation and the like. L. Gomez will put together a list and send them to the group via email.

Ongoing Business:

Working Group Update:

D. Lowe advised the working group is in a holding pattern. The working group has received information packets from several firms (over a dozen). There will be a meeting on April 6 to go

over all of the packets. Afterwards the working group will go forward and pick a firm to make an architectural picture to be able to present to the town. It will be necessary to winnow down to a short list of firms in order to start the process of getting ballpark estimates. The group has started working on a flow chart to track different strengths of the firms. They are waiting on two firms for submissions before they can complete the chart.

Senior Center Wish List:

L. Gomez shared Sherman Social Services' wish list for the proposed new Senior Center. R. Hudson will bring to the attention of the working group.

Spring Photo Project Update:

A. Von Plachecki laid out photo samples (5x7 and 8.5 x11) to share early entries to the project and one supplied by J. McRoberts. He advised cellphone cameras take good quality photos and should not deter submissions. If the commission selects the 5x7 size they will all fit on the boards for display. If people inquire about potential subject matter, can recommend Naromi walking area, wildlife, blooming flowers and so forth.

A. Von Plachecki will send an article about the project to the local newspapers (*Town Tribune, Sentinel*) at the end of the week. The article makes it clear that people don't need to be an expert photographer or full-time hobbyist to participate. There will be a follow-up article two weeks later. He thanked J. Wey for publicizing the project at meetings at the Senior Center and Linda Hubbard also promoted. He will finalize the judging process shortly.

New Business:

No new additional business at this time.

Announcements:

No announcements at this time.

Adjournment:

A. Von Plachecki moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:52 p.m.

R. Hudson seconded the motion.

Vote for: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Christine D. Aruza
Next meeting: Monday, April 18, 2022, 4:00PM at Mallory Town Hall