

## COMMISSION ON ELDER AFFAIRS

### Minutes of March 24, 2014

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robin Bahr Casey, Chair; Margaret Coffin; Tom Cullinane; Theresa Eckstrom; Stephen Greenberg; Ursula Hanus; Paul Johnson; Victor Ortiz; Steven Smajkiewicz; Gail Schuyler

MEMBERS ABSENT: Christopher Evans-excused; Carolyn Grenier-excused; Nick Kaltsas; Gail Smith-excused; Elaine Wrubel

STAFF & GUESTS PRESENT: Amy Vogel Waters, Patty Hainsworth, Linda Wincek Moore, Ron Motta-Friends of Worcester's Senior Center

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Robin Bahr Casey. The Commission minutes of February 24, 2014 were approved as mailed. m/s/a The Senior Center Committee Report was reviewed and highlighted by Robin including:

Changes in upcoming meeting dates for both the Senior Center meetings and Commission as follows,

Commission meetings will be held Wed. April 23, Monday June 2 and Mon. June 23. The Senior Center Committee will meet April 8, May 13 and June 17.

The Senior Center Committee recommended and the City Manager approved sending the letter below to legislators.

March 24, 2014

DRAFT

Dear Representative/Senator (personalize):

*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 funding decision this year which increased the formula for COA grant distribution to \$8/resident of each municipality age 60 and older.*

*The resulting FY'14 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. With the increased funding this year, we were able to expand multi-cultural services, home maintenance assistance as well as job search support. In addition it provided resources to enhance the operation such as updating our data tracking system. 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.*

The Commonwealth's partnership is a cornerstone to the Worcester Senior Center's success, supplementing core municipal funding as well as the assistance of 250 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 legislature make a cost-effective investment by increasing line item #9100-9002 to \$11.5 million.** , it is prudent that the This would restore competitive service incentive grants which allows COA's like ours to develop new programs such as the Senior Support Team as described above.

Thank you for your continued support of Councils on Aging statewide, thereby helping to ensure the health and independence of our aging population. Please feel free to contact Amy Waters at [watersa@worcesterma.gov](mailto: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

The Senior Center Committee recommended and the City Law Dept. approved the posting of the following at all antique appraisal events at the Senior Center:

#### ADVISORY TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE ANTIQUE APPRAISAL EVENT

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The Worcester Senior Center, on occasion, provides space for antique appraisals for those who are interested. This does not constitute an endorsement of the appraisers or agreement with their evaluations. If you decide to sell your items at auction or by consignment in an antique shop, you have the right to set a minimum price. Before doing this, you should obtain signed documentation from the appraiser for the estimated value of any item left for sale and the terms of the sale or auction.

The Senior Center Committee approved the addition of the following to the "Educational Programs" section of the Senior Center Guidebook:

Participants are encouraged to consider a variety of resources when making decisions about their health and welfare.

The Senior Center Committee also approved the addition of the following to the "Solicitations" section of the Senior Center Guidebook:

It is expected that all such sessions will conform to the highest ethical standards and consumer safeguards to prevent abuse, coercion, and/or misinformation.

Finally, the Senior Center Committee also approved the following to be added to the Senior Center Guidebook:

#### **Worcester Senior Center Program and Fee Policy *Draft 3/14 (Senior Center Committee revisions in underlined italics)***

##### **Registration & Standards**

Registration for classes and special events usually take place at the reception desk of the Senior Center or by calling 508-799-1232. Worcester residents age 60 and older take priority when participant space is limited, unless the program is provided as a regional activity. It is expected that all program instructors will conform to the highest ethical standards and consumer safeguards to prevent abuse, coercion, and/or misinformation.

## **Fee Determination**

The Worcester Senior Center does not require instructors to charge fees to participants in their programs. Participation fees shall be set by the instructors but must be approved by the Senior Center Program Coordinator and/or Operations Director before programs are scheduled and promoted. Seniors with limited income may request consideration for a scholarship by submitting a form to the Senior Center Operations Director. Any fee set by an instructor higher than \$10.00 per hour requires approval by the Worcester Senior Center Program Coordinator and/or Operations Director. It also requires that the instructor pay an amount of 5% of all such fees collected for the class to the City of Worcester. Instructors who charge fees less than \$10.00 per hour are encouraged to make a donation.

## **Supply Fees**

Any supply fees are set and collected by the instructor. It is the responsibility of the instructor to provide a supply list at the reception desk for participant viewing prior to the start of the class. Fees for supplies must be approved by the Senior Center Program Coordinator and/or Operations Director prior to scheduling the program.

## **Absences, Substitutes, Cancellations**

If instructors must cancel their classes, they must notify the Senior Center as soon as possible. It is under the instructors' discretion to make arrangements for a substitute. The inclement weather policy of the Senior Center will be implemented as necessary.

## **Advertisement of Class**

Classes will be promoted in the Senior SCOOP as space allows, as well as on posted flyers. The Senior Center Program Coordinator and/or Operations Director may also utilize other electronic and print media to publicize the program, at their discretion. The instructor must seek their approval prior to self-publicizing their program.

## **Refunds (if applicable)**

Providing refunds to participants for any missed classes will be solely at the discretion of the instructor.

## **Class Continuation**

The continuation or repetition of a class is based on participation and interest as evaluated by the Worcester Senior Center Program Coordinator and/or Operations Director.

## **Notification & Adjustments**

Instructors will be notified in writing of relevant Worcester Senior Center policies prior to the final scheduling of their classes. The Director of Elders Affairs may adjust this policy for instructors who are also tenants of the Senior Center facility.

(m/s/a)

The Senior Center Committee Report was approved as submitted with the above revisions.

m/s/a

Any updated members on the status of the goals and objectives including: FY 15 state and city funding; we are at 110% of our program goal and as of March; the AARP tax preparers have surpassed the number of tax returns processed last year; A grant has been submitted to the

GWCF Fallon OrNda fund for the “Promoting Healthy Aging” programs; Commission members were invited to the Volunteer Recognition lunch on April 11<sup>th</sup>; The annual participant survey is available and should be returned to the front desk; and Amy reported working on 4 leases currently up for renewal.

Patty reported on programs such as the “Men’s Guide to Healthy Aging” which was very popular and the speaker will be invited back; Robin’s upcoming poetry program; and the new programs being offered courtesy of Friends funding. Paul Johnson asked about the participant swipe stations being down and Patty explained the issues involved and noted that we keep attendance records manually also. Regarding the facility, Patty noted that almost all of the carpet installation project has been completed and all of the windows have been installed.

Linda reported on the Evidence Based Programs- Healthy Eating and Powerful Tools for Caregiving will be starting soon; the multi-cultural groups continue to meet and a Spanish version of *My Life My Health* is being planned once staff are trained; and the Dept. of Public Health continues to work with the Senior Support Team data.

Ron reported on the activities of the Friends of Worcester’s Senior Center, including refurbishing their office, strengthening their Board and maintaining Bingo as a successful fundraiser.

Members were reminded the next meeting date will be Wed, 4/23 and the City Manager will be in attendance.

Tom Cullinane spoke about the Retired Greendale Men’s Club and will work with Patty on ideas for publicizing the opportunities the Club offers to seniors.

The meeting adjourned.