

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE KILLINGWORTH
COMMITTEE ON AGING

Wednesday, December 27, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

Killingworth Town Hall

Members in Attendance: Joan Gay, Bill Joyce (Arrived at 5:30 p.m.), Joyce Mason, Jean Panciera, Mary Solera, and Ex-officio Member, Mercedes Riccuiti

Members Absent: None.

Visitors: Sandy Allard and Jamie Sciascia (Via Remote)

Called to Order: The meeting was Called to Order at 5:00 p.m. by Joan Gay, Chair

Roll Call: Chair Gay took a Roll Call of all Committee Members and Visitors that were in Attendance at the Meeting.

Communications:

Chair Gay stated that there were two paper Surveys that were mailed into the Town Hall which she handed to Joyce Mason.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion #1 - Jean Panciera *Moved* and Joyce Mason *Seconded* a motion to accept the Minutes from the Committee on Aging Special Meeting that was held on November 15, 2023 as presented.

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

Motion unanimously passed (4-0-0).

Communications:

Chair Gay followed up on two items: 1) Chair Gay reported when Nancy Gorski was First Selectman, she received questions from the Community on the specific “Age of Seniors” and suggested the Committee put an Addendum into the Minutes in order to clarify. Chair Gay asked First Selectman Couture when he came into office if he could send out an email blast to the Community about the deadline date to submit the surveys and to include the Age of Seniors which he did do so; and 2) Chair Gay reported that Town Clerk Mooney received an email from Mandy Ruggerio last month and as a follow up Chair Gay replied to Mandy acknowledging receipt of her email and advising her that the Committee will keep her on the list for programs in the future.

Report from Municipal Agent for the Elderly, Mercedes Riccuiti:

Mercedes “Chiqui” reported that some of her clients notified her that they received a letter from Eversource offering a discount for hardship according to their income status. She sent a letter to all of her customers that enrolled in the Fuel Assistance Program regarding this benefit since that is one of the ways you are eligible to receive it, another is to be enrolled in the Food Stamps program. Chiqui noted most eligible customers have received 10% off their Eversource monthly bill but some up to 40%.

Chiqui also reported that she has received an email that some Community members will be receiving a letter in the mail with a new Medicare card due to their information being compromised, noting this is not a scam. Chiqui sent this information to the Beechwood Community and also sent both the Eversource and Medicare information to Town Clerk Mooney to be put on the Town of Killingworth Website.

Approval of Clerk Invoice:

Motion #2 - Mary Solera *Moved* and Jean Panciera *Seconded* a motion to approve the Clerk’s invoice in the amount of \$130.00 as presented.

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

Motion unanimously passed (4-0-0).

Reports

- Identification of Needs of Seniors - Joyce Mason

Joyce Mason reported a General Summary of the Survey: There were 317 electronic responses recorded from the RiverCOG/Online Survey and 87 written responses sent in for a total of 404 completed Senior Surveys. Two additional email blasts were sent out: one by Nancy Gorski and the second by First Selectman Eric Couture which helped tremendously in reaching additional Seniors. Joyce gave a further breakdown of the Seniors that were reached in the Survey: 18% were in the 60-64 age group, 48% were in the 65-75 age group and 34% were in the 76+ group. Joyce further reported that less than 15% of Seniors worry about Employment, Computers, Smart Phones, Communication, Needs and Transportation. Killingworth Tax and Housing issues fell extremely high at 88% noting concern to be researched and evaluated. Housing Costs, Food, Nutrition, Health and Safety are a major concern according to the Survey and also Senior Comments. Joyce also noted that 47% of the Seniors are not utilizing resources of nearby Senior Centers or even the Senior Lunches held on Wednesdays in Killingworth. The Survey generated better Communication needs within the Town, interest in Killingworth Senior Center, Tax Reform for Seniors and a Bus Stop to be put in Beechwood.

