

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE KILLINGWORTH COMMITTEE ON AGING

Wednesday, September 27, 2023 5:00 p.m.

Killingworth Town Hall

Members in Attendance: Joan Gay, Bill Joyce (Arrived at 5:12 p.m.), Joyce Mason, Jean Panciera, Ex-officio Member, Mercedes Riccuiti, and Mary Solera

Members Excused/Absent: None

Visitors: Sandy Allard, Eric Couture, Brendan Geraghty, Glenn Johnson, Kate Moran, and Jamie Sciascia (Via Remote)

Called to Order: The meeting was Called to Order at 5:04 p.m. by Joan Gay, Chair

Roll Call: Chair Gay took a Roll Call of Committee Members and Visitors in attendance.

Guest Speaker, River Valley Transit:

Brandan Geraghty, Transit Planner for the River Valley Transit, came to the Committee on Aging Meeting to provide information on expanded routes, fares and services that are provided specifically for Seniors.

He spoke about the merge in July of 2022 between the Middletown Area Transit and 9 Town Transit now being called the River Valley Transit. During this merge, the company was able to review issues and also improve on them. Brandan advised that there were a series of proposed changes, and after speaking with bus riders, and getting feedback from them, some of their feedback was taken into consideration and accommodated. Brandan stated that Route 645 is relevant to the Town of Killingworth noting a physical brochure will be available next week. He also noted that the same information is available now on the River Valley Transit Website including the bus schedules. Route 645 goes from Madison to Middletown and vice versa. Once a person gets into Middletown, there are a lot more options in terms of regional travel. Brandan also noted there is ability to connect with Route 641 (Madison to Old Saybrook) or 201 (New Haven). All routes are synced up so they can all meet at the same time, reducing overall travel time. Route 645 is every 2 hours, noting it stops at the Killingworth Village; however, anyone can take the bus by waving it down when it passes through the route. Discussion took place if a Shelter Stand would be put in place via the Killingworth Village to accommodate the people who are waiting to travel on the bus. Brandan stated there is a Statewide Shelter Enhancement Program going on now and he will make a note of this as a high priority request. Brandan reviewed the Flex Route which is a program where you can call 24-hours in advance and request a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of deviation, for an extra fee. He also went over the Dial A Ride Program which is a reservation based appointment (first come, first serve) made by 4:00 p.m. or earlier the day prior. The shuttle bus will come and pick you up, take you to a location of choice and drop you back home for a fee. There is also a weekly subscription option that you can enroll in if you have an

employment, medical or educational reason. He further reviewed price information along with discounted prices. Brandon further noted if someone has memory loss, the Dial A Ride service will be able to make notes of that to make sure the bus driver is careful and more patient with the person during their travel. Brandon reviewed Taxi Vouchers, and their partnership with Curtain Taxi which is a service that accommodates you if your appointment is on the later side (nearing 5:00 p.m). and the Dial A Ride service does not operate. Discussion took place on how to get the word out there to Seniors about all these services. Suggestions of distribution to the Library, Town Hall, Pharmacy and other local establishments. Chair Gay will also ask First Selectman Gorski to do an email blast to reach the public. Bill Joyce offered to circulate the River Valley Transit Brochure to the Beechwood Community.

The Committee thanked Brendan for his time and coming to present and answer questions about the services and options for Seniors within the Community.

Brendan left the meeting at approximately 5:50 pm.

Communications: No Report

Approval of Minutes:

Motion #1 - Jean Panciera *Moved* and Mary Solera *Seconded* a motion to accept the Minutes from the Committee on Aging Meeting that was held on July 26, 2023 as presented.

Voting to Approve: J. Gay, B. Joyce, J. Mason, J. Panciera, M. Solera

Motion unanimously passed (5-0-0).

Report from Municipal Agent for the Elderly, Mercedes Riccui:

Mercedes "Chiqui" reported that the Renters Rebate Program was coming to a close. Information regarding the Renters Rebate Program ending was published in the HK Now Newspaper and also sent to The Source. Chiqui also reported on the Fuel Assistance Program that commenced on September 1st. Information was circulated to Town Churches and also put on the HK Now Website. She briefly spoke about the requirements of the Fuel Assistance Program changing last year in terms of how an application was submitted via in person or online. There have been 20 applicants that have filed for the Fuel Assistance Program with Chiqui thus far.

Chair Gay received an email regarding the \$17k in ARPA Funds and why the Committee on Aging didn't qualify in order to use those funds. She noted that if you don't have a physical Senior Center in Town that you would be able to partner with another agency like Park and Rec. Chair Gay is meeting tomorrow with First Selectman Gorski at 2:00 p.m. to see what gray area they would be able to fall under in order to qualify. Committee Members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Chair Gay informed Joyce Mason that Middletown Area Transit has to be updated to reflect its new name of River Valley Transit in the Health Report. Joyce advised that the Health Report is in PDF, so she will make an Addendum noting said changes. Joyce gave the Committee for their review the updated Senior Survey. A brief discussion took place regarding distribution of the Health Report to the Community and if a brochure simplifying the information would be a better option.

Joyce Mason left the meeting at approximately 5:58 p.m.

Reports:

Identification of Needs of Seniors:

Survey - Jean Panciera reported on the Identification of the Needs of Seniors. She noted that not much change occurred other than suggestions and definitions Chair Gay had received from the Board of Selectmen. A brief discussion took place on simplifying the last sentence of the Survey for Seniors who will receive it.

