

## Senior Services Commission

March 13, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Anne Kaiser at 10:35 a.m.

Present:	Judy Benvenuto	Steven Falco <i>(left at 11:25)</i>	Anne Kaiser
	Judy Norris	Pat Snow	Mertie Terry
	Linda Worden <i>(via phone until 11:30)</i>		
Absent:	Deirdre Daly	Ann Jordan	Bonnie Sprague
	Linda Worden		
Others:	Amy Saada – Senior/Human Services Director		
	Paula Luna – Town Council		
	Al Waters – Town Council		
	Sharon DeVoe – Finance Director <i>(present from 11:00 – 11:17)</i>		
	Tony Salvatore – Town Manager <i>(present from 11:00 – 11:17)</i>		

### Approval/Amendment of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda made by Steven Falco; seconded by Pat Snow. All in favor. Motion carried.

### Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2023, Regular Meeting made by Pat Snow; seconded by Anne Kaiser. All in favor. Motion carried.

### Senior/Human Services Director's Report – Amy Saada

Amy provided grant information. Nick will be working with Recreation on a grant for walking trails located near the community gardens on Evergreen Road. Senior Centers across the state have received ARPA funds; Cromwell will receive \$45,056. They're still awaiting the vehicle from the 5310 DOT grant and funding from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County for the new commercial Bingo machine, console and 8' electronic flashboard.

#### Programs/Updates:

- AARP taxes – They have scheduled 198 appointments and there are 4 remaining slots.
- March 15<sup>th</sup> – Trip to the Dublin Bar & Grill for St. Patrick's Day lunch

- March 16<sup>th</sup> – CRT St. Patrick's Day lunch
- March 16<sup>th</sup> – Lunch & Learn – Right-sizing in today's real estate market
- March 23<sup>rd</sup> – Senior Center Golf League kickoff meeting
- March 30<sup>th</sup> – Lunch & Learn – Rose Hill Funeral Home to discuss end of life planning
- April 27<sup>th</sup> – Luncheon Show, *Spring is in the Air*, at A Villa Louisa in Bolton
- May 23<sup>rd</sup> – Bronx Zoo
- June 7<sup>th</sup> – Casino trip to Encore in Boston
- July 12<sup>th</sup> – Lighthouse cruise in Narragansett Bay
- August 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> – Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard trip
- October 15<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> – Florida and Bahamas cruise

Save the dates:

- April 20<sup>th</sup> – Volunteer Luncheon
- May 24<sup>th</sup> – Older American's Month Celebration in the Park with food and music

Staff will be participating in the Connecticut Foodshare Walk Against Hunger on Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup>. 100% of the funds raised by walkers who select the Town of Cromwell Food Pantry will stay in Cromwell. They are looking for walkers and sponsors. Anne Kaiser suggest that something be published about the walk, as well as information on how to donate if you don't want to walk.

The deadline to apply for the April Holiday Food Basket program is March 17<sup>th</sup>. Amy is looking for both participants and sponsors.

The last day to order deliverable fuel through energy assistance is March 31<sup>st</sup>.

#### **Director of Public Health Update – None**

#### **Council Liaison Update – Al Waters**

It looks like there will be a zero increase in the Town budget.

The town is offering \$5,000 sign-on bonus for seasoned officers. The police chief will be retiring soon.

The Memorial Day parade will be on Tuesday, May 30<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.; spectators should arrive by 5:15 p.m.

The school building committee has until April to get their figures together.

#### **Old Business**

- CRT Meals on Wheels and Congregate Meal updates**

The maximum number of Cromwell residents on this program is 15 people; there is currently a waiting list. Anne Kaiser asked how many people are on the waiting list and Amy responded that CRT doesn't share that information with her.

CRT wants to cut the congregate meals to only two times per week.

**b. FY24 Budget**

This has been approved by the Town Council. The next step is approval by the Board of Finance. Amy has asked for increases for part-time instructors. Food costs are also up. Amy put in capital requests for a bus (\$56,000) and a shared vehicle for Human Services Staff. It was not recommended by the Town Manager and Amy was advised to apply for grants. Amy has asked for a vehicle to use for outreach, food pick up, senior appointments, transport supplies, Youth Services needs etc. Amy said they may get the vehicle currently being used by Recreation and Recreation may get a new vehicle. Amy applied for a grant for a vehicle through the Connecticut Foodbank but did not receive it.

Sharon DeVoe and Tony Salvatore joined the meeting at 11:00 a.m. Tony informed the Commission that they cannot apply for a grant for a vehicle if there is money in the budget designated for a new vehicle. Amy explained that there are 4.5 buses and they are all identified as being past their useful life according to the DOT definition. Tony responded that all the buses are safe, there are supply chain issues and that one bus is currently on order (this is the one from the DOT 100% grant funded). Judy Benvenuto inquired about applying for another grant for a bus and Tony responded that the grants aren't available right now. Tony also said that the vehicle from the Parks Department would be more conducive to seniors getting into the vehicle. Judy Benvenuto inquired about the age of that vehicle and Tony said that it was 3 years old.

Tony also discussed the school budget issue. He advised that the Town Council and the Board of Finance need to sign off on it and that it appears that it will possibly go to referendum. He also advised that any overage would impact other projects. Another option is to go to the taxpayers for a mill rate increase. The town budget is at a 0% increase and the Board of Ed is at a 7% increase. Tony did not know why the BOE increase is so large.

Tony talked about a new Community Center. They are looking for grants and a location. Watrous Park is no longer an option. A possible location is property on Coles Road (across from Blackbirch). River Road is not an option because of the flood zone, but the park where the farmers market is location is an option (it is above wetlands). He also mentioned that there is a lot of land in town controlled by a person in Rocky Hill.

At 11:17, Sharon DeVoe and Tony Salvatore left the meeting.

**New Business**

- a. **Connecticut Foodshare Walk Against Hunger** – previously discussed under Human Services Director's Report.
- b. **CT Healthy Living Collective Statewide LGBTQ+ Moveable Senior Center Initiative**

There will be training for all staff on inclusion and training on LGBTQ+ activities and initiatives. LGBTQ+ Special Events will be scheduled and out of town members could attend and not be charge the "out of town" fee. There will be more information to come.

c. **ARPA funds from the CT Department of Aging and Disability Services**

Amy asked the Commission Members for ideas on how to spend the \$45,056. She does not have the money yet but it may be able to be used for transportation or programming. Anne Kaiser asked about the cost of the Community Center conceptual design. Amy advised that the town has already paid for the feasibility study. Judy Benvenuto mentioned a safety program ("ALICE") that was held in Rocky Hill or a program on solo aging. Anne suggested having a lawyer discuss wills and trusts. There was also suggestions of a comedy event, magician or an impersonator. Mertie Terry mentioned that 200 people recently attended a comedy event which benefitted the Cromwell Children's Coalition.

**Citizen's Comments**

Al Waters talked about the Red Lion Inn. A builder and his attorney went in front of the Economic Development Committee. The plans for a \$100 million project include demolition of the hotel (keeping the parking garage), a class act restaurant, townhouses, stores and 14-15 affordable housing units. This will come before the Town Council in April. He also mentioned that Ruby Tuesday's is closing and Texas Roadhouse will be opening in town.

Anne Kaiser told that commission that she met with Tony Salvatore to discuss the Opioid Funding, Room use and other topics. Anne stated that the room use has been rectified. There was a brief discussion about funds coming from the opioid lawsuit. There was interest in the availability of Narcan and prevention/awareness/education for seniors on what is addictive.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Anne Kaiser; seconded by Pat Snow. Meeting adjourned at 11:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Stockman  
Recording Clerk