

Community Services and Recreation

DRAFT MINUTES/APPROVED

To: Community Services Commission Members
From: Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation
Re: Commission Meeting December 7, 2010

Meeting was called to order at 5:52p.m.

I. Attendance:

Present: Lou Criscuolo, Walter Heinig, Donna Malley, Judith Meyers, Krista Polinsky.
Absent: Thomas Balga, Maggie Jensen, Jim Marshall, Michael Pepe.
Staff: Edward J. Swinkoski, Judith Amarone, Manager, Joyce C. Budrow Senior Center and Carla Pelliccio, Secretary.

II. Acceptance of Minutes:

Krista Polinsky made a motion to accept the Minutes of November 9, 2010, seconded by Donna Malley.

III. Correspondence:

None.

IV. Finance Report:

Mr. Swinkoski began by reviewing the YTD snapshot of the Emergency Fund, followed by the Outreach Fund.

Emergency Fund: (as of November 2010):

Fuel: Contributions: \$100.00			
\$8,293.90 spent YTD.	Balance	\$19,396.21	
Misc: \$497.67 spent YTD.	Balance	\$37,627.58	
Food: Contributions: \$2,394.00			
\$50.00 spent YTD.	Balance	\$4,599.00	
Toys: Contributions: \$300.00 plus \$1,000 awarded by Toys R' Us in gift cards			
\$0.00 spent YTD	Balance	\$720.00	
	TOTAL:	\$62,342.79	

Outreach Fund: (as of November 2010):

\$1,080 spent MTD. Balance \$25,077.79

Budget reports were reviewed by the Commission (reports ending November 30, 2010).

Community Services: November 2010 snapshot of Community Services expenditures:
29.2 % of budget expended YTD

Welfare: November 2010 snapshot of Welfare expenditures (eviction related expenses):
41.6 % of budget expended YTD

Senior Center: November 2010 snapshot of Senior Center expenditures:
42.9 % of budget expended YTD

Daycare: Snapshots of expenditures through the Daycare grant were reviewed:
November 2010 snapshot: -\$39,727.93

IV. Director's Report:

2010 Season of Giving Program: Updates on the 2010 Season of Giving Program were discussed. Mrs. Pelliccio reported that holiday toy and food distribution will be taking place on Tuesday and Wednesday, December 21st and 22nd from 1-4pm. Additionally, she reported that as of today, 15 families have been successfully matched in the Holiday Family Match Program. 6 families are currently on the waiting list. Community Services has received a \$300 donation from the Pine Grove Men's Club as well \$1,000 from Toys R Us in gift cards.

Harbor Health: Maggie Goodwin, representative from Harbor Health currently spends approximately 20 hours per week overseeing the counseling services. Another Harbor Health representative, Susan Scott, is currently working with Angela to oversee the billing of the department as well as the accurate implementation of the Carepaths electronic medical records (EMR) system. The first electronic billing through Carepaths will take place in January.

Additional Group counseling sessions will be starting in January, including a smoking cessation group. Ms. Polinsky asked if these groups will be open to people outside of North Haven. Mr. Swinkoski indicated that he will have an answer at the next meeting. These group sessions will begin to be promoted through a posting on the Town website.

Mr. Swinkoski will look into the feasibility of having these groups offered through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Harbor Health has also provided assistance of one of their housing coordinators in which the current client base has found to be very helpful.

Caseloads remain the same. There is currently no waiting list.

V. Old Business:

As requested by the Commission, Judy Amarone, Manager of the Joyce C. Budrow Senior Center attended this meeting in order to present as part of the department by department comprehensive review.

Mrs. Amarone provided a packet of information for each commission with demographic information and comparative data. December 2010 Senior Happenings were also distributed.

The 2009 Town Profile for North Haven and surrounding towns were provided by Ms. Amarone through a report retrieved from the CT Economic Resource Center. According to these figures, 40% of the North Haven population is over the age of 50, which is the largest percentage compared to all neighboring towns (East Haven, Hamden, Wallingford, North Branford, Branford and Cheshire). Ms. Amarone further defined the various types of "seniors" (i.e. frail seniors, baby boomers) who utilize the senior center for activities as well as the transportation offered.

Ms. Amarone also disseminated information on the housing opportunities for seniors in North Haven and compared them to surrounding towns. Data was broken down by independent living communities, those with partial subsidies/ market rents, those with no subsidy (no transportation), as well as nursing homes and rehabilitation facilities that exist in the respective town. Other towns had additional offering such as assisted living (with transportation), Alzheimer's/ Memory Care facilities with transportation, respite

care, congregate living, continuing care retirement communities (with transportation) and adult day care (with and without transportation).

