



MINUTES of the Commission on Aging Wednesday, February 1, 2023

Andrea Plahn – Commissioner
Chris Boerner – Commissioner
Richard Schimmel – Commission Vice-Chair
Terry Gallagher – Commission Chair
Deb Favorit - Commissioner
Steve Washburn – Mayor – City of Watertown
Margaret Reisdorf – Administrative Services Director – City of Watertown
Paul Ericsson – Carver County Library – Branch Manager
Amy Dimmler – Watertown – Mayer Community Education – Education Director
Dawn Plumer – Carver County Health and Human Services – Public Health Program Director
Jake Foster – City Administrator

1. Call to Order

The Commission on Aging meeting was called to order at 3:30 pm on February 1, 2023.

Members Present: Richard Schimmel, Terry Gallagher, Chris Boerner, Deb Favorit, Margaret Reisdorf, Paul Ericsson, Kay Thul, Dawn Plumer and Lucinda Raymond.

Members Absent: Andrea Plahn, Amy Dimmler, and Jake Foster.

Others in Attendance: None.

2. Adopt Agenda

The Commission moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion passed 8-0.

3. Approval of Minutes from October 5, 2022

Schimmel moved to adopt the October 5, 2022, Commission on Aging Meeting Minutes as submitted. Boerner seconded. Motion passed 8-0.

4. New Business

A. Treasurer Report.

Reisdorf reviewed the treasurer report with the Commission. She informed that the Commission started being active again in September 2022. She explained that at that time, the balance of the Commission on Aging account was \$3,487.06. She reviewed 2022 revenues and expenditures related to the 2022 Senior Dinner event. Revenues included money received as donations from the Watertown Lions, Watertown American Legion and Carver

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County Public Health in the total amount of \$1,300. Reisdorf reviewed expenditures for the event to be a total of \$2,422.67 for meals, set up, and decorations. She stated that the resulting current balance in the account is \$2,364.39.

B. Senior Survey

Reisdorf introduced this item to the Commission. She explained that at a previous meeting, the Commission had discussed priorities and goals. She said that one of the items in which the Commission wanted to focus on was a Senior Survey that would allow the Commission to connect with Seniors and ask important questions. Reisdorf presented some example questions to the Commission and asked for feedback. She also asked the Commission to discuss the ways in which the survey should be conducted and distributed to get good participation.

Gallagher suggested the questions not be open ended and recommended a range in which participants could choose.

Ericsson agreed and suggested a format that included “Agree” at one end of a scale and “Disagree” at the other end. He also suggested a comment section at the end of the survey that would allow participants to add any additional comments. Ericsson recommended using the platform “Survey Monkey”.

The Commission agreed that the survey should reach as many people as possible to try and get participation from not just seniors, but anyone who provides support to or has input on senior related items.

Ericsson recommended asking age ranges at the beginning of the survey to be able to identify and analyze data from the different age groups. Ericsson referenced a survey that was recently conducted by the library. He said that they used Survey Monkey. He said that they also printed off paper copies for some people to fill out and the data was subsequently manually entered into the digital format later. Ericsson also suggested that a QR code could be used in a newsletter or on paper documents for people to scan with their phones as a way to get access to the survey.

Thul referenced the monthly city newsletter and how information on the survey could be presented there. She said that there could be an excerpt as well that would offer paper surveys to people at City Hall and/or other locations if requested.

Gallagher asked Reisdorf if census information could be provided to and presented to the Commission on Aging as a way to see and review demographic changes. He stated that providing some of that information to the public as well could be helpful.

Raymond recommended that there be an over the phone survey option as well in which people can call in and someone can help them complete it over the phone. Reisdorf stated that she would be willing to help with that.

Schimmel expressed concerns about survey results that may not be related to seniors. He asked what the Commission would do if concerns were expressed about things beyond senior related items.

Favorit stated that the questions may need to be formatted and drafted in a way to focus on things directly related to seniors. She explained that the goal is to reach all generations of people, but that the Commission is looking for information related to how they can help seniors and so the questions should be specific enough and written in a way that gets the information the Commission is looking for.

