



COMMISSION ON AGING

Clifford J. Hurgin Municipal Center, 1 School Street
Bethel, Connecticut 06801 Telephone: (203) 792-3048

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APR 15 2008

TOWN OF BETHEL
TOWN CLERK

COMMISSION ON AGING

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 P.M. by the Chairman.

MEETING MINUTES

April 14, 2008

IN ATTENDANCE Al Barney (Chairman), Jim Newell, Kathy Oles (Director), Mary O'Leary, Kathleen Gillen, Lou Walsh, Barbara Negri

Minutes of last meeting distributed.

1. Minutes accepted as read.
2. Municipal Agents Report-read and accepted.
3. Report, Director, Bethel Senior Center- Read and accepted.

Kathy attended the National Council on Aging in Washington, D.C.. The theme of the conference was "Aging in America".

4. Report - Treasurer's report read and accepted.

We have applied for a grant to purchase a T.V. and Sound system.

5. Old business -Mary O'Leary attended a summit meeting held by Chris Murphy on problems concerning seniors. He would like to have quarterly meeting with Representatives from centers around his district.
6. New business -It was suggested that we have a plaque in memory of past donations to the center.

The Director would like to start a Yoga Laughter Therapy class.

7. Miscellaneous (good of the order)- None

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55, P.M. by the Chairman.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Barney
Secretary, Commission on Aging



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Commissioners' Report April 14th, 2008

The "Taste of Italy Party" on March 12th was delicious, and Bob Mel once again was very entertaining. We had 120 seniors attend this function and since it was free, they all loved it. We had a wonderful time on St. Patrick's Day at the Platz Brauhaus with great food, entertainment, and dancing. My trip to Washington, D.C. to attend the NCOA 2008 conference was a great experience. I have written a special report that I will give you all at this meeting. Next year the conference is in Las Vegas. On Friday, April 4th, we had a tea sponsored by the Homesteads of Newtown. We had 40 attend and it turned out to be a great luncheon.

Our volunteer tax people from AARP tax aide have been doing a wonderful job this year. They have helped double the number they did last year because of the tax rebate. This is a great service they provide to our Senior Center. Another program that we started in March, which has become very popular - is Bingo! About 20 people attend these Friday afternoon games. They love it. We also had a nice presentation by Maureen Farrell from the RSVP office to those Seniors who were eligible for the Presidential award for volunteerism.

We have many things coming up in the next four weeks, the most important being the Senior Center Show, "On the Road Again" on May 9th. This year we are doing two shows. One will be at 1PM and the other at 7PM. The evening show will be cabaret style. Many of our Seniors have been practicing since February. There are several programs for Senior Center week, which is May 5th through May 9th. These programs include a Heart Healthy Breakfast, Pack-A-Bag-CVS, Town Appreciation Day, "Drinking Water for Health" and Genealogy. On April 10th, we had a free Health Screening Clinic, which included fall risk, balance, vision and a feet check. More than 30 people participated in the clinic.

The average number of people per day for the month of March was 102. We mailed out over 1,100 newsletters and distributed another 500 by hand. At the present time, we are trying to redo our mailing list to better reflect the over-55 population in Bethel. Now that Heather has joined the Center as the Senior Center Assistant Director, I feel like we have a great team. Everyone works together well and the Center is running smoothly.

Trips:

April 16, 2008	"Buddy The Buddy Holly Story" \$75
May 11	Mohegan Sun \$24
May 19	Springfield International Tattoo \$74
June 17	Puttin' on the Ritz -\$69
July 1	Ripley's Believe It or Not & the Top of the Rock-\$99
July 18	Thimble Islands \$61
Nov. 6, 2008	"The Producers" \$75

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Oles - Director Bethel Senior Center

National Council on Aging and the American Society on Aging
National Conference, 2008
"Aging in America"

I started my journey at 6:25 on Wednesday morning, March 26, on a train out of Bethel to New York City. At 9:25, I hopped on an Amtrack train to Washington, D.C., and then onto the Red Line up to the Omni Hotel on Calvert Street.

My first seminar, which started at 2 p.m., was one of the best of the conference. It was called, "Cutting Edge Strategies for Senior Centers." They talked about everything from naming your Senior Center (I liked, "Active Living Center" or "Life and Learning Center, a 50-plus Center") to how to pull more people into the center, especially volunteers. And we do not call them volunteer jobs anymore, but "compelling opportunities" or "civic engagement."

