

The Council on Aging

Meeting Minutes

November 30, 2023

Present at meeting – Carole Mullen, department director, Cheryl Moreci, chair, Bob Casali, vice chair, Dan Malloy, secretary, Charles Duczakowski, Dave Guglielmi, Eileen Milaszewski, Arlene Williams. On Zoom - Karen Kuligowski. Absent - Julia Manning.

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM.

October minutes – The minutes were accepted unanimously.

Assistance – The director stated that during the past two months a great deal of assistance was given to people needing help in filing for fuel assistance and Medicare. For fuel assistance, the signups were complicated by a situation SMOC has been going through, as described at last month's meeting. A great deal of help on prescription drugs was given to people before they talked to a SHINE counselor. The number of people in need of SHINE counseling has grown substantially. Bob mentioned that the Milford CoA office has been getting between 50 and 60 calls a day on that matter.

Circuit Breaker – Dave pointed out that the guidelines for "circuit breaker" eligibility have changed, and some who weren't eligible in the past will be now.

AARP tax clinics – The clinics will be held on Thursdays, starting in February, with groups of up to ten people in each session. They will be for seniors and low-income people. We had 44 people making use of this service last year, and because of the "circuit breaker" change, it is expected that the number this year will be in the 70s.

Transition – Carole will remain in her position through the budget planning process for FY2025, but not past January 1. Carole and Cheryl will be discussing budget matters with the town administrator.

Budget – Carole went over a page of the items on the FY2024 budget. One item mentioned was the formula grant amount of \$33,308. She pointed out that that amount was that high because of the increase in the formula grant which is now based on the 2020 census, and the fact that Nancy reduced her hours. At some point, the board will have to decide if we want to bring that position back to 22 hours.

Carole is recommending that the department ask for a five-percent increase in our budget for the next fiscal year. The reason for this is that employees who have been with the department for 10 to 20 years are being paid at entry-level numbers. The board approved going for five percent.

Arlene asked if companies could be asked to make donations for items such as computers. Carole said that would be an appropriate matter for the Friends to look into. Discussion brought up the point that this would have been more likely to have been successful in the past than in the present time.

More money will also be required if the board decides to increase the hours of the nurse program.

Classes – Carole told the board that within the next couple of years, we will run into a problem paying instructors. The going rate now is \$60 an hour. Fees only cover about a quarter of that. She suggested the possibility of adding \$5,000 in a new line in the budget for classes.

Director vacation – The board unanimously approved Carole's request to take a vacation from January 8 to January 16.

New hire – Bob suggested that the director start making a list of items that we could keep in mind when interviewing to replace her. Carole agreed to do that.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 2:02.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Malloy, secretary