

Tompkins County Office for the Aging

Advisory Committee Meeting

January 22, 2024

Hybrid

9:30am

Members present: Hart, Lesser, Roe, Beyers, Stamm, Hatch, Hultberg

Liaisons: Lynch, Lindhorst, Askew, Molloy, Wells, Burger, Stuart, Klein, Evans, Hillson

Staff: Bullis, Monroe, Davis, Sprague, Jackson

Public: Toby Dean

1. Hart called the meeting to order at 9:30am.
2. No quorum; approval of November minutes postponed.
3. No member comments
4. No public comment
5. COFA Update:
 - Will send out Advisory meeting schedule for 2024; please know depending on the states timeline, meeting dates may shift especially with regards to public hearings
 - Still looking for new members; Danby, Enfield, Trumansburg; introduced potential member Toby Dean from Danby
 - Monroe will report out annually on PERS data/information; this will occur in February or March
 - We are currently in the process of interviews for our Aging Services Specialist position which has been vacant since August; will also have 2 new permanent staff for our Ombudsman program
 - Monroe wanted to make people aware of the new Center for Government building and that legislatures are leaning towards selling the current building we are in and moving our department to the new building; project is 4-5 years out
 - Bullis reported that our Public Hearing will be held on Tuesday, February 6th at 11:00am at the Danby Community Church; 2024 Plan Abstract and Feedback survey are both on our website; COFA will continue to collect feedback through the month of February
 - COFA will be holding their Annual Luncheon in May; will be convening the subcommittee to assist with planning. Due to scheduling speaker, we are looking at the first week in May (2nd or 3rd)
 - COFA has put out the call for nominations for the 2024 Outstanding Volunteer awards. NYSOFA will be holding in person event for Older NYer's Day on May 14th in Albany. Deadline for nominations is February 5th

6. Liaison Reports:

a. Klein: Legislature-

- Committee assignments for legislators will be forthcoming; COFA will continue to report to the Health and Human Services Committee

b. Burger: Lifelong-

- New program manager, Maria Vargas
- In training mode for tax program; about 30 tax preparers; expecting to be really busy this year
- Scholarship brochure-anyone who falls in 150% of federal poverty limits can receive a scholarship (up to \$250 credit to use at Lifelong however they would like)
- Starting a strategic planning process; starting with sessions with the staff and their board
- Library Place community room-looks like they are headed in the right direction and are hopeful for an MOU this week; thank you to Dan Klein for helping facilitate.

Hart asked if flyer for tax program lists the locations; Burger stated that it does-will share with Lisa

- Senior Circle is now digital; over 500 people already signed up. Hard copies available at local libraries, Lifelong and COFA

c. Evans: Foodnet-

- Mac-n-Cheese Bowl is May 1st. Opportunity for tabling, please let Aly know if you have not heard from Georgia Lesh

d. Molloy: TCPL-

- Restarted Tech Help 1 on 1's Wednesdays from 12-1pm; can sign up on events calendar or call reference desk
- Hosting free tax help with Cornell from Feb 3rd to April 13th; no registration required, drop-in appointments from 11:30am-4:30pm each day

Lynch asked about flyer for tax help; Molloy stated that they will be sending one to Lisa to distribute. Monroe asked if tax program was for specific ages. Molloy answered that it is geared towards older adults but open to all ages. Burger confirmed that it is the new VITA program.

e. Hillson: TCWH-

- COVID still ongoing; reminder that Flu, Covid and RSV vaccines are still available
- Waiting on delivery for more COVID test kits; folks can still submit through US Postal service to receive test kits
- Oral Health work; overarching goal is to expand oral health in Tompkins County; have created a survey for school age kids and their families along with oral health webpage; plan after initial survey results is to send out to all residents of the County

- f. Askew: StateWide-
 - Patient Advocates webinar on January 30th; new insurance options for undocumented immigrants aged 65 and over
 - Annual Convention in Saratoga Springs on October 21-23
 - A lot of calls on help line about the Medicare card scams; have folks getting test kits that they did not order, and Medicare is getting billed
 - Medicare Advantage plan open enrollment right now
 - Patient rights helpline calls; people getting discharged with no home care set up; people getting kicked out of rehab facilities because they don't feel they are making progress- can call the helpline 800-333-4374

- g. Lindhorst: Love Living at Home-
 - Held Board retreat last week; a lot of great ideas were shared, putting together subcommittees and will have more information next month
 - Contact Thena if anyone interested in getting involved in any of the subcommittees

- h. Stuart: VNS-
 - Community Paramedicine project; still moving forward-was hoping to launch in January but will not be able to go live quite yet; project is if VNS has a patient that they think could stabilize at home with an EMT going into home with virtual care appointment, they will try to do that instead of being transported to ED; also if someone doesn't qualify for home care, an EMT could go in and review medications, and make sure they have follow up appointments. Waiting on the State to give okay. The concept is to use fly cars, not ambulances. Will receive \$225,000 for 2024

- i. Wells: Gadabout-
 - Getting very close to deploying their new scheduling and dispatching software; will be beta testing it with 3 drivers on the 31st. Will proceed with additional roll outs once beta testing is completed.

- 7. Discussion: Jan Lynch, Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC)-Snow Co. Update
 - Statewide systems advocate will be travelling to Albany for Legislative Day. Advocating for relevant issues for older adults including fair pay for home care
 - Consultant for strategic planning completed in December; what came out of community is that many people are unfamiliar with what FLIC actually does; trying to get more information out and be more active on Facebook page

Bill asked if the County information system was familiar with FLIC's services so that if someone called they could be directed to FLIC? Lynch, clarified through 211 and stated that they try to make sure they are updated and do receive referrals from them but will check in with them as well.

 - Snow free crosswalks and sidewalks coalition (SnowCo)
 - For past 2 years has been working to raise awareness and get some small funding for a trial through the City of Ithaca; the city is responsible for snow removal for cars; but do not clear crosswalks and sidewalks

- Effects everyone coming into the city, not just those who live here
- Had discouraging couple of budget sessions where the amount they were asking for for a trial did not go through. It made it to discussion and there was talk of the possibility of it being in the budget, but it didn't clear
- Group is working on talking to every new member of the Common Council as well as old members to make sure that they clearly understand what the Snow Co is interested in seeing happen and why
- If you are interested in the Snow Co; meets at noon on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, all virtual; please reach out to Jan
- Bike Walk Tompkins and COFA are also involved in the coalition
- City needs a better understanding of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); have found that there is a lot of misunderstanding there; will be working to educate the public

Klein asked if the city came up with a plan that may be identifying certain major avenues or tributaries in and out of downtown but not attempt to try to get every street and every crosswalk, would that fall short of what you are hoping for or would you consider that a good start? Lynch stated they would consider that a good start. Initially asked for \$50,000 to just try it in center of downtown, and the coalition was for that. Both Syracuse and Rochester have crosswalk clearing and they point to those two cities as models.

Bill asked about some communities who have neighborhood watch groups and he wondered if this was the kind of thing that a group like that may get involved in, volunteers who do the work? If not, at least reporting areas that are blocked by snow? Lynch responded that she thinks the reporting part is really important. Have shied away from volunteers doing the work because it's very complex. Snow Angels were a group of Cornell students who were going to come down and provide snow removal. What happens when the students are on break, organization of volunteers. Would really like to see the city take some responsibility for it.

8. No old business
9. No new business

Next meeting will be February 6, 2024 (Public Hearing). Next regular meeting March 25, 2024.

Meeting adjourned 10:30am