

**TOWN OF AMHERST SENIOR SERVICES
MINUTES OF ADVISORY BOARD ZOOM MEETING
Wednesday, June 9, 2021**

PRESENT: Kate Wagner, Chairperson, Senior Services Advisory Board; Honorable Deborah Bruch Bucki, Councilmember/Liaison to Senior Services Department; Asst. Chief Michael Camilleri; Aaron Carlson; Beverly Fish; Rhonda Frederick; Brian MacDonald; Jordana Maisel; Jay Smith; Del Szczesniak; Deborah Waldrop; Brian C. Bray, Director, Amherst Senior Services; Melissa Abel, Deputy Director, Amherst Center for Senior Services

EXCUSED: Robert Durante; Dal Giuliani; Karen Grady; Honorable Geoffrey Klein

CALL TO ORDER & APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - Chairman Wagner called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Motion to approve the April 14, 2021 minutes made by Del Szczesniak, seconded by Beverly Fish.

Report from Amherst Senior Services Director, Brian Bray:

Updated Covid protocols were discussed. There have been several instances where members were being noncompliant with our rules. We felt it necessary to update our policy & relax some of the rules for vaccinated individuals. Masks are only required for unvaccinated individuals. Verification of vaccination will not be required - we decided to use the honor system instead. Social distancing is still suggested, but will be relaxed in the card room & dining room. Tables in the card room and the dining room will be separated into vaccinated and unvaccinated areas. The café will reopen 2 days a week. Eating in the café is now allowed. Food purchased there must be eaten in the dining room.

We've just submitted our departmental budget to the Town of Amherst. It's a largely status quo budget and we anticipate activity levels returning to 2019 levels. We've asked for an increase in our expenses for next year's revenue. No new positions were requested and we hope to get the budget passed through as is. The only outstanding item in our departmental budget is the AMOW contract which ends in 2021. We need to have a new contract in place by January 1st and don't anticipate any issues with that.

The Capital Improvement plan is due at the end of June. Our building is 21 years old & showing signs of age. We have requested funds for routine maintenance and a general building facelift. We are also requesting money to convert our patio into a 3-season room. The patio is under-utilized and we feel the conversion would make better use of the space. We would like to receive the funds within the next 5 years.

The frozen meal program is dictated by the County. We will continue selling frozen meals as long as we receive reimbursement from them.

We've had a decrease in non-resident memberships during the Covid closing. It shouldn't affect our budget. There has been an increase in sign-ups for classes & programs over the last couple of months & we anticipate returning to 2019 levels in 2022. Credit cards are now being accepted & have helped alleviate staff work.

We received a CDBG community development block grant from the town government. There are two things we would like to procure with that. One is new AV equipment for hybrid programs both online & in person. The second is the addition of a new Social Caseworker position.

Opening a second site at the former BAC at the Boulevard Mall is on hold for now. The Town does not have the funds to sustain a new facility long-term. We hope the project comes to fruition and we continue to be optimistic.

Upcoming events:

- The Juneteenth luncheon takes place on June 17th. A special lunch will be provided. Speakers & proclamations will be presented.
- The Center will have a table at the public markets in the town parks. The sewing club will attend.
- Early voting will be held at the Center in the Amherst Adult Day Center.

Report from Melissa Abel:

- The new Social Caseworker started this past Monday. She has knowledge and experience with mindfulness & is very happy to be here. The other Social Work position is still open - salary & residency issues are a problem. We hope to fill it soon.
- Programs are going really well. Most clubs are back. Appointments are still required to enter the building for classes & programs. Check-in is required.
- Primary voting is held Mon-Fri (12-9) and Sat & Sun. (12-6).
- Juneteenth: Donations of new books are being accepted here or at Amherst local libraries. They can be purchased at Amazon.
- June 25th is the food truck rodeo at Veteran's Canal Park. It will be held once a month.
- The Health Fair is scheduled for August 7th from 9-12. Senator Rath is the sponsor. Plans are under way. Over a thousand people are expected.
- 3 summer concerts are planned for the months of June, July & August. Attendance will be limited to 200 people. A food truck will be on site June 23rd.
- We are hoping to see an increase in membership. A big PR push is planned in July. Ads will be placed in the Bee & other marketing tools will be used.

Updates from Debbie Bucki:

Debbie welcomed Chief Michael Camilleri. Michael is the new assistant police chief for the Town of Amherst. Debbie wished him well in his new position. A special Juneteenth celebration was held at the Senior Center in conjunction with the Amherst Diversity Commission. The Center was acknowledged for their efforts in the planning of this first time event. The Diversity Commission enlisted the help of student interns from Daemen College to do an educational program at the Juneteenth breakfast. Other events for the day included a special luncheon, presentation of Town proclamations & a movie. New book donations related to Juneteenth or black history are being collected to benefit the Amherst libraries. An extensive list of books is available at the Center & on their website. We are also doing some research outreach at local schools. The schools were delighted to hear from the Town and were happy to be involved. A proclamation honoring Older Americans month was presented in May.

Member Updates:

- Rhonda Frederick said the Blocher property is closed and still owned by the original owner. They are working with the Town & the State to secure funding. It's a very long process & they are hopeful it will come through. They do have a new senior project opening in August in Blasdel. The Ombudsmen are back in nursing homes.

Adjourn: 9:15 a.m. - Motion to adjourn by Jay Smith, seconded by Brian MacDonald. Hybrid meetings were suggested for future meetings.

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

Respectfully submitted by Brian C. Bray