

MANSFIELD COMMISSION ON AGING MINUTES

March 14, 2022 held via Zoom in virtual format

Town of Mansfield

In accordance with PA 21-2 §149 and social distancing guidelines recommended by the CDC to slow community spread of COVID-19, this meeting will be held virtually. A video recording of the meeting will be available on YouTube at "MANSFIELD CONNECTICUT STREAMING CHANNEL" (<https://mansfieldct.gov/video>) within seven (7) days after the meeting. Public Comment will be accepted by email at human.services@mansfieldct.org or by USPS mail at 4 South Eagleville Road, Mansfield, CT 06268 and must be received prior to the meeting (public comment received after the meeting will be shared at the next meeting). Please email human.services@mansfieldct.org or call 860.429.3315 by 08:30 AM on the day of the meeting to receive instructions for how to view, listen, or comment live.

Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMyjcS09ZDk>

Meeting called to order at 9:34 AM by John Riesen

Martina Wharton makes a motion to accept the February minutes and Laura Austin seconds. The motion carries.

PRESENT: John Riesen (2024), Martina Wharton (2023), Devon Hock (2023), Joanne Sousa (2024), David Stevens (2023), Will Bigl (2024), Sylvie DelaMotte (2023), Laura Austin (2025)

ABSENT: Nancy Trawick-Smith (2023)

STAFF LIAISON MEMBERS PRESENT: Sarah Taylor: Senior Center Supervisor, Patricia Schneider, Director of Human Services, Mary Attardo, Juniper Hill Village Representative

Additional Community Members Present: N/A

CORRESPONDENCE: N/A

PATRICIA SCHNEIDER'S REPORT:

- Pat reports that the town meetings will be both live and virtually
- A copy of the budget schedule will be sent out
- Hoping to get vacant position filled and should know more this week

- Wall is being installed at Senior Center
- Town is still in the process of the programmatic building study that is taking place.
- The new van is here, it is 12 passenger van with two wheelchairs and lift equipped.

SARAH TAYLOR'S REPORT:

- Senior Center is closed to the public this week
- Mask Mandate being lifted which allows for coffee, snacks and refreshments as well as Fresh Fridays in person. Looking at April to make some changes in those areas.
- Fresh Fridays have been very successful as drive throughs and plan to offer it as a hybrid program.
- Yamil will be going out on Maternity leave and looking at the best way to get the Café going again. She runs transportation and outreach.
- Building is also going to be opening to outside groups in the evening. Dorothy is the contact for those details.
- St. Patrick's Day celebration was on Friday. 72 people were served.
- April is volunteer appreciation month.
- New Van party is going to take place in April. The big difference with this new van is that when there is a passenger with a wheelchair you won't lose other seats. 12 person capacity plus two wheelchairs. The ceiling is carpeting to keep the cabin more quiet. There is a heated step so it does not ice over. 25,000 dollars of that purchase was from the Association. There is also a Hepa filter in the van as well to clean the air. Want to thank all the members of that final Board for making that happen. Joanne was a big part of that decision as well, so thank you!
- John asked regarding Accreditation. Sarah reported she is still awaiting details regarding that, but there are other programs that will be happening before accreditation.

David Stevens Report and ARPA Discussion:

- Discussed that \$6,000 listed under senior center and 300,000 dollars listed for ambulance. David was disheartened in terms of where the money was distributed and where the money is. Do we need an ambulance? Stated the amount of money that was guided toward seniors, just didn't seem right. David wanted to present the opportunity to look at the numbers and to discuss.
- Pat discusses there is very specific guidance on what you can spend ARPA funds on. Everything that is in the town's response has to be dealing with one of those guidelines. They wanted one of the allowable uses to fund projects of non profits that do regional services.
- What projects do you see would fit into guidelines and how? Pat reports most of the projects do effect seniors in a positive way for example, the library and ambulance services.
- Discussed Pages 5-6 on document Pat emailed out. Human/Social services Mobile Outreach: Mobile outreach van will be used in all of our departments. Biggest impact on senior center is Enhanced Funding for Human Services Program.

