

**Chaplin Senior Center**

**Board of Directors**

**132 Chaplin Street**

**Chaplin, CT 06235**

The Board of Directors for the Chaplin Senior Center met for its regular meeting on Tuesday, **May 3, 2022**, in meeting room of the Chaplin Public Library.

Members present: Chairperson Irene Schein, Shirley Rakos, Ann Lewis, Jeanette Haines, Ellen Gillon, Catherine Dietrichsen, Crystal Gebhardt, Carl Linkkila, and Walt Zlotnick; alternates Dawn Gilbert, Robin Hoagland, and Janice Godaire, Director Lisa Kegler, and Victoria Northrop (recording clerk).

- 1. Irene Schein called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.**
- 2. Secretary's Report and Additions or Changes to Agenda:** Jeanette Haines moved to approve the draft minutes of the April meeting, Ann Lewis seconded the motion, and the Board approved unanimously. There were no changes to the agenda.
- 3. Audience for Citizens:** First Selectman Juan Roman attended, as did Senior Center Chef Bob Grindle, and Cesar Beltran.
- 4. Director's Report and Correspondence:**

No correspondence to report.

Special Revenue Fund: \$31,290.81

Cash on Hand: \$399.03

Membership: 387

Dues Collected: \$2,008

Lisa informed the Board that the Fisherman's Breakfast successfully served 71 people and created a fundraising profit of \$357.56.

The second estimate for the shed roof came in at \$2500 for just the strip and re-shingle using the supplies the Center already has. This still seems expensive, so Lisa's husband has volunteered to do the re-shingling, as long as the town allows it.

New activities include a "Paint & Sip" painting class on slate with mocktails and a light lunch for up to 10 people (already sold out), and the resumption of the Saturday Morning Walking Club, which will begin soon and continue through summer into early autumn.

The annual fundraising Plant and Grinder Sale is set for May 7<sup>th</sup> from 10 am to 12:30. It will feature seedlings, flowers, hanging baskets and other houseplants. Due to potentially rainy weather, volunteers should wear rainproof footwear for 8 am setup on Saturday.

The plants will be brought down on Friday. Lisa will ask people to return the starter pots after they plant if possible. 116+ grinders have been or will be sold.

## 5. Budget Discussion with the Board and First Selectman

The topics of the increase in budget for heating and cooling as well as the idea of combined services and increased weekly hours for the Chef and his Assistant were brought up with the Board and First Selectman Juan Roman, who was present. Juan stated that combining services, particularly with HVAC has been considered, but in such a system it would be difficult to assess which systems were being used efficiently or working properly. It is clear that the HVAC system for the Senior Center and Library are not functioning well. Fuel prices are indeed rising and if the Senior Center has an overshoot on HVAC costs, the town has a contingency fund for such expenses if needed. Irene asked if changing out the ceiling tiles would be included in an update of the Center's HVAC system. Juan said that it is more likely that the existing ducts will remain and the furnace system be updated. The BOS is currently waiting to speak with the roofer and the solar panel installer to deal with the issue of water damage from roof leaks and the subsequent repair of water stained ceiling tiles. Jeanette asked what the time frame for this would be and Juan stated that since this is high priority it would be addressed soon. He also stated that the town needs the new specs to be drawn up by a mechanical engineer.

The next topic was the Community Room and its increased use affecting the heating and cooling budget. Juan recommends increasing the budget to reflect increasing facility use requests. Irene wants to make certain that documentation of the room usage is kept accurately and up-to-date through the existing form to track usage, whether by seniors or community members. The Board discussed contacting Dave Stone to potentially prune back the evergreen tree planted by the Community Room air intake to avoid its encroachment on the airflow for the HVAC system.