Chair Gay distributed data from the online/RiverCOG and paper results which contained the total response from the online/RiverCOG and the paper as well as the associated comments. Chair Gay also presented the combined totals which were prioritized. The combined prioritization are as follows:

1. Housing Costs/Taxes
2. Health/Safety
3. Recreation/Activities
4. Senior Center/Community Center
5. Nutrition/Food
6. Socialization/Loneliness
7. Fuel Assistance/Rent Rebate
8. Employment Opportunities
9. Need Assistance Navigating Medicare/Medicaid.
10. Help With Smartphones, Computers, Communicating with Others
11. Transportation to Doctors and Shopping an Issue

The Committee had discussion and agreed to redact the Seniors names and phone numbers from the Survey. Chair Gay will send a thank you email to all Seniors who participated in the Survey also attaching the Survey results. Chair Gay further thanked Joyce Mason and her husband for all their hard work in compiling the Survey information into an excel spreadsheet.

Chair Gay talked to Bill Joyce about meeting with the Beechwood Community for feedback and next steps. Bill Joyce reported briefly about the possibility of adding a Border Committee to the Town of Killingworth regarding Mobile Homes when there are tax rate increases. Bill advised that State Representative Christine Cohen is looking to bring this item up to the State Legislature which is similar to what the State of Massachusetts has in place now. Bill will forward to Chair Gay the State Statute for further review.

The Committee had discussion of possible meeting space/locations. Joyce Mason suggested adding an electronic sign to be put up in the center of Town to help get the information out to the Seniors about when Activities are being held and/or Senior Lunch which would reinforce communication. Chair Gay noted that the electronic sign is an appropriate topic for the Communications Research Group.

Next Steps:

- The Committee will review in depth the details of the Survey and bring back ideas for the next meeting in order to develop a plan of action.
- Chair Gay will Finalize the Report into a concise Summary.

- Once the Final Report is completed, it will be posted on the Committee on Aging section of the Town of Killingworth Website, have copies available at the Library, Beechwood, Town Hall and “All Things Killingworth”.
- Chair Gay will contact all the Killingworth Organizations to be added onto their meeting Agendas (so it goes into their meeting Minutes) in order to review a General Report of the Survey Results, also directing specific comments to their group as well as seeking a plan of action/implementation (Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, Planning and Zoning, Health and Safety, Park and Rec, Traffic and Safety, Youth and Family Services, etc.)

Communications:

Bill Joyce and Mercedes “Chiqui” Ricculti offered to be the Research Group for the Communications Team. Chair Gay asked that the Researchers come up with a report to identify opportunities, first coming up with a comprehensive strategy not just for Seniors but all residents of Killingworth. This will be reviewed and approved by the Committee and then be implemented. (Beechwood Newsletter, Board of Selectmen Email Blast, Posting Items on the Town Website, Communication Using the Churches). Bill stated he knows the reporter for The Source.

Senior Center:

Chair Gay reported that she will be meeting with Nancy Gorski to go over possible meeting spaces and will also be looking at putting together a Budget for a part-time Coordinator position. They will take all the suggestions that were made for the programs/activities and identify places to hold them at the Library, Fire House, School.

New Business:

Chair Gay reported that Mary Solera and Jean Panciera are not seeking reappointment to the Committee on Aging. Chair Gay thanked them for being wonderful, valued Committee members and stated how they will be missed. She also thanked them for all they have done on the Committee. Chair Gay stated she would love for them to consider being a Researcher versus a full time Member. Chair Gay also will make sure Mary and Jean will be on future communications.

Next Regular Meeting is January 24th:

The Committee discussed canceling the regular meeting and scheduling a special meeting due to a scheduling conflict with some Committee Members.

Motion #3 - Bill Joyce *Moved* and Jean Panciera *Seconded* a motion to cancel the January 24, 2024 Regular Meeting and schedule a Special Committee on Aging meeting for Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. at the Killingworth Town Hall.

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

Motion unanimously passed (5-0-0).

Adjournment:

Chair Gay adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Sciascia
Clerk