When discussing the housing options, Ms. Amarone defined the differences between the various types, the locations of some, as well as the number of units that exist in each. She mentioned that Oakview and Woods Edge have a waiting list that has been closed since 2003, which means that they may have upwards of 100 applicants waiting on it. When the list eventually opens, this simply allows openings for more people to be added to the waiting list, it is not an opportunity for a senior to get into an apartment. Usually the average housing waiting list is approximately 3-5 years. These two properties in particular have a 5+ year waiting list. This information indicates that there is a shortage of affordable housing opportunities for the seniors in town. Ms. Amarone pointed out that while affordable housing shortage exists for seniors, she does not believe that it is a need that cannot be feasibly met by the availability of dollars (Federal or otherwise) to develop further housing at this time. She feels that perhaps it may be something to revisit in the event a developer was to approach the Town in the future, however not at this time. The shortage creates the need to turn people away to other communities, ultimately impacting the economics for the Town (the tendency to grocery shopping, get gas, and go to doctors in the town that they reside).

In the next 5 years, Ms. Amarone does not see the population makeup changing. Baby boomers have already arrived into the 50+ population which makes up the 40% of the North Haven population. She stated that unfortunately the town will not grow with the aging adult, as there is no place for them to go for other services. She feels that the programming that the senior center offers is meeting the needs of the baby boomers, providing education, socialization, legal education, and social activities, however there is not a place for our older adults to go to in town.

Ms. Amarone confidently expressed how her and her team of staff is meeting the needs of the community successfully. She further provided the following statistics: 1,259 members are currently registered at the Senior Center. Average daily attendance is 133. Membership increased by 68 new members upon the moving back into the renovated senior center. 669 meals are served monthly (frail population) at the cost of a suggested donation of \$2.00 per meal. 528 rides are provided per month, which is 6,336 rides per year.

With regards to programming offered by the Senior Center, Mr. Heinig asked how Ms. Amarone knows which programs to keep, add, or remove. Ms. Amarone indicated there is a programming committee composed of seniors who provide input and discuss what they want and don't want. When asked by Ms. Polinsky if there are any programs that she would like to see offered that are not currently being offered, Ms. Amarone stated that she would like to see a family support group for caregivers and family members of those affected with dementia. Ms. Amarone has already had a meeting with the counselors in Community Services to explore this possibility. Additional support groups that she would like to see are bereavement groups, groups on how to take care of oneself when you are care giving, and where to look for respite care.

The issue that Ms. Amarone identifies surrounds senior transportation in Town, as currently transportation is only available three days a week. The need exists to have a bus driver 5 days a week to accommodate the needs of the seniors medical transportation. Currently transportation is available 3 days a week (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9am-2pm). What poses a further issue is that many doctors' offices are closed for lunch from 12-1pm daily and many are often closed on Wednesdays, further limiting the availability for seniors to make their medical appointments. 2 buses are currently in operation for the seniors over these 3 days. They have one full-time bus driver and one part-time bus driver to provide this service. The buses are leased through the Greater New Haven Transit District (GNHTD).

This immediate need for providing medical transportation is so great that Ms. Amarone indicated that they cannot accommodate the needs of all who request this service. Mr. Heinig echoed the sentiment of the commission, that since 40% of the population is 50+, many of who need medical transportation, there is a strong need to provide this transportation that is currently running short. Additionally, by increasing the availability of transportation, this will allow to keep dollars being spent in North Haven versus sending these residents to other towns.

The recommendation was discussed among the commission to hire another part-time driver for two additional days in order to increase bus transportation to five days a week. Upon this recommendation made, Ms. Amarone will discuss the feasibility of this option as well as budget availability with Mr. Swinkoski. The commission asked if it was possible if this addition could be made before the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Amarone and Mr. Swinkoski stated that they would look into it.

On a final note to her presentation, regarding the suggestion of the commission that each division of the Department have a 5-year strategic plan, Ms. Amarone commented that she feels that an outside consulting firm would be better equipped to conduct such a study. Formulate the data that the commission is requesting, however Ms. Amarone can only provide the data that is available to her.

VII. New Business:

Special Funds Draft of Guidelines: The revised draft of guidelines as well as draft of the Outreach Funds application that were distributed to the Commission at the November meeting. It will be added for discussion at the next meeting in January.

Additionally, nominations for the new Chair will take place at the January meeting. Mr. Heinig expressed the pleasure of having served on the commission, thanked his fellow commissioners and the thanked Community Services for the job they have been doing. He provided well wishes to all as this is his commission term is set to expire on December 31, 2010. Mr. Heinig stated that he would happy to stop into some of the upcoming meetings to provide his input.

VIII. Public Participation:

No participation.

IX. Adjournment:

Louis Criscuolo asked for a Motion to Adjourn, seconded by Judith Meyers. The meeting was adjourned at 6:55p.m.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, January 4th at 5:30pm in Room 2.