

**TOWN OF AMHERST SENIOR SERVICES
MINUTES OF ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, February 10, 2021**

PRESENT: Kate Wagner, Chairperson, Senior Services Advisory Board; Honorable Deborah Bruch Bucki, Councilmember/Liaison to Senior Services Department; Beverly Fish; Brian McDonald; Jay Smith; Del Szczesniak; Brian C. Bray, Director, Amherst Senior Services; Melissa Abel, Deputy Director, Amherst Center for Senior Services

EXCUSED: Aaron Carlson; Asst. Chief Charles Cohen; Robert Durante; Rhonda Frederick; Dal Giuliani; Karen Grady; Honorable Geoffrey Klein; Jordana Maisel; Deborah Waldrop

CALL TO ORDER & APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - Chairman Wagner called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. Motion to approve the December 9, 2020 minutes made by Beverly Fish.

Report from Amherst Senior Services Director, Brian Bray:

The Senior Center reopened as of Monday, February 8th. It will be open Monday-Thursday with Friday being reserved for the Tops covid vaccination clinic. We've launched our new website. The site includes class & program information, supportive services & nutrition advice, information on becoming members & volunteers, pictures of the facility, testimonials and more. It also provides a link to the Newsletter and "My Active Center" and other social media sites, such as Facebook & U-Tube. "My Active Center" enables members to sign up & pay for classes & programs online. It's a new system & there are still a few glitches, but we are optimistic it will be very helpful to our members.

The management report is not complete for January. We've had a lot of volunteers working & helping out in AMOW and at the covid vaccine clinic. We are very grateful for all the time they donate to us.

For the month of January, our kitchen staff has made 5,538 meals for AMOW and nearly 900 congregate meals. The congregate dining program is not operating on site right now. Frozen meals have been available during this time. Frozen meals must be ordered 24 hours in advance & picked up at the Center at an appointed time. Meal choices vary & a voluntary contribution of \$3.00 is suggested. The County reimburses us \$3.50 for each meal. PR has made a flier with weekly meal choices. Congregate dining will tentatively resume on March 1st. People cannot be closer than 6' apart. Dining set-up will not interfere with the covid vaccine set-up. We are still working on plans. Our program staff continues to work on programs online & in the Center.

2021 priorities: We have many things planned for 2021. Firstly, we would like to assist citizens recover from the pandemic. Secondly, we hope to introduce internet technology by establishing online programs via Zoom, including programs at the Center. We are working on a high quality website specific to the Center & online payment programs for Center activities. We want to pursue more community engagement. That would include expanding programs outside the Senior Center such as in public parks. We plan to increase sponsorship & partnership opportunities with businesses in our community. We want to improve internal operations. Our goal is to streamline work to improve services, offer training programs to sharpen staff skills and

increase services in our community. We will reexamine procedures to streamline the work we do. Finally, we will negotiate a new contract with AMOW. Their 5 year contract ends this year.

We did not get funding for a new Social Worker, but we did get funding to contract out mental health services. We are currently putting together a request to partner with a mental health agency to work with our Social Work staff to provide these services.

Report from Melissa Abel:

- We are reopening Monday with limited programming. Appointments are needed and masks are required at all times. In-house & Zoom programs continue. Classes offered will increase in March & we will begin charging fees. Fee waivers will be available for those in need. The billiard & wellness rooms are open two days a week.
- Collaboration with the Amherst Police Dept. will continue.
- There is an increased need for food assistance for seniors in the community. Our Social Workers are working on that. Canned goods, pastas, sauces & paper goods are being accepted to replenish our food pantry.
- Staff member, Vijaya, has been upgraded to full-time Social Worker for the Center.
- The second round of covid shots starts this Friday. Emergency Services is on site for the whole clinic. We've been inundated with calls from members who want to get their shot. Many people have been having difficulties signing up - spots fill up quickly. We may designate a phone line to help members who request assistance with signing up for the vaccine. It's a challenge & we are working on it. We are very happy to be a part of this.

Updates from Debbie Bucki:

Debbie acknowledged the leadership & staff of the Senior Center for the help & assistance offered during the pandemic. The vaccine clinic was highly organized & praised for the efficient way it was run. The Board was reminded to fill out & send in their financial disclosure forms as soon as possible.

Member Updates:

- Dr. Brian MacDonald has joined us as our newest Board Member. He is a graduate of UB medical school and happy to be a member of our Board. Dr. MacDonald expressed concerns about the indoor dining program, especially as the new variants emerge that are more transmissible than the current original covid 19 strain. He disagrees with the decision to open the congregate dining program. Director Bray said we will be keeping a watchful eye on this and will reevaluate our decision if needed.

Adjourn: 9:35 a.m. - Motion to adjourn by Beverly Fish.

***The next Advisory Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at 8:30 a.m.
370 John James Audubon Parkway, Administrative Conference Room***

Respectfully submitted by Brian C. Bray