

DATE: January 12, 2023  
TO: Commission on Elder Affairs & Interested Parties  
FROM: Frances Langille, Chair  
SUBJECT: Meeting Notice and Agenda for January 23, 2023, 4 pm via Zoom

The Commission on Elder Affairs is meeting via zoom on **Monday January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 4 p.m.** Join Zoom Meeting:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84372450565?pwd=TWZwcWZKMlBuazhGNFRhMDVGb1ZzQT09>  
Meeting ID: 843 7245 0565 Passcode: 898553  
One tap mobile +19292056099,,84372450565#,,,,\*898553# US (New York)  
Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kg7dOOVrz>  
Members who cannot attend, please contact Amy Vogel Waters at 508-799-1232 x48013 or [WatersA@worcesterma.gov](mailto:WatersA@worcesterma.gov).

### **BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA**

- I. Commission on Elder Affairs Chair
  - a. Call to Order/Roll Call
  - b. Approval of Commission Minutes of Nov. 28, 2022, AND Oct. 24, 2022 meetings
  - c. Approval of Senior Center Committee Report on Jan. 10, 2023 meeting
  
- II. Presentation on 7 Hills RSVP & Senior Companion Programs-Joy Rehfield, Director
  
- III. Elder Affairs Staff Reports
  - a. Director Report - Strategic Plan Goal and Objectives
  
  - b. Senior Center Operations Director Report
    1. Developing and Offered Programs
    2. Facility and Grounds
  
  - c. Manager of Senior Services & Education Report
    1. Outreach, Information, Referral and Advocacy
    2. Multi-cultural Programs & more
  
- IV. Commission on Elder Affairs Chair

-comments &/or questions from Commission members  
-comments from others-up to 2 minutes each  
-confirm next meeting- February 27<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm on zoom  
-Adjourn

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## COMMISSION ON ELDER AFFAIRS

November 28, 2022 Minutes

**Present:** Fran Langille-Chair; Kathan Horne, Noreen Shea, Richard Shea, Sarah Faucher, Stephen Corridori, Tamara Cullen, Amy Waters, Patty Hainsworth, Suki Lapin, Jim Crochiere

Fran called the meeting to order at the Senior Center at 4:03 pm. The minutes could not be approved as there was no quorum. Fran reminded the Commission that there will be no regular meeting in December with the next meeting scheduled for January 23, 2023.

Jim Crochiere, Senior Center Technology Program Assistant presented information on the following technology upgrades implemented this year: Visix digital displays, MSC.net check in stations, Sensus people counter system, computer lab updates, lunchroom media updates, collaborative technology tools, and the provision of technology assistance to seniors. It was noted that the changes made great positive differences in user friendliness, efficiency, tracking data, hybrid programming, and empowering seniors to stay connected in various ways.

Amy reported on and the Commission discussed the following: Accomplishing Department Development Plan Goals, especially exceeding the annual goals for onsite & remote programming as well as the number of seniors active in the new Fitness Center; FY'23 state COA funding has been received; positive meeting with city Budget Director; Worcester Telegram coverage of the Thanksgiving event; Senior Services outreach to elder housing and assistance to seniors who face eviction. Richard asked about the benefits of the solar array in the parking lot.

Patty reported on and the Commission discussed the following: Expecting 3 interns stationed at the Senior Center in the coming semester; no major changes in the facility; ribbon cuttings for the Fitness Center went well and over 200 seniors are using the center; community gardeners were thanked via a lunch and presentation by QCC students; the Veterans Day and Thanksgiving events were creative mixes of food, entertainment, and multi-generational education; December lunches will be accompanied by much musical entertainment with the kick off act being our local star from "The Voice;" the indoor walking club is going well and January's theme is "Be the best you can be in 2023" and Overeater's Anonymous will be one of the new offerings.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm with holiday greetings.

