

# WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION

## MINUTES

February 15, 2022

Members Present: Rebecca Hajosy, Noreen Bachteler, Robert Kennedy  
Absent: Linda Hanson, Rosemary Cleary, Mary Reilly (Rosemary and Mary tried but unable to get into the meeting from computer or phone)  
Staff Present: Keren Paquette, Rebecca Sears (with intern Kevin Ryan), Kevin Farmer, Gail Crockett  
Guests: Beth Rocco, Robert McCue of West Hartford Emergency Management

Chairperson Rebecca Hajosy called the meeting to order at 10:03AM. The meeting was held virtually and did not have enough members present for a quorum, so no voting happened. The January 18, 2022 meeting minutes thus could not be approved.

### ***Presentation – Robert (Bob) McCue, Deputy Director of West Hartford’s Emergency Management***

Bob served for 39 years on the West Hartford Police force. He now coordinates the newly formed ***Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)***. This team is formed from resident volunteers who are trained and available to assist first responders and town leaders in the event of an emergency. They work with the town’s Office of Emergency Management (OEM). Volunteers receive 24 hours of basic emergency training – first aid, fire safety, search & rescue, disaster prep and animal protection in disasters. Recent activities they’ve helped at: vaccination clinics, covid tests & mask distributions, and will be helping at the Park Road Parade and Celebrate West Hartford. There are currently 40 CERT team members who have gone through the training – must be 18 years or older. All residents of West Hartford can go through the CERT training even if they’re not interested in being on the CERT team. The town wants all residents to be prepared for emergencies as the impacted person is always the first person to the scene of every disaster.

Bob also brought up the “Special Needs Registry” – a registry where you can sign yourself up or a loved one who has mobility issues, electric equipment needs, confined to bed, etc. that would need special consideration in a power outage or other emergency. Bob pointed out that this registry is different than the police/fire department alerts that can be attached to an individual home address.

Rebecca Sears from the Senior Center asked Bob if he could come present this information to the 2 Senior Centers – they will set up dates offline.

### ***Chairperson’s Report***

Rebecca Hajosy reported that Ellen Phillips has resigned from the Commission effective 2/1/2022. Beth Rocco has submitted to become a member which will have to be approved by the Town Council and their meeting in February has been cancelled. Gail Crockett also expressed her interest but brought up the issue of political party affiliation and being on other Commissions/Boards in town.

The Town has a new “Civic Clerk” computer program where all meeting minutes will be housed and anyone who registers can view them.

Rebecca reported that our group sent flowers to Amy Silverman to thank her for her years of service on this Commission – Amy was very appreciative.

### ***West Hartford Social Services***

Keren Paquette reported that overall Social Services is getting more and more referrals and more complex referrals, and they are short staffed.

The West Hartford Prevention Coalition is still looking for members. This group wants community input on how to use grant money earmarked for mental health, suicide prevention and substance abuse issues. The town’s Food Pantry continues to be very busy, and Volunteer Services is back to full activity. The town’s Energy Assistance person has resigned so Social Services is getting calls from frustrated residents who are not getting responses from CRT.

Rebecca asked Keren if Social Services gets involved with issues related to IRMAA (Medicare Income Related Monthly Adjusted Amount) cases. Keren said they do not, but a larger discussion happened around this topic. Rebecca will see if we can get a presentation on IRMAA at a future WHSCAC meeting.

### ***Seniors Job Bank***

Gail Crockett reported that the Seniors Job Bank is gearing up for the usually busy spring season when an uptick in need always happens, especially around household and yard cleaning. The Job Bank is also seeing more and more non-profits and small businesses looking for part-time help.

The Job Bank is looking to update their website and make it more interactive and create a social media presence.

### ***Transportation***

Kevin Farmer reported that their numbers were down in December and January due to omicron covid variant, but they are starting to tick up again. They recently added 2 drivers and are in the midst of their annual appeal for which they are at 60% of goal right now. Membership fee remains at \$40

### ***Senior Centers***

Becky Sears reported that the Spring 2022 Programming Bulletin is close to completion – it covers programs in March April and May. Most spring programs will be in person but will continue to have hybrid options. The mask mandate in the Senior Centers is staying in place for now. The number of info sign-ups is up 400% from the Fall programs. The Valentine’s Day event yesterday had a great turn-out. Becky introduced Kevin Ryan, a senior citizen and CCSU intern for the Senior Center. Kevin lives in West Hartford, is an Engineer by training and will help Becky with Senior Center programming.

Becky reported on a new program they’re working on – WeHa YOUiversity that are programs geared toward younger seniors 55+. The programs are being developed as a place for younger seniors to look at their whole “health” – financial health, career health, physical and mental health. The programs will occur after normal Senior Center hours due to this group mostly still working.

### ***New Business***

The Acting Town Manager has asked this Commission to recommend a member and an alternate to sit on the New Elmwood Community Center Advisory Committee that will work with the selected architectural firm and Town staff throughout the feasibility and design stages of the project and facilitate community outreach and participation. Submissions are due 2/28/22. It needs to be a Commission member. Beth Rocco expressed interest but she’s not officially on the Commission yet. The Commission may need to put a temporary person on the committee until this is resolved or the Commission can hold a special meeting between now and the end of the month to discuss the choice and vote on it. Once the Commission has a member on the New Elmwood Community Center Advisory Committee, they will report to the Commission every month. Rebecca will forward a copy of the Acting Town Manager’s letter to the absent Commission members.

The Town has asked this Commission to produce an Annual Report – Rebecca and Noreen will handle putting this together.

### ***Agenda for Future Meetings***

Rebecca reported that the March meeting is planned for a report on Elder Housing Options and the new Town Ordinance on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU), but they haven’t been able to secure anyone to present yet. She and Noreen will continue to work on this and maybe try to find someone to present on IRMAA as well.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 15 and will be virtual again – needs to be 3 consecutive months of either in person or virtual meetings according to town recommendations.

The meeting adjourned at 11:53AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann T. Visgilio, Recording Secretary