The whole idea behind this conference is to bring the Baby Boomers into the centers by giving them a feeling of being part of the center and by giving them opportunities to work in their communities as volunteers with meaningful jobs. Examples of these are people to run computer workshops, photographers, environmental clubs, Mr. Fix-It types, fundraising helpers, etc. We should get together a group of Baby Boomers to guide our Center into the next decade.

On Thursday, March 27, from 9 to 12, I went on a site visit to the Hallie Holma Senior Wellness Center. There is a larger concentration of Seniors in D.C. than in any other place in the country. Both the federal government and the D.C. area give funding (\$1,150,000) to four large Senior Centers, which they call "Wellness Centers". They are in partnership with local hospitals. What a lay-out!

At 2 p.m., I participated in a workshop called, "Laughter Therapy: Starting a Laughter Group". This is something we should look into doing at the Center. It's a lot of fun. Maybe we can get someone to do a civic engagement on it.

At 2:45 to 3:15, I attended a workshop on the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvements and Modernization Act. This was very interesting, because there are many Seniors who are on Medicare and Medicaid who now have to pay more for their drugs in co-pays. Moreover, the gap is becoming wider. They would like to do away with that gap.

From 3:30 to 5:30, I attended the Opening General Session: "An Afternoon with Maya Angelou – Aging in America." This program alone made it worth my while to be at this conference. She was one of the best speakers I have ever heard. She is a great storyteller and poet. I could have listened to her for a few more hours.

On Friday morning, I attended a seminar on "Senior Center Design and Renovations" presented by Lifespan Design Studio, LLC, of Lebanon, Ohio (www.lifespandesignstudio.com). This was good to understand what need to do if we want to go forward in renovating our current center or building a new one.

Friday afternoon I attended "Senior Centers in America – Partnership and Resource Development". The future for Centers is in building a partnership in with the community. Share with them your mission; ask them for advice. Sings are a must for a Center – you need to be noticed. The 50-plus group wants fitness centers and fitness classes. They won't be staying at the Center all day unless they are civically engaged.

Also on Friday afternoon, I attended a very interesting class, "Jumpstart: Enlisting Mature Minds in Their Battle Against Memory Decline; Roger Amunsen – What is MemAerobics?" I did attend a talk that this man gave last year and found it interesting. This year, he is doing a study and he needs centers to participate. He might call us for this, but he is supposed to call us about a meeting in New York City in the fall. Maybe we can get into his program somehow. We will need a big-screen TV for this, and will have to get Western Connecticut State University to help get this set up.

On Saturday, March 29, I attended a seminar entitled, "A Revolution in Again Fueled by Neuroscience". This was about a computer-generated program to help you increase your ability to stay sharp, called "Insight". There was a large study done by the Mayo Clinic and the University of Southern California School of Gerontology. We all decline after age 30, except in vocabulary. We can use the Insight program to increase our sight and sound memory. The 10-hour program is good to do every year or two. Once older people complete the training, they are like younger people: their recall is better, balance is better, driving is better. It can be used at centers at theBrain.com.

I also attended another workshop on "Civic Engagement and the Reinvention of the Senior Center. This was presented by one Center that has successfully brought the Boomers in.

At 12:30 Saturday, I boarded Amtrack to arrive back home at 7 p.m.
It was a good trip!

COMMISSION ON AGING REPORT

APRIL 14, 2008

The Connecticut Energy Assistance program is closed for the 2007-2008 year. I still have a little money left in Operation Fuel funds which can be used up to May 1st. However the income guidelines are more severe.

April 15th is the day that winter protection ends for utility heating customers. Customers in arrears after that date can be disconnected. I am expecting a lot of phone calls for help with utility bills this week and for the rest of the month. Some will owe too much for my limited funds to be of any use.

I have had good luck in having the food pantry stocked this year. Several schools, scout troops and clubs have been generous in collecting and purchasing items for it. I still buy \$10 gift cards for Bethel Food to supplement the non perishable items.

The Easter food deliveries went well. I only got a few complaints about outdated food.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kathleen Gillen
Bethel Municipal Agent for the Elderly