## Commission on Elder Affairs

October 24, 2022 Minutes

**Members Present:** Robin Bahr Casey-Chair; Caroline Sullivan, Facely Henriquez, Fran Langille, Kathan Horne, Lovo Koliego, Nancy Greenberg, Noreen Shea, Richard Pinkes, Richard Shea, Sarah Faucher, Stephen Corridori, Tamara Cullen, Thuha Le

**Staff Present:** Amy Waters, Patty Hainsworth, Linda Wincek-Moore, Suki Lapin, Jenny Linch, Lindita Taka, Jim Crochiere, Dawn Skoglund, Carmen Webb, Wei Shi, Andrew Davis.

Robin called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm in the new Wellness Center on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Senior Center. The minutes of the Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting were approved (m/s/a). The report from the Oct. 11<sup>th</sup> Senior Center Committee meeting were approved (m/s/a).

Senior Center Committee members assisted Amy to recognize full and part-time staff for their contributions during the height of the pandemic as well as their ongoing excellent work. Robin recognized outgoing Commission members, Richard P. and Nghia. The Commission joined Amy to recognize and thank them as well as Robin Bahr Casey for her 13 years of dedicated service and leadership.

Amy reported on and the Commission discussed the following: we are on track for meeting or exceeding Department Development Plan goals, including most impressively the Fitness Center has over 150 active participants; Friends received \$2000 from Country Bank; Department of Public Facilities is working on an “existing conditions” report as well as recommendations for development of the vacant nurse’s residence wing; average daily attendance for September 22 is only 1 % less than the same period pre-pandemic; and, With the help of our support letters to MCOA on behalf of Elder Services of Worcester Area, they were awarded two grants to improve behavioral health services for seniors in our region which will add a behavioral health case manager and a Spanish speaking clinician.

Patty reported on and the Commission discussed the following: The new chairs and tables in this room are examples of the furnishings which are slowly coming in for the Fitness/Wellness Center; the external door to the reception area is still waiting replacement; various technology is still being tweaked; the steamer in the kitchen broke and is being assessed; incident of all external doors being stuck in locked or unlocked position seems to be resolved; ribbon cuttings are all set for the Fitness and Wellness Centers; Multicultural Month in September was very successful and will be illustrated in a poster as well as hanging the Diversity Tree created; Tuesday was an example of a very busy day including two clinics, 2 new exercise classes, coat distribution by Sheriff’s office, antique appraisals and more; Cara Brindisi’s concert was well attended by adoring fans who are following her on The VOICE...she will give another holiday concert this December; November signature programs include Veterans Day and Thanksgiving events; there will be a Real ID workshop; and, the Scoop newsletter is reduced to 12 pages but will hopefully be restored to 16 once the publisher secures more advertisers.

Linda reported on and the Commission discussed the following: Open enrollment is keeping SHINE counselors and staff very busy; already have received many fuel assistance application requests...Thuha offered to work with WCAC and Community HELP to facilitate the application process through bi-directional referrals; UMASS Medical’s Population Health clerkship is underway; attended MCOA conference; and, working with Robin/NAMI to plant 1000 yellow tulips at the Senior Center to create an anti-stigma campaign for people with mental illness. Richard S. shared information about a fall prevention technique advertised online. The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm (m/s/a)

## REPORT TO COMMISSION ON ELDER AFFAIRS

Senior Center Committee Meeting January 10, 2023

Present: Richard Shea-Chair, Caroline Sullivan, Kathan Horne, Fran Langille, Facely Henriquez, Patty Hainsworth, and Amy Waters

Richard called the meeting to order at 12:02 on zoom. The minutes of the November 8, 2022 meeting were approved (m/s/a). The next meeting was confirmed for Feb 8, 2023 at noon.

