

Haddam Committee on Aging Minutes
January 22, 2024
Old Town Hall

Chairman Mary Lou Heger opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance at 10:00 am and introductions of members and guests.

Attendance : Bob McGarry, Mary Lou Heger, Mike Farina, JoAnn Woickelman, Mary Lou Pierce, Thurston Clark, Marge DeBold, Robert Waller, Doreen Staskelunas, Wayne Ruty, Beth Hartke, Becky Rice, Kim Gionfriddo, Ron Pellerin, Mark Lundgren, Sherry Carlson, Jen Favalora

Minutes From our last meeting were approved with additions by the Committee.

Election of officers Bob McGarry discussed the timing history of the officer designation for the town, he noted the Charter doesn't specify when the COA elections must take place but it might be better to have it in sync with the appointment of members. Recommendation agreed to by the Committee is to reverse December's election for chairman and review the COA bylaws. A vote was taken with all members agreement Thurston and Mike abstaining. The group agreed to establish a working group (Mary Lou Heger, Kim Gionfriddo and Marge DeBold) to review the bylaws.

First Selectman's Report Items to report on included the swing bridge in Tylerville, inspection showed additional cracking which will impact marine and vehicular traffic (see their schedule on the town website). Roundabouts construction will begin on exit 7 this spring. Rossi property in Higganum center proposal by developers for 43 single bedroom units meeting on 1/27/24 at Firehouse to take questions on this proposal. Senior van time of operation 10 am to 2 pm, he discussed with the Committee late afternoon options if necessary. Committee members favorable impression with new driver. COA may need to do an article to explain the van program to the town. Bob M. also mentioned we have alternatives Dial a Ride program. Mike mentioned there is also Neighbor to Neighbor program through the St. Peter Church help with scheduling gaps if needed. It was recommended that we reach out to the Dial a Ride transportation for a presentation on their program.

Senior Center Doreen gave a year end overview advising they were open for 144 days, saw 2043 visitors. For example, in October they had 259 visitors (highest numbers) and in January they had 114 visitors (lowest numbers), reflecting growth

over time. The year over year attendance numbers increased from 1189 in 2022 to 2347 in 2023, which reflects almost 100% increase in attendees. So, we have a few new people coming, but the regulars are coming more often as well. For the year they provided over 1000+ congregate meals. Some special meals included Pizza and movie. Tomorrow they are offering a presenter to talk from Liberty Bank to avoid senior fraud. Upcoming Doreen will be visiting other Senior Centers. In late January Doreen with seniors will be visiting the Estuary at Old Saybrook for lunch and a walk through.

Social Services During December Becky assisted 69 adults and 11 children with food, provide 5 gift cards, electrical assistance for 1 family, provided paperwork assistance for 3 families and clothing for 107 people. In December she provided 30 Christmas baskets. The Committee inquired about the meals on wheels program which continues to be run by the Estuary drivers, she indicated there has been no complaints about the program from the few who utilize it in town. The Committee discussed winter warming days in Haddam, there were no request so far this year. We also discussed the possibility of an Easter meal and particularly for the High Meadows seniors. Mike recommended the Knights of Columbus maybe able to help if needed.

Youth and Family Services Jen Favalora provided reports she let the Committee know about the diaper bank they are running and encouraged the Committee for their support. Jen gave an update about the very successful Holiday crafts fair in December, she expressed appreciation for the Club 60 gift wrapped donations. She talked about upcoming programs on suicide prevention. The Committee talked about the backpack program. Beth offered to provide knitted hats if needed.

CRAHD (Health District) Sherry Carlson reported that flu and Covid cases are less than last year. Her agency provided over 1000 vaccines. She talked about the effectiveness of Paxlovid if given within 5 days of symptoms. She also talked about the Covid test boxes previously distributed now have extended expiration date of February 9th. She talked about upcoming Healthy Heart month and she will be bringing materials about that program. She also will be bringing additional Covid test kits to Doreen in the upcoming weeks.

Club 60 Has a program this afternoon about the Internet. She also talked about upcoming presentation in February and March.

COA picnic JoAnn talked about the picnic, she suggested we use some of the time to talk about the available programs in town. Marketing the picnic to HK news and Facebook, and town websites to maximize the attendance.

NEW BUSINESS

- The first item of business is the Bylaws will be reviewed by the subcommittee.
- Thurston recommended the trifold be updated with the new members' names.
- Update the telephone and contact list for all new members, Bob W. will do this.
- Bob W. talked about Medicare information, everything you need to know about Medicare 2/7/24 at 2 pm.
- Outreach for the picnic and other senior programs in town to be established next month.

Goals/Projects for 2023/24

Adjournment Motion made 11:30 and accepted by attendees.

Notes taken by Robert Waller
Kaye Burgess, Secretary

**Next meeting Monday February 26, 2024
at Old Town Hall**