

Tompkins County Office for the Aging

Advisory Committee Meeting

July 25, 2022

Virtually via Zoom

9:30am

Members present: Hart, Lesser, Izbicki, Beyers, Hultberg, Hatch, Lawrence, Shearer

Liaisons: Burger, Jewell, Klein, Schiele, Hillson, Lynch, Askew, Molloy, Evans

Staff: Monroe, Jackson, Maine, Davis, Slocum

1. Hart called meeting to order at 9:30am. No quorum for minute approval.
2. No Public comment.
3. Member comments: Izbicki- strongly agrees that the issue of snow removal on corners and crosswalks is very serious. Feels that this issue should not be put on the owners who live on corners. Most properties have front sidewalks that are 50ft and corners have an additional sidewalk, so they already have double to do; some people have to get to work and don't have time to clear, sometimes do clear and then the plows come by and fill them back up. Feels is it a city problem. Suggestion of Cornell students doing it- assumes they would be paid? Izbicki stated she would be happy to work with the people on this committee. Lynch replied that she sits on the committee, and they are opposed to both putting it on the owners as well as using volunteers. Lesser commented on other places having been successful in securing grants to expand the sidewalk protection. Lynch explained that for this budget year the committee is advocating for the Department of Public Works to hire someone to do a study to see what it would take, look at cities like Rochester to apply same metrics to Ithaca; then do a pilot in a well traversed area

Izbicki commented on the issue of increasing water bills. Estimates water bill has increased 400% since she has lived in her home. Contacted water department and was told that everyone is charged for 12 cubic feet, whether you use those 12 cubic feet or not; feels it is getting out of hand. Wonders if there is a way to be able to rebate some of the cost and not put the onus of water use of a large household on households with one or two people. Monroe remarked that our office can look into it and has worked with a client and the city of Ithaca regarding her water bill. Found it to be a pretty extensive and complicated process. Izbicki clarified that she is not talking about leaks, etc. Monroe suggested getting some more information and see if we can advocate with the city. Hart suggested getting Cornell students involved to process information from the city to see if it really needs to be 12 cubic feet or would 10 cubic feet be sufficient. Hart mentioned that in the town of Dryden if you use a gallon of water, it is assumed that its going into the sewer, so you get charged double for the water and sewer usage. Izbicki commented on the environmental issue this creates as well regarding water usage.
4. Approval of minutes for May and June. Hultberg stated that she attended the open house in May and needs to added. Lawrence asked about a c in front of everyone's name in the April minutes. Hart looked at the minutes and suggested it might be

Lawrence's browser. Monroe stated she will send everything, including the minutes in a PDF to avoid those issues. Minutes approved.

5. COFA Update-Monroe/Davis:

- Davis explained the Farmer's Market Coupons. We received 660 coupons which is significantly less than past years. So far, we have distributed 480 coupons. Visited 17 locations for outreach, 9 more to go. The State is creating a waitlist with a possibility of allocating more to the offices who need them. This year, coupons have been increased from a total of \$20 to \$25.

6. Liaison Reports:

a. FLIC: Lynch-

- Free movie "Deaf Jam" tomorrow to commemorate the 32nd anniversary of the ADA at Cinemapolis.
- Busy with the Registry; have gotten a few more aides; if anyone is interested in the program or becoming an aide, please send them to FLIC

b. Burger: Lifelong-

- Teri Reinemann is the new Program Director at Lifelong
- Anticipating big increase in program offerings for this Fall as people feel more comfortable coming into the building; will still have virtual and hybrid options available; Fall Catalog will be out end of August, beginning of September
- Working on putting a survey out to adults 50+ in Tompkins County to assess interest in programming and services and how to reach more individuals; online access and hard copies available, should be out in early September
- AARP Safe Driver Training; have run one and will be hosting training again in October and November

Lawrence asked about the Mosaic Program. Burger responded it is a grant program through COFA that provides multicultural programming and outreach.

c. Evans: Foodnet-

- Hired a new Donor Engagement Manager. Will try to attend the September meeting.
- In June of 2022 served over 13,000 hot meals, 5000 sandwich meals, almost 1000 weekend meals

Hart asked about impact of higher food and gas prices. Evans said they are working hard to save where they can, save on overtime, paper products, use of an external freezer. Working on fuel savings by not running vans and air conditioning all the time, working to get gas funded through other means in the community. Monroe mentioned that COFA is putting some money towards the fuel costs as well. Evans says they work primarily with Mirabito.

Lawrence commented that the oldest couple in their community really survives with meals on wheels. Children are able to maintain taking care of them due to meals on wheels.

d. Molloy: TCPL-

- Summer Reading starting on June 25th and goes through August 12th; you can submit one written book review at the Reference Desk or online; can also submit a Super Summer Reading Challenge Board which is like a tic tac toe board; can attend any program during the period of Summer Reading
- Will have a party at the end of Summer Reading on August 12th in the Borg Warner room; will have drawings and prizes
- August 4th, tour of Ithaca City Cemetery with Julie Johnson from 10am-12pm; will meet at cemetery and learn about some of the history
- August 11th, tour of Cornell Botanical Gardens from 11am-12pm
- July 28th from 10am-2pm and 2pm-6pm, will be hosting the League of Women Voters to do voter registration in front of the library entrance

Registration required. Information located on their website.

e. Schiele and Hillson: TCHD-

- Moderna booster clinic 18+ at Lifelong on August 10th from 2pm-6pm; information on TCHD website; register online through website or call 211; walk ins welcome
- Community Health survey fully underway; have received about 2800 responses so far; hard copies available as well as online and through 211
- Launched Community Health Workers program; have 2 full time community health workers whose goal is to get out in the community and help them with public health issues, programming, outreach, etc.