- Pat discussed the biggest thing in question is connecting water up to the middle school and expanding wifi and wireless access which are the big projects that need funding. Wireless access will have an impact on the senior population.
- Pat advocates If you have input then there is a town council meeting tonight. They need to hear from the community in regards to how to prioritize what should happen. The deadline is in April for the Council which will make decisions, so the meeting this evening will have a big impact.
- Will discussed page 6 and discussed the breakdown of funds for Seniors.
- David discussed concerns where some of the money is allocated to. For example, 150,000 for a design project to do what with? David reported concern that not once did anyone come to the Commission on Aging to ask their thoughts, and feel that the senior residents are always put second. Pat reports they did send out a community survey to the whole community.
- Sarah reports there was nothing specific for the senior center itself. Sarah reports concern for air filtration systems in the senior center building.
- Send concerns to the Town Council, Tasha and Town manager and ask to be included in the town packet. Pat recommends as well to be there in person.
- The Council Discussed the following topics to bring to the Town Council's attention:
 1. Why aren't more of the funds directed specifically for seniors?
 2. Out of 150,000, 92,000 is going to Farms to Families? Why so much?
 3. Where is senior housing going to be on Hunting Lodge Road?
 4. Discussed that the percent of the money that is being designated to make a real impact on seniors, is a very small percentage of the overall budget and it doesn't reflect what the needs of the seniors are. What can be done regarding this?
 5. Senior center would love to have more funds for nutrition, transportation and mental health programming.

WRTD REPORT: Will reports that the Board of Directors meeting is going to take place at the end of the month.

HOUSING REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS:

Rolling Hills (Jensen's Park): Will reports that the club house is finished, but nothing official has been announced. Construction is still going on, but hopefully it will be finished this spring.

Glen Ridge: Martina asks if a Commission member could attend the next Board meeting with her so the Commission can present live and get another representative. Will volunteers to go with Martina to next meeting.

Juniper Hill Village: Mary reports that Laurie who is the social worker is leaving the end of March so they are in the process of interviewing and hiring someone else. Regarding Covid 19, residents no longer have to wear a mask, it is personal choice. Visitors who are vaccinated do not need to wear a mask, unvaccinated visitors do need to wear a mask. 5 are allowed to sit at a table for meal times. They are allowing only a certain amount of people still in the dining room during entertainment shows. Rent a

rebate starts April 1st. Hearing clinic is going on the second Thursday of every month. Joe the outdoor maintenance worker is leaving and a fairwell party will take place on April 1st. New hire, Mario, to take his place.

Wrights Way: Position vacant. Still waiting for representative

Old Business:

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION:

N/A

New Business:

- A. Proposed writing of a letter to the town regarding the two vacant buildings and potential use
- B. Extend an invitation to the Mayor to meet at our April meeting. Questions to ask include:
 - What are we looking for in regard to the vacant schools? When are they going to close? Pat reports as of yet, there has been no decision regarding those buildings, but there are a lot of people who want the buildings for various reasons. It will ultimately be the Town Council's decision.

-David reports wanting to know the Mayor's vision for seniors in the town of Mansfield and how they are going to be able to afford to stay in town?

-Discussed that Juniper Hill is more affordable for someone who is lower income. Pat discusses the differences between the Juniper Hill and Wrights Way.

-John asked is there any documentation for the number of people moving out of town due to affordability? Most cases are anecdotal.

-David asked if Mayor has the number of seniors and % of tax base that seniors are paying? If we knew what % of seniors in the town of Mansfield and what % is paying % of tax base, may give us some leverage. Also, What % of the people who vote are seniors?

-David reports wanting to ask the Mayor, What she would like to see on the Commission on Aging and what she believes the relationship between them should be?

Martina and David to draft a letter of the Mayor.

B. Discussed: Hybrid format for meetings coming up in the future.

ADDITIONAL REPORT:

N/A

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 AM. The next regular meeting is April 11th, 2022.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Devon Hock.