Amy reviewed and the committee discussed the FY'24 budget request submitted to the city administration. It includes a request to make part-time temporary elder group coordinators into two full time regular employees. It also includes upgrading eight positions. The requested salaries would be covered by increased state COA funding. Key justifications reviewed:

- As of 2020, there are 37,079 Worcester residents age 60 and older. This is a **27% increase** from 2010.
- The pandemic and economic trends are exacerbating stresses already impacting seniors e.g. housing, financial and food insecurity; physical and mental health challenges; isolation etc.
- Language barriers impede access to resources to meet basic needs.
- There is a relationship between discrimination and health. Residents experiencing discrimination are also facing crucial barriers to accessing healthcare and basic needs. Groups who are already suffering health consequences of structural racism, such as Black, Latinx, Asian and indigenous populations are facing discrimination more than Whites. (MDPH Covid 19 Community Impact Study 2022)
- Worcester Senior Center participants identify as: 12% Asian, 6% Latino & 6% Black/African. (msc.net)
- FY'22 senior services assistance units: 9,491 which is a **58% increase** from FY'19 (pre-pandemic). After general senior center information, the highest categories of requests were related to: Health, Benefits, Food, & Housing.
- Over two years from the start of the coronavirus pandemic, the workplace remains in a state of severe disruption. The economy has 4 million more jobs than workers to fill them. Employees are quitting in large numbers. Companies are finding it hard to find workers. (US News 3.17.22)
- As human service workers, Worcester Senior Center/Elder Affairs employees continue to display a remarkable level of dedication and caring, sometimes in the face of life-threatening circumstances.
- Elder Affairs positions have not been assessed and regraded since FY'14. Ten years of mounting responsibilities have ensued since then. While 3 clerical and technical positions were added in this period, the core team of human service professionals carried on with the essence of the work.
- There are 5 employees on the last step of their grade, leaving a much reduced financial incentive for longevity on the job. Maintaining their valuable

knowledge and expertise should be prioritized. Unfortunately, we already lost a 6<sup>th</sup> long term employee to retirement as of 1/4/23.

- In addition to the need cited for expanded senior services, the Elder Affairs staff have taken on new and growing responsibilities in the past year, e.g.:
  - Development and administration of new indoor Fitness Center as well as outdoor Fit Lot.
  - Development and continuation of Senior Center without Walls remote programming and services (hundreds of videos on TV Channel 192, Facebook, YouTube & website; hybrid zoom programs; assisting seniors to connect through technology.)
  - Integrating an average of 30 new registered Senior Center participants per month.
  - Tracking and managing over 6,300 people/month entering the Senior Center as counted by Sen Source.
  - Continuing to respond to the pandemic, preventing and containing outbreaks, providing education and resources and hosting clinics.

Amy noted that the request for city tax levy funding only included \$32,655 for new tax/fringe plus a potential increase in the Fitness Center contract. The projected use of COA state funding also ensures adequate resources to continue supporting current programs for FY'24 and beyond. ***The Senior Center Committee voted unanimous support for the FY'24 budget request as presented (m/s/a).***

In addition, Amy reviewed the status of leases/licenses for tenants of the senior center. The following tenants are due for renewal as of April 1, 2023: RSVP, Senior Companion, Wellness Works Yoga, Pastoral Counseling and Our Deaf Survivors Center. ***The Senior Center Committee voted unanimous support for offering these tenants a one-year license extension (m/s/a).***

Patty reviewed the following building and grounds related purchases/renovations being worked on in conjunction with the Dept. of Public Facilities: steamer for kitchen, signage, fixing external door, shades/windows in lunchroom, refreshing first floor carpets, path to Fitlot, additional picnic table, external kitchen door steps, renovating the 4<sup>th</sup> floor over the offices, renovating the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> floors over the fitness/wellness centers, lighting for the solar panel area of the parking lot & eventual development of the rest of the vacant portion of the building. Also being researched for purchase: computer lab chairs, laptop shelving, smart TV for wellness center, Older American's Month program subsidies and other special programs, as well as privacy seats for the lobby.

Patty reported that the holiday programs were successful and some of the new programs include somatic movement, astrology speaker, overeaters anonymous, JCC film festival, sex and aging speaker, black history trail speaker, and the REC winter market starting. Students are on board to help with programs and respite care. She noted that a new library kiosk will be installed soon, and she is working on various items for the fitness center which as of December has 243 members. Responding to Richard's question, she updated the committee on current pandemic protocols at the center. The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.(m/s/a)

