

ELDERLY COMMISSION MEETING
REGULAR MEETING: May 23, 2011 at 5:30pm
East Windsor Town Hall Meeting Room

Meeting Minutes of May 23, 2011:

- I. Chairman Badstubner called the meeting to order at 5:35pm.

- II. Attendance:
 - Present Members: Elizabeth Burns (Municipal Agent), Claire Badstubner (Chairman), Catherine Drouin (Co-Chairman), Trevor Bray, Deb Donovan
 - Absent Members: Madeleine Thompson
 - Guests: Selectman Gil Hayes, BBFD Assistant Fire Chief Tom Arcari, Manchester Community Resource Officer Stacey Forish

- III. Previous Minutes:

Regular Meeting 4/25/11: **MOTION** made by Ms. Donovan to accept the minutes as presented. **SECONDED** by Ms. Drouin. **ABSTAIN FROM VOTING:** Ms. Badstubner (absent 4/25/11). **ALL THOSE VOTING: VOTE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.**

- IV. Added Agenda Items:

None.

- V. New Business:
 1. "Are You Okay" Program with guest speaker, Officer Stacey Forish:

Following introductions, Officer Forish explained what the "Are You Okay" program is and how it works. It is an automated called system that is set up to call the participant once a day at a designated time. If the phone is answered, the system recognizes the person as being "ok". If the phone is not answered, 3-5 more attempts are made within a few minutes of each try. At that time, if there is still no answer, an officer is dispatched to the residence to check on the person.

Officer Forish handed out information regarding the program – brochure, program features and application. The subscriber information application includes questions such as: where a spare key is located, is there a dangerous pet, do you have a vial of life. There are only two copies of the form – one with the dispatch officer and the other at the fire department. All applications only go through one person for confidentiality purposes. Officer Forish stated that any interested people will receive a brochure, application and self-addressed-stamped envelope in the mail. There is also a magnet to serve as a reminder of the program, with the phone number to call if the participant is going to be out of their home at their designated call time.

There are approximately 20-25 participants now in Manchester. The program began about 10 years ago and has just been revitalized this year. At the start of this year, there were 3 participants. The program has been successful and the current participants are saying good things about it. She did recommend screening applicants.

Mr. Bray asked if the program is expensive to start. Officer Forish replied that the software is between \$2-3,000 to start (the automated call system). Mr. Hayes further inquired about where that money is budgeted – under police or fire? Officer Forish stated that for Manchester, it was paid for by the 8th district police department. She added that some towns choose to do the program utilizing a person to make the phone calls rather than investing in the automated system.

Mr. Bray asked if the interest level in the program decreased over time. Officer Forish responded that in their case, it did only because nothing was done with the program for a period of time, but since it has been revitalized (she has been in this position for about 2 ½ years), interest has increased. Officer Forish also mentioned that Manchester had previously done a “watch your car” program.

Mr. Hayes asked for clarification with regards to the length of time between calls. Officer Forish stated that she believes that the person can set that up – 3 or even 5 minutes. However, it is generally a minute due to the fact that if there is in fact an emergency, someone should be dispatched sooner rather than later.

Officer Forish stated that Manchester is (or will be) trying to get postal workers involved as they are some of the first people in the community to notice inactivity at a home.

Mr. Bray commented that Hudson, MA had this program and it worked very well.

Not many towns in CT currently do this program. Ms. Burns originally heard about it through a former selectman – she shared an article from 1997 regarding Brattleboro, VT and their program.

Ms. Badstubner asked if this program works in conjunction with “Lifeline”. Officer Forish responded that it does not however, she does encourage people to do both.

Ms. Burns asked if they established a database to begin. Officer Forish stated that she used a binder with names/info. Officer Forish also added that she spoke to family members as part of the beginning process of registering a person – this would help confirm that this is not a scam and establish some trust for the elderly. People need to be screened to find out who wants to do the program and for the right reasons. Officer Forish also stated that if there is no answer with the phone call, she will sometimes contact next of kin prior to dispatching an officer.

Mr. Bray asked how you would know if a person is, in fact, in need but they still pick up the phone – how can a message get relayed if there is a need with the computerized call system? Officer Forish responded that she would hope that the person would not answer the phone or that if they could, they would dial 9-1-1.

Selectman Hayes asked what the next step would be – involving the Chief and Deputy Chief? Ms. Burns stated that if the Elderly Commission does want to pursue this topic further, they may want to request to be placed on the Police Commission’s agenda to explain the program. Selectman Hayes added that since there are no local dispatchers in the Fire Department, the police would need to be the primary department for calls. Assistant Fire Chief Arcari commented that EW gets dispatched from Tolland. It was

mentioned that this program would be good PR/Community Relations with the Police Department.

This program is not part of CTriad.

