

COMMISSION ON ELDER AFFAIRS

Minutes of February 23, 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robin Bahr-Casey, Chair; Sandra Bisson; Meg Coffin; Tom Cullinane; Theresa Eckstrom; Matthew Fonseca; Paul Johnson; Elizabeth Nguyen; Victor Ortiz; Gail Schuyler; Steven Smajkiewicz; Elaine Wrubel

MEMBERS ABSENT/EXCUSED: Chris Evans; Ursula Hanus; Gail Smith

GUESTS & STAFF PRESENT: Amy Waters, Patty Hainsworth, Linda Wincek-Moore-staff; Roxana Gomez & Brenda Nagle-Packard, Centro los Americas; Mike Cahill, Central Mass Housing Alliance

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. Sandy Bisson was introduced as a newly appointed Commission member. The minutes of November 24, 2014 were approved as mailed. m/s/a

The Senior Center Committee report of December 8, 2014 was approved as distributed. m/s/a

Mike Cahill from the Central Mass Housing Alliance reported and answered questions on the Elder Home Maintenance Program which is partially funded by the Commission to assist senior homeowners with chores in order to help them remain at home safely. Roxana Gomez and Brenda Nagle-Packard from Centro los Americas then reported and answered questions on the Latino Elder Group which is also partially funded by the Commission and meets both at the Senior Center and at Centro.

Commission members were reminded to give Amy their completed conflict of interest receipt and computer training certificate.

Amy reviewed the goals and objectives update highlighting various funding sources and upcoming staff trainings. The volunteer Recognition lunch will be held on April 15th. The Committee to Re-elect John Binienda has given a generous donation via his will and the family will be recognized. The City Manager will be recognizing all volunteers at the City Council meeting April 14th and all members are invited. A grant has been written for the Fallon/OrNda fund requesting support for the evidence based programs. While the Governor reduced the statewide Council on Aging line item, our FY'15 grants remain fully funded. Members were asked for their suggestions and to approve sending the attached letter to Worcester delegates at the state legislature as soon as the City Manager provided approval. Members voted and unanimously approved sending the attached draft letter. m/s/a

Amy noted the media coverage posted on the information board and that the T&G will be doing an article on falls prevention. She also informed the Commission about the 365Z foundation events.

Patty reported on programs and facility items. The Valentine and White Out events were very successful. Some programs had to be rescheduled due to inclement weather and others were not able to be rescheduled. The Facebook page is now active. Staff were thanked by Paul and Tom for their help with the meetings held by the Greendale Men's Club. Linda reported on outreach activities, including snow removal assistance. Evidence Based programs will begin in the spring. There was discussion about outreaching to various sections of the city. The next meeting will be held Monday, March 23rd at 4 p.m.

February 24, 2015

DRAFT

Dear (personalize to State Legislators):

The Worcester Commission and Division of Elder Affairs is one of 349 Councils on Aging (COAs) dedicated to promoting healthy aging in the Commonwealth. Funding from line item #9110-9002 provides essential grants to COAs statewide. On behalf of Worcester's 29,000+ seniors, we express our gratitude for the legislature's maintenance of the formula for COA grant distribution as \$8 per resident of each municipality age 60 and older.

The resulting FY'15 grant of \$233,520 to our COA provides substantial support for the operation of our vibrant, multi-cultural, focal point senior center. It helps to fund senior services, program development and coordination. In addition funds are targeted to multi-cultural services, home maintenance assistance as well as job search support. We provide cutting edge services such as evidence-based programs including "A Matter of Balance," "My Life, My Health," and "Healthy Eating for Mature Adults." Further, we continue to maintain the Senior Support Team, an innovative collaboration between public safety, health and human service organizations which outreach to thousands of vulnerable seniors identified through their involvement with 911 emergencies. This Team, as well as multi-cultural outreach, will be strengthened further with increased training via an additional \$5,000 Service Incentive Grant from the COA line item. Worcester and all of the State's municipal Councils on Aging rely on the continuation and expansion of the Formula and Service Incentive grants. While the Governor reduced funding to this line item mid-year, it is fortunate that existing allocations were not impacted.

The Commonwealth's partnership is a cornerstone to the Worcester Senior Center's success, supplementing core municipal funding as well as the assistance of over 230 organizations and instructors to provide hundreds of programs and services annually. Senior Centers promote healthy aging, lessening the need for more costly health and long term care services. **With the growing senior population, it is prudent that the legislature continues to make a cost-effective investment by increasing line item #9100-9002 over the next four budget cycles by \$1.3 million per year.** This would bring the formula for grants to Councils on Aging to \$12 per elder resident by the year 2020, helping to keep up with minimum wage increases and growing needs statewide.

Thank you for your continued support of Councils on Aging and their Senior Centers, thereby helping to ensure the health and independence of our aging population. Please feel free to contact Amy Waters at watersa@worcesterma.gov or 508-799-8063 for further information.

Sincerely,

Robin Bahr Casey, Chair
Commission on Elder Affairs

Amy Vogel Waters, Director
Elder Affairs/Worcester Senior Center