

SOUTH HADLEY COUNCIL ON AGING

Virtual Board of Directors Meeting—March 8, 2021

Minutes

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 4:40pm by Chair Drewey Darnell

Roll Call: Drewey Darnell, Mary Boulais, Carol Constant, Liane Pueschel, Robert Pueschel, Rita Starzyk, Linda Young, Marsha Chappelat

Present: Leslie Hennessey, Director

Guest: Kim Prough

Open Forum: No issues for discussion

Welcome to our newest Board member, Marsha Chappelat

Approval of January Minutes: Motion by Mary Boulais to approve January minutes. Seconded by Linda Young. All were in favor. Minutes approved.

New Business:

- Vaccine Updates---The Senior Center has a hot line to aid seniors in obtaining appointments for the vaccine. At the onset, there was success in obtaining appointments for seniors 75+. However, when appointments opened up to seniors 65+ it became much more difficult. Sites were not accessible due to an overwhelming response. Discussion followed. The Senior Center continues to try to provide aid. The Knights of Columbus in Chicopee will host a vaccine clinic on Thursday, made possible through the efforts of Sharon Hart working with the Hampshire Collaborative of Boards of Health.
- VA Options: Veterans can contact the Leeds Veteran Hospital (at the main #) to secure a vaccine appointment. There will also be a clinic for veterans at the War Memorial Building in Holyoke On March 9th.
- Census numbers for the town are not yet available

Old Business:

- New Senior Center Project: Coming together nicely...paint, cabinetry, etc.
 - June 1st projected for move-in date for key staff. There is no plan at this time for occupancy in relation to programs.
 - Possibility of a virtual Grand Opening.
 - The Senior Center is considering the purchase of an electric car and has applied for a Grant to install an electric charging station at the COA.
 - The café in the new Senior Center (Woodlawn Café) is being sponsored by Peoples Bank and will be brought before the Selectboard for approval.

- Friends of the South Hadley Seniors: Updates by Kim Prough
 - This year marks the 40th Anniversary of the 'Friends'
 - 2 pool tables have been ordered for the Center
 - Bingo continues to be very popular (25-30 participants) and will continue every Friday through the end of March
 - March—225 people have signed up for the St. Patrick's meal on 3/16 and more are expected to sign up before the deadline
 - April—There will be a 'Vaccination Celebration'. The Towers Theater will be rented every Tuesday in April. Tickets will be given away to South Hadley residents 65+ who have been vaccinated, and a 10% discount will be available at Johnny's for those who wish to grab a bite on the day of the movie. At present there is a 35-seat capacity. Looking at renting the two theatres which could then accommodate 70 seniors, if the response is great enough.
 - May—Annual plant sale at St. Theresa's Church 5/7 and 5/8
 - Membership Drive continues
 - In the Fall, there will be '40 days of giveaways' to celebrate the 40th anniversary
 - A few banks have expressed interest in supporting targeted programs in the Senior Center
 - Working with Marcotte Ford regarding the purchase of the electric car. The purchase will be made by The Friends with perhaps some help from the dealership. This purchase would eliminate the need to use a van for single appointments.
 - In dialogue with Peoples Bank for the purchase of a sign for the Senior Center. Design and size to be determined.

Director's Report:

- Programs, services, events
 - COVID Hotline is helping approximately 200 seniors at this time
 - 130 seniors have signed up for the St. Patrick's curbside breakfast. Bagpipes will be played.
 - 'Soft' opening on April 20th at St. Theresa's. (i.e. curbside events, outside meetings, awning to allow sheltered space for crafting mindfulness, yoga, writing/book club, knitters, etc.
 - Crafts to go (higher end) which would be ordered on-line and picked up curbside
 - 190 seniors contacted bi-monthly by phone and note cards continue
 - AARP tax prep is running smoothly
 - iPad loan program is very slow. Only a few on board due to eligibility guidelines. Flyer regarding the program will be sent to clients of the MOW program.
 - UMass Nursing students calling seniors and also helping with vaccine issues

- Staffing:
Sarah Gmenier has been hired as the Senior Center Coordinator. She was formerly the Assistant Town Clerk for the Town of South Hadley and was also on the IT team at Town Hall. She will manage the Welcome Desk, Transportation Services, etc. and will also be able to provide IT service to the Center when needed.

A cleaning crew will be hired to manage the upkeep of the Center. There are no funds available for a custodian at this time. The DPW can be called upon in an emergent situation.

- Grant funded Adult Fitness trail:
Plans for the Fitness Track are being expanded. The trail will extend up Fulton Street and around the fields and will include adult fitness equipment. Applications have been made for a Mass Works Grant and an Accessibility and Compliance Grant to support the project.

Next meeting: April 12, 2021

Motion to adjourn by Robert Pueschel and seconded by Linda Young

Meeting adjourned @ 5:30pm

Respectfully submitted,

Liane Pueschel

Secretary