Ms. Donovan asked Officer Forish what is the age grouping and total shut-ins number that are participating in the program? Officer Forish stated that most are over the age of 60 and there are a couple of special needs people who live at home. She offered to gather information on the demographics.

Ms. Burns asked Officer Forish that if she comes across someone who is not part of the program, is it suggested to that person that they sign up? Officer Forish replied that she does hand out flyers and has them at the fire departments and ambulance to explain the program – she also relies on those departments to suggest the program when they are out on calls.

Ms. Drouin asked Officer Forish if she would be available to meet with others in town to review the program. Officer Forish was very agreeable and willing to help the Elderly Commission. She will not be available during the month of August. Ms. Burns suggested September to have the Elderly Commission meet with the Police Commission. Mr. Hayes added that it should also be presented to the Selectmen and a larger forum. Officer Forish added that the commission may want to reach out to the seniors to see what interest level there is, prior to meeting with the Police Commission.

Selectman Hayes inquired about (aside from the initial cost) what the maintenance/annual cost would be for such a program. There is no cost as the town simply facilitates and runs it with their resources.

Mr. Bray asked what the biggest disadvantage of the program has been. Officer Forish responded that it is when people DO NOT call in to inform them that they will not be home during their scheduled call time. This has resulted in still dispatching two people which takes time and is an expense. She distributes magnets with the phone number in the hopes that it is a reminder for them to call in if they are leaving the house.

Selectman Hayes commented that we would need a good, dedicated dispatcher. Asst. Fire Chief Arcari commented that a couple of times a month (with the Ambulance) they have done “check welfare calls”.

End “Are You Okay” discussion.

A commission member asked Officer Forish to explain her role in the police department. Officer Forish took a moment to explain her role in the Town of Manchester.

She explained that she also runs the Police Explorer Program in Manchester – which is through the Boy Scouts of America. These are boys aged 14-21 who have an interest in becoming a police officer who participate in this program to help them be guided through the process. There are weekly meetings with over 30 kids and 4 advisors. She states that the Explorers help with anything that the police department is very busy with – such as crowd control at road races, first aid/CPR – any support for patrol and safety reasons.

Officer Forish is also involved with Block Watches where she has done 11/month but has revamped it to 3/month. Those meetings are 45-60 minutes and she has guest speakers attend, provides statistics for that neighborhood as well as traffic information. Approximately 20 people attend each meeting. She states that they are easy to organize.

Ms. Burns stated that East Windsor had an Explorer program in the past and no longer has a community officer or school resource officer. Grants requirements were met for those programs, now they are no longer supported – mainly for budget reasons. Ms. Burns added that about 5-6 years ago the town also did a bicycle safety program. Officer Forish added that SafeKids donates helmets and car seats. She added that their department does approximately 400 appointments/year for car seat checks.

In conclusion, Officer Forish added that Manchester has also done a “DEA Drug Take-back” program. This has been a successful program – collecting seven boxes of prescription drugs. Seniors (and others) can drop off any expired drugs to be disposed of properly. The town has a “no questions asked” policy, for any other drugs dropped off for disposal.

VI. Continuing Business:

1. CTriad next step:

Ms. Burns handed out CTriad invitations for the 6/15/11 information session regarding the starting/revitalizing a Triad. Discussion followed regarding who should attend and who is available to attend. It was suggested that someone from the police department attend to “open the door” to Triad. The commission discussed the programs that the town already has in place as part of a Triad. Ms. Burns stated that she will see that the police department received this email.

Ms. Burns asked the commission if they want to pursue this at this time or focus on the “Are You Okay” program at this time. Brief discussion followed. It was decided that the “Are You Okay” program may be something that is more possible for the town at this time.

Ms. Burns asked Ms. Pellegrini to respond to Attorney Mimi Peck-Llewellyn stating that at this time members of the commission are unavailable to attend the presentation.

2. 2011-2012 Meeting Schedule:

Budget was approved for \$600.00 total (from \$650 last year). Brief discussion regarding the recording secretary’s fee to increase to \$85. per meeting. Also discussed the number of meetings per year – generally the commission meets six times during the year.

MOTION made by Ms. Donovan to set the recording secretary’s fee to \$85.00 per meeting, at six meetings for the next fiscal year and will budget accordingly. **SECONDED** by Ms. Drouin. **ALL THOSE VOTING: VOTE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.**

VII. General Discussion

Brief discussion regarding June meeting.

MOTION made by Ms. Drouin to cancel the June meeting due to no June agenda items. **SECONDED** by Ms. Donovan. **ALL THOSE VOTING: VOTE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.**

VIII. Public Input – comments only (5 minute maximum)
None

IX. Adjournment

MOTION made by Ms. Drouin to adjourn meeting at 6:40pm. **SECONDED BY** Ms. Donovan.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christine Pellegrini
Recording Secretary – East Windsor Elderly Commission