

Tompkins County Office for the Aging

Advisory Committee Meeting

September 25, 2023

Hybrid

9:30am

Members present: Lesser, Hultberg, Stamm, Roe, Beyers, Izbicki, Mallison, Shearer

Liaisons: Evans, Burger, Klein

Staff: Bullis, Sprague, Jackson, Maine, Davis

Public: Lewis, Lesh

1. Lesser called the meeting to order at 9:30am.
2. Meeting minutes for June and July 2023 were approved.
3. Public comment: No public comment
4. Member comment: Izbicki asked if anything has come from the County Strategic Plan meetings. Bullis reported that the county has held a couple of listening sessions and are still working on it and compiling information.

Sally Dullea introduced herself as chair of the Love Living at Home board and is representing them in Cheryl's absence. Cheryl Jewell has accepted the Executive Director position at Longview.

5. COFA Update-Bullis:
 - County is currently going through the extended budget meetings. COFA submitted a budget that is within the target requests so we do not need to present to the Legislature.
 - Community Assessment for Older Adults survey that was distributed earlier this summer by NYSOFA (NYS Office for the Aging). COFA has received the local results of this survey. A lot of data and currently in the process of sorting through it. Will provide a link to share the summary.
 - HEAP generally opens November 1st. Busy processing early applications. HEAP provides heating assistance for income eligible recipients. COFA processes applications for individuals 60+ and for those who receive SSI or SSD and who do not receive SNAP benefits. Also, Medicare Open Enrollment begins October 15th.
 - Bob Slocum, our Fiscal Coordinator is retiring after 30+ years. Rodney Maine our former Aging Services Specialist will be taking over that role. We have a new Account Clerk Typist and our Admin. Assistant Level IV will be retiring at the end of November. Also have a vacancy for an Aging Services Specialist.

Lesser asked if the budget was close to being passed. Klein stated that it was in fact close. Lesser also asked about the impending government shutdown and

how that might affect our services. Bullis stated that a shutdown should not directly affect any of COFA's services.

- Public Hearing update: will be pushing our hearing back and will be looking to hold it just after the 1st in 2024. Hoping to do two-in person in Danby and virtually. Those on the subcommittee will be contacted closer to the time. Roe mentioned that she will be happy to help with the planning.

6. Liaison Reports:

a. Burger: Lifelong-

- Annual flu clinic tomorrow, appointments still available
- Medicare open enrollment starts October 15th. Walk in clinics are being hosted by Lifelong.
- Gone to sliding scale for annual membership. Have some funding from Triad foundation allowing them to expand their scholarship program. Will be looking to do more outreach.
- Construction next door is ramping up. Front parking lot to be paved tomorrow and they should get their 10 spots back. Has been no final MOU as far as if Lifelong will have any space in new building. Hopefully it will still happen.
- Working with NYSEG on Clean Heat Incentive program. Lifelong is looking to switch to a heat pump system to be more environmentally efficient.

Lesser inquired about the COVID vaccine. Bullis stated that Whole Health has ordered more Moderna vaccine however, they have not received it yet. Roe stated that Walgreens has also been pushing it back as they did not have the supply yet. Sprague reported that there has been an uptick in people calling needing assistance with scheduling vaccine appointments and that the appointments with pharmacies have been difficult to come by.

Roe reported on her experience with getting the RSV vaccine and how it was covered in full for her but not for her friend. Confusing because general advice is for people 65+ but some doctors are not recommending it if folks do not have respiratory problems. Beyers commented that the biggest risk of RSV is to young children so if folks are around young kids, grandkids they should get vaccinated.

b. Evans: Foodnet-

- Georgia Lesh new Manager of Philanthropy and Community Engagement
- Getting ready for Blizzard Bags; partnering with City Meals in NYC to provide curated shelf stable meal bags
- August-served over 11,000 hot meals, 4000 sandwich meals, over 1000 weekend meals and have driven so far to date 47,402 miles

c. Klein: TC Legislature-

- Difficult budget year- unprecedented large increase in unfunded State mandates (over 5 million dollars)
- Broadband-County has issued request for proposals for internet service providers to send plans on how they would reach every unserved address

in Tompkins County (approx. 1200 addresses). Expect requests back next month.

- Rapid Medical Response System- County is proposing a new program where they would have 3 vehicles stationed around the county that would have an emergency medical technician on them. They are not ambulances and could not provide transport but would respond to calls as appropriate and provide assessment and stabilization. Still in the first stages but hoping to get these cars running next year.

Lesser asked what these unfunded mandates are about. Klein stated that one of the bigger ones is the FMAP funds which is Medicaid money that the federal govt. sent to the counties filtered through the state that now the state is taking. A second one is the increase in salaries for Public Defenders. They were getting \$75/hour and that had not been raised in years so they have more than doubled it.

7. Discussion: Andrea Davis and Amy Jackson, Certified Aging in Place Specialists

- NYS Office for the Aging offered every local AAA in the State an opportunity for some for their staff to receive the Certified Aging in Place Specialist designation with the goal to equip staff with the tools to help inform older adults who are aging in place
- Focus on Universal Design; used by CAPS professionals to make housing accessible for everyone.
- To receive CAPS designation staff participated in three 7-hour trainings and passed a test after each. These training courses are facilitated by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB).
- COFA CAP Specialists can assist by suggesting home modifications to allow older adults to live in and enjoy their home longer. Staff will walk through the home with client and evaluate changes that may range from minor (such as handrails) to more involved solutions (like a stair lift).
- During this evaluation staff can also perform a falls home safety assessment. Both the CAP evaluation and the Falls assessment are at no cost to the client.
- Universal Design is user-focused, and allows household products to be used more safely, easily, and comfortably.
- CAPS trained contractors-Dryden, Crown Construction 607-844-3993

Izbicki asked if someone owns a home who is not a senior but is renting to a senior are they eligible for funding to perform some of these Universal Design upgrades? Also asked if anyone is aware or familiar with situations of lifetime lease that does not involve a senior and their children but rather just to another person.

Davis stated that INHS does have some funding to perform upgrades in the home. Bullis commented that for the purposes of COFA's funding and small home repair program the repairs cannot be done on rentals. Suggested reaching out to INHS for more information. Another avenue would be to contact the NAHB directly.

Lesser asked how you bring in family and friends to help in the process for folks who may not want to make changes in their home. Davis responded that our job is to get the information out there. Encourage clients to involve family and friends to assist with decisions. Just trying to be the best resource for them.

8. No new business

9. No old business

Next meeting will be October 23, 2023

Meeting adjourned 10:32am