



TOWN OF BERLIN

COMMISSION FOR THE AGING

Minutes of Monday November 20, 2023

5:00 P.M.

Meeting held in person & open to the Public, on Zoom or by phone.

1. Call to Order:

Chairwoman Gombotz called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

2. Roll Call:

Present: Barbara Gombotz- Chairwoman, Kay Murray, Ann Gamelin and C. Roger Moss Jr.

Absent: Frank Slogeris

Staff: Jennifer Ochoa, Director of Community, Recreation & Park Services

Tina Doyle, Senior Center Director

Juliet Benjamin, Secretary

3. Approval of Minutes – September 18, 2023:

Commissioner Moss made a Motion to accept the Minutes of September 18, 2023 and Commissioner Murray seconded. The Minutes were unanimously approved.

4. Audience of Citizens:

5. Senior Center Director's Report from T. Doyle: November 20, 2023

To: Commission for Aging Members

From: Tina Doyle

Re: Senior Center Director's Report

Current Activities:

Our Average Daily Attendance is as follows:

Avg Per Weekday

Monday 79.08

Tuesday 63.98

Wednesday 56.74

Thursday 101.22

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2023 NOV 22 AM 9:50

Kathleen Hall
BERLIN, CT.

Commission for the Aging -11/20/2023

Friday 38.98

Avg Per Day by Month

January 65.5

February 72.44

March 64.3

April 70.42

May 69.41

June 63.1

July 66.1

August 63.87

September 67.45

October 75.29

November 71

Our Transportation service requests have increased. We are providing transportation currently to 179 individuals to 132 different locations. We have provided 6562 rides (dup) from January to today.

MYSenior Center- As of today, 1247 seniors have their key tags. That is an increase of 38 since our last meeting in September 2023.

We are currently in the process of filling the two vacant positions – Assistant Director and PT Program Coordinator. We will be conducting interviews on Nov 30th and Dec 1st for the Assistant Director position. Then we will interview for the PT Program Coordinator.

6. Report – Commissioner Frank Slogeris:

Chairwoman Gombotz noted that Commissioner Slogeris could not attend today's meeting but he wanted to send a message to all seniors not to answer any phone calls unless they are expecting the call. Robo calls and scams have increased and seniors have to be on guard for any fake calls.

7. Senior Housing Report – Commissioner Ann Gamelin:

Commissioner Gamelin stated that the roof at Percival Heights has been repaired. She understands that new staff overseeing the senior housing will be doing inspections of units. She noted that this has not been done in a long time and will be welcomed in order to keep the units in better shape. Applications for Percival Heights are now available at the Senior Center.

Chairwoman Gombotz attended the last Berlin Housing Authority meeting in October. This Commission's concern is that there are ninety-four applicants on the wait list for senior housing and units are standing empty as long as a family member pays the rent for the unit. Housing Authority Chairman Bajorski had stated that he has to follow the legal regulations and as long as family pays the rent he cannot give the unit to anyone else. Chairwoman Gombotz stated that the units should not stand empty if the present occupant is not expected to return or has passed away.

Chairwoman Gombotz has learned from Housing Authority Chairman Bajorski that Wells Fargo has not responded to either the Housing Authority or to the Town regarding financing of the former Knights of Columbus property for new senior housing.

8. Senior Issues Input – Commissioner C. Roger Moss Jr.:

Chairwoman Gombotz noted that Commissioner Moss has many connections to seniors and will be reporting on any issues that are brought to his attention.

9. Senior Center/Community Center Report – B. Gombotz:

Commissioners noted that they are very frustrated because Mayor Kaczynski stated at the meeting of November 1st at the Senior Center and on other occasions that they "are going to talk about the building" and they never do. At the meeting at the Senior Center the Mayor said that he should have a revised plan by January 2024. As of this date no one has heard of any plan. The Architect based his plan on the Statement of Need from both the Park & Recreation Commission & the Commission for the Aging. If that Statement of Need or the plans need to be revisited or revised then there should be some communication between the parties involved. The notion that the Senior Center should be self-sufficient is also incorrect. Other departments, such as the Board of Education, Public Works, etc. are not expected to be self-sufficient and the Senior Center and Park & Recreation Departments are for the benefit of all the residents of Berlin. After discussion, Commissioners agreed to draft a letter to Mayor Kaczynski requesting information on the new plan that he had spoken of.

10. Old Business:

Non-Resident Fees: Chairwoman Gombotz asked to have a discussion on the Non-Resident fee charged by the Town because she has had comments from some seniors that the amount is too much. Senior Center Director Doyle stated that the Non-Resident fee in 2016 was changed from \$2 per month to \$3 per month or \$36 per year and has not changed since. Senior Center Director Doyle has checked with other Senior Centers in CT and the fee ranges between \$25 and \$40 per

Commission for the Aging -11/20/2023

year. Commissioner Moss stated that the \$36 gives a non-resident senior the same benefits of all the programs at the Senior Center, benefits that residents are paying for with their property and vehicle taxes. It is quite a bargain at only \$3 per month. After further discussion, Commissioner Moss made a motion to raise the Non-Resident fee to \$48 year, for new members only, beginning July 1, 2024, the beginning of the new fiscal year. All existing Non-Resident members would still pay the \$36 annual fee. The motion was seconded by Chairwoman Gombotz. The vote was Commissioners Moss, Murray & Gamelin in favor and Gombotz opposed. Motion Passed. Senior Center Director Doyle is always available to work with anyone who might have difficulty paying the fee.

11. New Business:

Schedule of Meetings: After review Commissioner Moss made a motion to accept the Calendar/Schedule of Meetings for 2024. The motion was seconded by Chairwoman Gombotz & unanimously approved.

12.Motion to Adjourn:

Commissioner Murray made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 p.m. Commissioner Gamelin seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Juliet Benjamin Secretary