

**TOWN OF AMHERST SENIOR SERVICES
MINUTES OF ADVISORY BOARD ZOOM MEETING
Wednesday, February 9, 2022**

PRESENT: Kate Wagner, Chairperson, Senior Services Advisory Board; Aaron Carlson; Beverly Fish; Rhonda Frederick; Brian MacDonald; Jay Smith; Deborah Waldrop; Melissa Abel, Director, Amherst Center for Senior Services; Honorable Deborah Bruch Bucki, Councilmember/Liaison to Senior Services Department; Asst. Chief Michael Camilleri; Mary-Diana Pouli, Executive Director, Amherst Youth & Recreation Department; Del Szczesniak

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

CALL TO ORDER & APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Chairman Wagner called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Motion to approve the December 8, 2022 minutes by Beverly Fish, seconded by Aaron Carlson.

Report from Amherst Senior Services Director, Melissa Abel:

The Board was given a brief summary of Center activities. Attendance at the Center is going up steadily - we have about 300 people coming into the building each day. Our classes are doing well & people feel safe and comfortable attending them. The holidays were rough with staff absences due to Covid. Programming was reduced as per the Town Supervisor. We were able to provide lunch for our meals on wheels program safely & at the same time offer ZOOM classes to our members. Right now we are working on policy & procedures and are trying to streamline some processes that we have in place. We are also doing safety training updates with our kitchen staff & kitchen volunteers. Unfortunately, one of our Social Caseworkers resigned recently & has taken a position with Hospice. She has agreed to stay on as a hired contractor & will be doing a mindfulness program & some other wellness programming for us. In the meantime, we are looking to hire a new Social Caseworker & will pursue some contacts from UB & Daemen College. Work has begun on some of our larger contracts with the kitchen & our Outreach contract with Erie County. Board members will remain the same for this year. Meeting dates have been updated & the Board will meet 6 times this year. Tammy Jacobs, our Program Coordinator, will now attend our meetings & give updates on Center programming. Evening classes & activities are going as expected for January & February. Last Thursday's evening class was cancelled due to bad weather. We plan to steadily increase programming on Tuesday & Thursday evenings and hope to attract the 55-65 age group.

Report from Mary-Diana Pouli: The SOS contract with the County comes up in March. We are proposing a minor change that would free up the Social Workers to have more time to focus on Amherst clients. Last week the program staff from both departments had a meeting to discuss future programs & brainstorm their ideas. We are looking to hire a fulltime employee in the front reception area. We also have fulltime openings for a Recreation Leader & Social Caseworker. Later today we are meeting to make plans for our Spring Fling which was cancelled last year due to snow. We hope to hold this springtime event on Saturday, April 23rd. Lastly, we want to move forward on the reorganization of committees. This involves term limits for board & committee members & other issues which need to be clarified. It's been held up in the Town Attorney's office & we would like to move forward with this.

Updates from Debbie Bucki:

Debbie spoke with the Town Attorney's office last week & was told the committee reorganization was in the process, but there were still some outstanding issues. Our town Attorney has a plan to take the by-laws & create a resolution that would identify board members, board purpose, term lengths, & other issues that are in the by-laws. Hopefully, it should be on the Town Board agenda no later than March & in place for our April meeting. She stressed the importance of facilitating a decision & moving forward on this matter. The Holiday Happening in December was very well done and enjoyed by everyone. It was a phenomenal collaboration between the Senior Center, Youth & Recreation Department, Library & the Police. The budget for the Community Development Block Grant was approved at the last Town Board meeting. One of the items in that approval, was \$10,000 for the Amherst Senior Transportation Dept.

Report from Tammy Jacobs:

- The Holiday Happening in December went very well.
- Plans are under way for The Spring Fling which will take place in April.
- We had a drive-thru handout of KN95 masks in January. Home test kits were also given out to people who could use them.
- March is Women's History Month & also nutrition month. Many exciting things are planned.
- Last night's program "Brain Train" was well attended. Things are going well here & we are excited to see members back in the building.
- Frozen meals are very successful. Many people have benefitted from them.
- The free AARP tax program has been popular and a huge help to many people.

Member Updates:

- Aaron: Hearts & Hands has been working with the Senior Center in recruiting volunteers. They have a nice display case here. They are presently working on a new phone reassurance program called "Tell-a-Story". It is an eight week program that will be targeting socially isolated people. Local artists are recruited to make phone calls to seniors and create a gift for them based on information they learned from their conversations with them. 25 people have been signed up so far & they are looking for 5 more participants. They hope it will be a big success.
- Bev commended the Center kitchen staff for their dedication & hard work. She helps with the distribution of the frozen meals on Fridays & has been impressed by the organization & work ethic of the kitchen staff.
- Rhonda: People Inc is the Ombudsman representative for nursing homes across WNY. The Ombudsman program is in need of volunteers who are looking for a truly meaningful experience. The housing project on Evans Street in the old Blocher facility is fully funded. They are hopeful construction will begin before the end of the year.

Adjourn: 9:20 a.m. - Motion to adjourn by Beverly Fish, seconded by Del Szczeniak.

***The next Advisory Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 13, 2022 at 8:30 a.m.
370 John James Audubon Parkway, via Zoom***

Respectfully submitted by Melissa Abel