

Commission on Aging

Minutes of the Meeting

November 20, 2017

Present: Chair Chris Robertson, Marion Freer, Dayna Sierakowski, Kathleen Brennan, Advisor Karen Gaudian, George Noyes, Mary Ann O'Grady, Mary Morrisroe

Absent: Sheila Silverman

The meeting was called to order by Chair Chris Robertson at 2:32pm.

Minutes from last meeting were approved by Marion Freer, seconded by George Noyes and approved.

George Noyes spoke of RHS program set up where students are looking to create relationships with seniors. George contacted RHS about a new club formed called STARS (Students and Teenagers Acquiring Relationships with Seniors). George brainstormed with the teacher serving as moderator for group, about needs that students could fulfill/things that they could work on. Concern was brought up about students going to seniors homes, which is being looked at/discussed. George will serve as liaison between COA and RHS. He asked commission members to brainstorm ideas for program and meeting places.

Lori Marks, member of public, commented on Founders Hall providing program for seniors talking about technology, apps, etc.

Tony Phillips, Director of Social Services, mentioned Role Model Mentors, which may/may not have ideas/things in place already to assist STARS program.

Karen spoke of MSP (Medicare Savings Programs)—210 residents in Ridgefield, 80,000 in CT affected. State of CT budget created new income guideline from \$2100/ \$3125 (couple) to \$1374(ALMB level)/\$1644 (will no longer qualify). As of January 1st, people will be losing coverage (prescription plan, supplement)

Lori Marks asked if we can get petition signatures and what can be done to change?

At this point not sure when benefits will end according to registration time, etc.

Chris Robertson pointed out article in Danbury News Times Nov 14th, talking about the change.

Tony sent messages to Rudy and John Frey about issues and impact on town residents (between MSP and renters rebate).

There is a Thanksgiving lunch at Ballard Green from 2-4pm—families from Jesse Lee providing.

Commission then called Darylle Willenbrock from WCAAA (Western CT Area Agency on Aging) to talk about MSP updates—she gave latest income guidelines, effective Jan 1. People will get letter in December. State won't pay Part B premium. Part D (prescription coverage) to continue for one more year until Dec 31, 2018. CT state legal services are fighting this—the state legislature could call special

session to address. Darylle and WCAAA are encouraging people to call state reps. Governor Malloy has stated that a lot of other states do this already (as far as the amount of benefits they provide); but those states aren't as expensive to live in as CT. Social Security going up usual COLA of 2%. WCAAA going to meet with CT Legal Services again in December. This is going to be a drastic cut for many people, with little/no warning. People often don't know what coverage they have and will be hard hit. Darylle pointed out that these cuts are effecting people who worked and paid into Social Security. The cost savings to the state to cut the program is \$50 million. They did not study who would be impacted. Darylle encouraged Social Services to call Legal Services to ask. Information from the state has been limited.

Once a letter is drafted to state representatives, the Commission discussed creating a potential online petition.

In other business, Chris called the Leir Foundation today and found out that COA can keep money previously assigned to us and we may spend money to pay for published Gold Card book.

Chris presented letter from town in regards to the scheduling of future COA meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 3:45pm.