Lawrence asked what type of information they are trying to get through the community health survey. Schiele stated that they are trying to get information on what people think creates a health community as well as unmet needs; barriers; how best to get information to the community.

Lawrence asked if they would consider extending the deadline; could get hard copies to senior group who doesn't meet until August 8th. Schiele said they can get copies to them for them to complete.

Beyers asked if there has been any feedback or repercussions on some of the pharmacies that have been closed on the weekends. COFA staff have not been alerted of this issue. Namely Walgreens is noticeably closed on the weekends.

Izbicki asked about Monkey Pox. Schiele responded that yes, the Health Department considers it an issue but is not something to keep people home over. It is a communicable disease and the communicable disease nurses are watching it. Being handled case by case, contact tracing when necessary. Making sure people are aware and how to best protect themselves and lower their risk.

Lynch stated that on the news she heard that there is a vaccine although in short supply. Asked if they have vaccine and what the plan might be. Schiele stated that he does not believe that everyone should be vaccinated. Most vaccine is being allocated downstate. If you believe you are at a high

risk then you should speak with your primary physician. Asked about how many cases in Tompkins County; Schiele reports only knowing of one.

f. Klein: Legislature-

- A bit of turnover in administration positions; Deputy County Administrator Amie Hendrix has left; new Deputy Bridgette Nugent hired; Chief Equity and Diversion Officer has left, and they will be hiring for that position soon; Director of Finance is retiring in November
- Budget process is underway; over the Summer each department meets with County Administrator and goes over budget; gets presented in September and September and October is when they do most of their budget work. County budget looking very good. Sales tax revenue is way up
- Community Recovery Fund of 6 million dollars set up by Legislature as COVID relief money; slow process but things starting to move along. Have hired outside firm to administer program; committee to act as consultant between the firm and the legislature and Klein will be chairing that committee. Details should come along shortly. Publicize grant applications by Fall hoping money will start to go out by the first of the year. If you know of agencies or community groups who would benefit you can reach out to Klein as the details roll out.

Hart asked that when the grant applications are ready if there is a plan to get them to the different town offices. Klein answered that part of what this firm will do is outreach to all municipalities and not for profits to make sure that everyone is aware.

g. Askew: Statewide-

- Annual Convention in person in Saratoga Springs, September 12th-14th
- Providing in person presentations; wide presentation menu which she can send to everyone; will also table at events
- NY Health Act-
 - This act would eliminate the financial burden for getting healthcare in NYS; eliminates deductibles, co-pays, etc.
 - About 37% of social security checks goes to out of pocket health costs
 - There would be no insurance company selling insurance that duplicates what NY Health covers; the Department of Health would pay your providers, hospital, nursing home, home care agencies, suppliers, etc.
 - Every NYS resident would have the same benefit card and have access to the same package
 - No separate Medicare or Medicaid insurance in NYS if this passes; the bill would apply for a waiver from the Federal Government to allow the money for Medicaid that goes to the state and the Medicare funding that goes to insurance companies to go into the NY Health Trust Fund to fund the program
 - If the Federal government did not approve the request for a waiver, NY Health will wrap around the federal benefits; Medicare enrollees would select Original Medicare and NY Health would pay for the deductibles, co-pays, Medicare premiums and the plan

would eliminate the need for supplemental coverage such as a medigap plan or a Medicare Advantage plan

- Would no longer have to annually review your Medicare coverage
- Goal is no more Medicare B premium; most often taken out of Social Security check automatically
- Would be no Medicare Part D premium regardless of income
- Would add in benefits that are not in Original Medicare such as dental, vision, hearing aids, long-term care, and care coordination

Izbicki asked the status of the bill right now. Askew replied that it has not been voted on yet. Wanted more definition of provisions.

h. Jewell: Love Living at Home:

- Offer 3-month free trial membership as well as sponsorships
- CSP property management; reasonable monthly fee to have someone to do any construction, handy man services
- Have a retired Occupational Therapist who has volunteered her time to help people improve home and safety to be able to age in place
- 25% discount to YMCA; Lifelong members receive a 10% discount for Love Living at Home
- Physician appointment and transportation, advocacy, and note taking has been going very well; have had 7 people utilize this as a pilot program and it has been very impactful
- Bill paying is moving along; procedure is in place
- August 19th event at Treleaven ; tickets \$10
- New website and software system starting next week.
- Cassie Besemer now full time Assistant Director; Leslie Shultz hired as Admin Assistant

i. COFA: Monroe-

- Normally time to go through Annual Plan that is submitted to NYSOFA; now coinciding with our county budget planning
- Need advisory committee to review; for sake of time, Monroe will email plan and request questions and/or feedback to implement into the plan
- County budget meeting this week
- Will be required to do a Public Hearing this year in October. Can still do it virtually if we want. Will need to pull subcommittee together soon to discuss.
- We have a legislative advocacy subcommittee that currently has no on signed up. If anyone is interested, please sign up. Issues such as the water bill would be something this committee could work on.

7. No Old Business

8. No New Business

No meeting in August. Next meeting will be September 26, 2022, at 9:30am

Meeting adjourned 11:10am