Dissemination - Discussion about where to disseminate the information and also to make sure Seniors only take one Survey versus receiving duplicates took place in length. The Committee brainstormed and suggested: HK Now, Library, Senior Luncheons, Town Hall, All Churches, and different Organizations. Chair Gay suggested that there should be some coordination between distribution of the Survey and receiving a response back. The possibility of attending a church meeting, setting up a table to hand the Surveys out and collecting them took place. The Committee also discussed setting up a table at Helping Hands. The Survey would be for an individual response versus for a joint married couple. The Committee further had discussion about mailing out the Survey in order to reach the most constituents. The Committee would be able to receive a mailing list from the Registrar of Voters. Chair Gay asked the Researching Group for the next Committee meeting to brainstorm about locations to distribute the survey, a timeframe that they would like to distribute the Survey as well as any associated cost if they mail the Survey out (noting the possibility of utilizing the Town's postage machine).

Health: The Health Report has been shared and uploaded to the Committee's SharePoint folder back in July. Chair Gay noted it just needs a minor correction in terms of reflecting the new transportation name.

Communications: No Report.

Recreation/Programs:

Chair Gay stated that the Committee has to move forward with Communications and Recreation and Programs. Bill Joyce offered his services for the Communications Research Group and the Recreation And Programs. Community Members, Nancy McCormick and Sandy Allard, have also informed the Committee of their interest in serving on the Recreation and Programs Researchers Group. Chiqui expressed interest in helping with the Communications Researchers Group. Chair Gay noted that the Committee's main focus is to look at how to effectively communicate those that identify as a Senior, and how to generate a good outreach. Bill Joyce will draft a temporary report for the Committee for their next meeting scheduled at the end of October. Bill Joyce voiced his concerns with the Committee being too small, noting that he feels there should be 7 or 8 Members involved due to the amount of work that is ahead of them in order to make the Committee more successful. A brief discussion took place thereafter regarding getting more Community Members involved.

Jean Panciera spoke about how the Committee identified during the first Committee meeting items to prioritize, take on and research. The high priority items were gathered: Identifying Needs of Seniors, Health, Communications and Recreations/Programs. Jean addressed her concerns about being a smaller Committee and having a larger amount of items to take on. Community Member, Kate Moran, suggested to the Committee to see what the Public thinks is important in terms of priorities before moving forward. Chair Gay confirmed that once the Committee tackles the Survey and Health topics then the Committee will move onto other priority topics for discussion and research.

Age for Seniors/Elderly:

Chair Gay presented options that exist in identifying a specific age group for Seniors. She looked at the following: State Statutes, Medicare, Killingworth Homeowners Tax rate, Clinton, Haddam, Guilford, Durham and The Estuary. Chair Gay asked the Committee what their thoughts were in defining an age for the Elderly and Seniors. The Committee took a poll for: 55 years of age, 60 years of age, 65 years of age. It was narrowed down to 55 years of age and 60 years of age for a Senior and/or Elderly. The Committee will wait for the next meeting in order for Joyce Mason to be present to take a formal vote.

Senior Center:

Chair Gay reported on the Senior Center and meeting with First Selectman Gorski, Senator Christine Cohen and Representative Chris Aniskovich noting their support in pursuing a Senior Center in Town. Discussion took place on utilizing the Town's Barn since there have been upgrades outside noting and RFP would need to be issued for the interior. Due to the age of the Barn (1880's), the possibility that it would qualify for a Historic Restoration Grant took place. Chair Gay addressed a second avenue of hiring a part-time Coordinator for Senior activities in the interim of finding a Senior Center similar to what the Town of Clinton does. This would be a paid position by the Town and the Coordinator would be able to identify Senior programs and activities and search around Town for a location to hold these. Possible locations for Senior Programs are: The Fire House, St. Lawrence Church, KES, and Congregational Church. She spoke with RSD17 Board of Education Chair, Suzanne Sack, who advised that if the Committee was looking to hold these programs at KES it just can't be held during school hours and will speak with the Superintendent of Schools regarding same. Chair Gay suggested hiring a Coordinator would be the ideal way to start and also noted that First Selectman Gorski will continue to work with her on the Committee post election.

Chair Gay received an email received from Heather Milardo from The Estuary regarding the upcoming Senior Lunch, and if anyone is interested in attending, they will help with registration during the luncheon for their activities/programs during that time. Starting in October David, who drives The Estuary Bus, is looking for 10-12 people that have interest in attending.

Old Business:

The Grants/ARPA funds were discussed earlier in the meeting and more information will follow at the next Committee meeting.

New Business:

Clerk Invoice -

Motion #2 - Mary Solera *Moved* and Jean Panciera *Seconded* a motion to approve the Clerk's invoice in the amount of \$305.00 as presented.

Voting to Approve: J. Gay, B. Joyce, J. Panciera, M. Solera

Motion unanimously passed (4-0-0).

Next Regular Meeting: October 25, 2023:

Chair Gay confirmed the next regular Committee on Aging Meeting is scheduled for October 25th. The Committee discussed the November meeting being the day before Thanksgiving and the possibility of rescheduling it to the week prior. The Committee concurred and agreed upon holding a special meeting on November 15th at 5:00 p.m. The Committee also briefly looked at the scheduling of the December 20th meeting and being so close to the Holidays. No action was taken in terms of rescheduling the meeting date.

Motion #3 - Bill Joyce *Moved* and Jean Panciera *Seconded* a motion to cancel the Committee on Aging regular meeting scheduled for November 22, 2023 and schedule a special meeting on November 15, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. at the Killingworth Town Hall.

Voting to Approve: J. Gay, B. Joyce, J. Panciera, M. Solera

Motion unanimously passed (4-0-0).

Chair Gay thanked the Committee members and Participants for the information they provided and wished everyone a Happy Halloween.

Adjournment:

Chair Gay adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Sciascia
Clerk