

**TOWN OF AMHERST SENIOR SERVICES
MINUTES OF ADVISORY BOARD ZOOM MEETING
Wednesday, April 14, 2021**

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

EXCUSED: Asst. Chief Charles Cohen; Robert Durante; Dal Giuliani; Karen Grady; 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 February 10, 2021 minutes made by Del Szczesniak, seconded by Beverly Fish.

Report from Amherst Senior Services Director, Brian Bray:

Covid policies were reviewed. We still have the mask mandate in the building and members must meet certain criteria to enter & attend programs. Social distancing is still required. Temperature screening at the front door has been stopped as the equipment proved to be unreliable. People continue to sign in & out of the building to assist with contact tracing. People who have travelled outside the state are asked to wait 14 days before entering the building. We are not keeping a record of people's vaccination status at this time. The vast majority of our regular visitors & volunteers have gotten the vaccine through our Friday clinics. If the vaccine passport program takes off, we could require vaccinations to enter the building.

Senior Outreach Services has a contract with Erie County that provides half the funding for their EISEP/CSE program. Erie County is changing their reimbursement policy – it's no longer a straight grant. It won't have an impact on our operations but will be a big change to our funding stream for that program. Our contract has been for much less than other agencies providing comparable services. We are advocating for more funding from Erie County for this program.

Our Social Worker, Angela Jones, has left us and we are looking for 2 new social workers to replace her. Two candidates were considered & they both declined the position due to the residency requirement & a low starting salary. We are still looking to fill these positions.

The lunch program still maintains low numbers. We have been averaging 30 people per day & seating distance is 6 feet apart. Most regular participants have been vaccinated

One of the goals of our department is to increase diversity among our membership. A 50 question survey was distributed to members to get their input & feelings. The results showed most people feel welcome & comfortable at our Center. We are not as diverse in regards to race, different cultures, gender & foreign languages. This may be an area in need of improvement. Overall the results were positive. An employee group, the BEDI Committee (belonging, equity, diversity & inclusion), was established to make sure we can provide services & programs to the diverse population in our community. We want to take proactive steps to accomodate people with differences. Census data may be helpful to identify unique, cultural groups in our community.

Report from Melissa Abel:

- Programming online & in-house is going really well & numbers are going up. The summer classes are being planned & a class brochure book will be available for classes held in June, July & August. Outdoor programming was very popular last year & will be offered in local parks again.
- The Social Case Worker position is still open.
- Senior Outreach is managing their caseload well & holding their own.
- The vaccine clinic has administered over 1,000 rounds of vaccine to seniors in our community. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine has been suspended for now. We are presently doing second doses of the Moderna vaccine.
- We will be looking at the diversity survey to see what we can offer to diversify our programs.
- Zoom & hybrid classes will continue. They have been very well received.
- ASTS is operational for transport to the Center.
- Erie County University Express classes will be starting up as well. They will be offered through Zoom and in the Center.

Updates from Debbie Bucki:

Debbie acknowledged the Center staff & especially our food service department for their outstanding work. Frozen meals are going well & providing a necessary service. The Zoom St. Patrick's Day Irish dancers performance was phenomenal. Zoom programs have offered people a connection in a way that wasn't possible before.

Member Updates:

- Aaron Carlson said services in Amherst are really picking up - 86 rides have already been scheduled for this month. "Hearts & Hands" is seeing an increase in transportation requests.
- Jay Smith mentioned his marketing team was looking for sponsorship & outreach opportunities.
- Rhonda Frederick said the Ombudsman program was hoping to get back up to speed. It's been a tough road - their staff is hesitant & uninterested in getting vaccinated. They expect to see an exodus from the field if vaccination is required. Their new clinic is done & they are waiting for Dept. of Health approval to move in.

Adjourn: 9:10 a.m. - Motion to adjourn by Brian Bray, seconded by Del Szczesniak. Meeting times will remain at 8:30 a.m.

***The next Advisory Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 9, 2021 at 8:30 a.m.
370 John James Audubon Parkway, Administrative Conference Room***

Respectfully submitted by Brian C. Bray