

## Commission for Senior Services Meeting Minutes September 16, 2011

**Attendees:** Commission Members: Howard Maynard, Bob McGrath, Stan Nayer. Mike Stashower  
Staff: Terry Giegengack, Sue Lebrija, Sue Pfister, Guests: Charlene Barlow (Family and Children's Agency). Stemmie Goldman (LWV observer), Bill Meyer

The minutes of May 20, 2011 were approved.

Charlene Barlow described the Personal Alert Service (formerly called "Lifeline") offered by Family and Children's not-for-profit agency. A person in need of help can push their Personal Help Button, which activates the unit, which then dials the Care Center and establishes two-way voice communication to provide the needed help. They are the largest personal alert provider in Fairfield County.

The Baron's South Committee is developing the housing proposal based on information from site visits.

Stan Nayer stated that Teri Klein has a conflict with meetings on the third Friday of the month and has requested that the Commission for Senior Services meetings be switched to the first Friday, which is O.K. with the staff. It was decided to change the date accordingly for the October, November and December meetings and readdress the issue at the end of the year.

First responders were accommodated at the Center for Senior Activities during Hurricane Irene. Many of them worked long hours and came to the Center for R and R. The DHS staff knew of seniors who are frail and might be in need of help and had contacted them ahead of time. Everything went smoothly. The Center has a generator and thus was not out of power, but is not hurricane proof, which Long Lots is, so Long Lots School was the official hurricane shelter for the community. This shelter was staffed and managed by the DHS personnel, Red Cross and CERT volunteers. Fire and police departments supported.

Sue Lebrija reported on the concerns about the ability of the Westport Warm-up Fund to adequately serve clients this winter. There is no resolution on the amount of state funding for the coming year. There was discussion on the need to improve fund raising to cover any potential gap. The Westport Warm-Up Advisory committee has been reestablished to include community representatives. This committee will work with DHS staff to promote awareness of the Warm Up Fund and help with community fundraising.

Sue Pfister announced that the Center has hired a new program director, Tara Lansdale. Program registration for Westporters was this week.

The town responded very successfully to the United Way challenge grant to help people residents who are unemployed or underemployed with housing payment assistance. The DHS staff worked hard to raise more than the required \$2,500 and 25 donors in the challenge grant. The total amount received by DHS to help people of all ages with housing expenses is over \$16,000.

Stan Nayer reported that the Friends of the Senior Center was reviewing its goals and mission. They have recently added several new board members.

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 A.M.

Respectfully submitted: Michael Stashower