Thul explained that it may be helpful for the Commission on Aging to explain its purpose in an upcoming newsletter to educate the community.

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Reisdorf recommended that the Commission on Aging have a meeting to review its purpose and mission statements again.

Plumer explained that there should be a clear explanation on what who seniors are. She provided an example of someone who is 55+. She also explained that anonymous surveys can be tough in that it is hard to follow up with some specific concerns or ideas because there is no one to contact. She recommended that the survey at least allow people to share information if they want to.

Boerner recommended that the Commission look into different survey styles on Survey Monkey. She said that some survey templates that are offered are free, but that it may be worth spending a little money on a survey template that will allow for better participation.

Gallagher agreed that it would be good to follow up with participants who have specific comments or requests. Gallagher asked if the Commission should ask if the Commission on Aging should sponsor events with speakers. He suggested that speakers could include seniors in the community, the mayor, and/or other applicable people. Gallagher shared an idea of having a Community Bench created for people to sit and converse. He also shared an idea of having someone come in and have their story recorded.

There was a discussion on the Watertown Senior Center and touring their location again for a future meeting.

The Commission discussed transportation issues for seniors within the community. Reisdorf stated that she would provide an update on Carver County's WeCAB program at the next meeting.

Plumer said that Carver County will be doing a countywide Health Assessment Survey in 2023. She said that it is conducted every 5 years and will focus on countywide issues including transportation, housing, health, etc.

The Commission agreed to let that survey capture some of those items and that the Commission's survey will attempt to capture items not on that survey.

Raymond recommended that the Commission on Aging do an event in the Spring like a senior dance.

The Commission discussed ideas on how to distribute the survey. Schimmel recommended bringing survey information to the St. Paul's Church dinner that takes place on the first Thursday of each month. The Commission also discussed the newsletter, social media, paper surveys, community event (Rails-to-Trials) and call-in options.

The Commission discussed senior housing in the community and the need for more affordable options. Reisdorf explained that the City is looking at potentially doing a housing market study as a way to help identify community needs and guide future development.

Reisdorf stated that she believed that the conversation was very helpful and that she would take the comments and concerns presented into consideration as she creates an updated survey template and recommendation at the next meeting.

C. Tax Preparation Resources for Seniors

Reisdorf introduced this item to the commission. She stated that Commission Schimmel had asked her recently if there were tax resources available for seniors throughout the tax season. She presented information that was provided by Ericsson on the Carver County Library Site. Information included in person appointment options in Carver County communities. Reisdorf stated that staff would put the information up on social media and the city newsletter to provide the information to seniors.

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D. Holiday Dinner Review – December 2022

Reisdorf provided a review of the Holiday Dinner event from December 2022. She provided positive feedback related to the event and some recommendations that were provided for the upcoming event in 2023. She explained that overall, it was very well received, and people enjoyed the event.

The Commission discussed that they felt that the event went really well and was well received as well. There was discussion on ideas for the upcoming year.

Raymond asked if the Commission could discuss having a senior dance event in April. She said that it would be nice to have a Spring event as well.

E. Meeting with the City Council – February 14, 2023 @ 5:30 p.m.

Reisdorf invited the Commission to the City Council meeting workshop on February 14, 2023 to meet with the City Council and other Commissions. She stated that the goal of the meeting is to meet with others who serve the community and learn more about the roles of each group and how things are interconnected.

5. Other Business

A. City Updates

Reisdorf referenced updates in the packet from Commission Member Organizations including Carver County Public Health and Library.

Plumber referenced an upcoming grant opportunity and COVID-19 vaccination clinic options. She said that clinics can be scheduled as events in conjunction with other events. She also stated that seniors can request a visit from a nurse to their home for a vaccine.

B. Reports from Commission Members

None.

6. Adjournment

A motion by Raymond to end the meeting at 5:00 p.m. was made. Favorit Seconded. Motion passed 8-0.

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