Irene then stated that use of the facilities and meals served to the community are growing greatly and potentially going over budget. The budget will need to be increased through the BOS and BOF. The chef and his assistant need to increase their hours to handle the demand by approximately +25%, if the BOS/BOF so approve. Juan stated that the budget is already in for the year, and that there has been a 3% across the board increase to help lessen the pinch of the +7.5% Cost of Living increase that occurred. He emphasized that with a 9 million dollar budget, adding 5 hours a week will not be the make-or-break line item. Juan said that Val can provide the accurate numbers to Lisa and the Board and then the BOS and BOF can discuss the increase with them. Increasing actual hours is something which cannot come out of the slush fund like overruns in HVAC costs. Lisa reemphasized that she had made the request to the BOF to increase the Chef and Assistant hours, but it was denied as it hadn't been approved by the BOS as well. Victoria mentioned that the minutes of August 2020 mention adding an extra lunch day and that there was some discussion about capping numbers of lunches at some point, but no vote on such. With current hours, production of 70 lunches is approaching the high end of ability. Irene then recommended approving 15 hrs/wk for the Chef and 10/wk for the

Assistant. Ellen moved for this to happen, and Catherine seconded it. Before the Board voted, Juan interjected that he thinks that even these increased hours might be insufficient if the demand continues to grow. Carl suggested perhaps increasing the meal price slightly to help cover the shortfall in paying the Chef and Assistant for increased hours, but Lisa stated that's not possible, as the money for the lunches goes into the Special Revenue Fund and salaries explicitly may not be paid from the Special Revenue Fund. Irene then withdrew the motion entirely, as the situation needs more research.

Bob stated that in more than a decade on staff he's seen it grow from 15-25 lunches to now around 70 per service. Curbside has also grown, with the Health Department's approval. The need is there, the people who come in are often from an underserved population. Dawn and Bob are a good team, and the Center supports the program. Many of the hours worked are already volunteer. Bob would like to be paid only for the core program. Fewer than 25% of the participants are from outside the community. Chaplin cooks meals rather than reheats TVCCA program meals. The meals fall within the \$5 budget for each meal so the Center is not losing money on the meals. As the numbers of participants increase, Bob and Dawn rise to the challenge. Bob doesn't feel that capping the number of lunches served is appropriate. Juan would like the Board and Lisa to get the concrete numbers together so the budget would cover even more than the 15 hours requested in case of further expansion; looking to the future.

#### **6. Update on Benches for Garrison Park**

Victoria and Crystal volunteered to help stain the existing Senior Center benches at Garrison Park. Lisa will contact Dave Stone to see if he has stain and what color/type he plans to use. Lisa read a letter from Dave Stone to the community concerning the benches and their installation. The DPW will pour concrete bases and will order Brazilian Walnut slats for the benches (75 year life-span on the wood). The cost per bench will be \$740 and the project will be completed by 9.10.22. Ann asked if the Brazilian Walnut is sustainable. Bob suggested asking individuals if they would like to support the project. Catherine asked how many benches total the town plans to add – at this point no one is sure. Juan asked the source of the Center's Special Revenue Fund and its uses. Lisa and the Board told him (donations/fundraising) and mentioned projects it's used for such as the shed roof, the art wall-hanging system, outdoor sitting area, etc. After some discussion, Ellen moves to use the Special Revenue to purchase one bench and Crystal seconds it. The Board then passes the motion to buy the bench but to make certain that the wood used is sustainable if possible.

#### **7. Board Member Reports:**

Ellen gave a description and showed photographs of the art hanging system at the hospital as an example for the Board of what the Center will be getting. Lisa will have prices for the next meeting.

Irene updated the Board on the situation of affordable housing in Chaplin. Juan stated that at this point, everything hinges on finding a location. The Economic Commission is trying to push this forward. To transfer State property to the town is complex. The town does not want to be a landlord. The Mansfield Housing Authority has said that it could assist Chaplin with its Section 8 and senior housing if needed. The next move would be reaching out to Mansfield and identifying the location for said housing in Chaplin. There is a question of who will make the investment in the construction of the housing. The Access Agency may be helpful. Ann Lewis suggested talking to similarly sized and budgeted towns, and to Willington (which has just gone through the process) to see how they've approached the issue.

**8. Next Meeting Date:** June 7, 2022 @ 10 a.m.

**9. Adjournment:** the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Victoria Northrop, recording clerk