

**TRUMBULL SENIOR CITIZEN COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES**  
**May 25, 2012**

**Commission members in attendance:** Linda Ciocci, Chairperson; Joan Mehlhorn, Vice Chairperson; Helen Weinstein, Secretary; Dee Chiota; Connie Cleary; Amy DeZenzo; Fran Hanna; Gary Raytar.

**Commission members not present:** Rita Grossi, Alternate; Dorothy Merritt, Alternate.

**Public Attendance:** Jennie DiBenedetto and Sylvia Jones.

*Meeting called to order: 10:00AM*

**Public Session:** Center member Jennie DiBenedetto described issues she was experiencing with the transportation services provided by the Senior Center to and from medical appointments, stating that she was unable to book appointments three weeks in advance and was frustrated by lack of availability for appointments established by her doctor and for which she could not coordinate a ride. L. Ciocci asked Sharon Miller, Senior Center Transportation Dispatcher, to join the meeting to explain the procedure for booking rides on the medical bus. S. Miller explained that the ideal time frame for booking appointments is up to three weeks from the date of an appointment. She explained that booking too far in advance and/or too close to the desired appointment time results in too many individuals being told that their appointment time is unavailable, as there is only one medical bus daily. She confirmed that last minute calls/changes/cancellations are a reality and that the Transportation Service tries to satisfy the needs of the seniors as best it can. She added that when necessary more than one individual may be asked to share a ride so that more seniors' needs can be accommodated, but that ride sharing is prohibited when servicing a wheelchair-bound senior. A. DeZenzo asked how many appointments could be accommodated in a given day. S. Miller stated that the number of appointments that can be booked depends on the timing and the location of the destination appointments. J. DiBenedetto stated that in the past she never had to book appointments three weeks in advance and further that her doctors do not always inform her that far in advance of her appointment. S. Miller stated that the three week time frame is not mandatory, but that attempting to book rides closer to the date of the desired appointment typically would not succeed as the desired time probably would already be booked.

Center member Sylvia Jones provided a copy of a recently-taped session of the Board of Finance in which the subject of the Youth Group wanting to come to the Senior Center is discussed. She reiterated her opinion that she and the majority of seniors with whom she has had discussions agree that relocating the Youth Group to the Center at Priscilla Place is undesirable. L. Ciocci thanked her for her opinion but stated that this topic would not be discussed in Public Session. F. Hanna asked for permission to address the topic, explaining that the idea was presented to the Board of Finance because the current location of the Youth Group at Indian Ledge Park is not good and further explaining that the Board of Finance is handling the issue. She stated that the Senior Center is a town facility; therefore, determining the groups that use it is not an issue that the Senior Commission can oversee or decide upon. J. Mehlhorn specifically asked whether or not the Town was considering bringing the kids into the Center. C. Cleary noted that the Youth Group had occupied the Center before and asked if

a representative of the Senior Commission should approach the Board of Finance and/or the Town Council with their concerns. F. Hanna stated that the facility is a public building and, regardless of whether the Center was under consideration as a location for the Youth Group or not, this issue is not an issue that the Senior Commission should or could weigh in on.

L. Ciocci closed the Public Session at 10:12am.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**MOTION** by D. Chiota to approve the minutes of April 27, 2012 as filed, seconded by A. DeZenzo.  
**VOTE:** Motion carried unanimously.

**Chairperson's Report:** L. Ciocci stated that the Smile Awhile performance group was requesting a renewal of the Commission's sponsorship for 2012/13. She noted that the group did not spend all of the \$500 allotted to them last year, with a balance remaining of \$165. She suggested that the group should continue to use the remaining funds and then approach the Commission for additional money when needed. C. Cleary suggested that the Commission approve the renewal of \$335 to bring the starting balance back to the \$500 amount and stated that \$500 seems to be sufficient to accommodate the group for the year. G. Raytar stated that last year the Commission allotted \$500 but that the full amount was never given outright to the group and, therefore, a requisition would have to be submitted for additional funds for this year. Discussion followed as commissioners sorted out the details of last year's sponsorship and the proper procedures for establishing this year's sponsorship amount.

**MOTION** by J. Mehlhorn to allocate \$335 to the Smile Awhile performance group budget, currently at \$165, to bring the total budget available for 2012/13 to \$500; seconded by C. Cleary.

**VOTE:** Motion carried unanimously.

L. Ciocci asked for an update on the status of the television in the Snack Bar, informing the Commission that the internal auditor, James Henderson, has charged the Senior Center with "theft of cable television signal". She then requested a motion to go into an Executive Session.

**MOTION** by D. Chiota to initiate an Executive Session to discuss the status of the cable service at the Senior Center, seconded by J. Mehlhorn.

**DISCUSSION:** Because the charges leveled by the internal auditor were announced on the record, several commissioners urged that the session continue on the record as opposed to under an Executive Session format.

**VOTE:** Motion voted down 2-6.

L. Ciocci read from J. Henderson's report (copy filed together with minutes at Town Hall) specifying the charges. G. Raytar stated that the Center legally subscribes to a cable service provider but that the initial connection runs to the library. He added that he and the Senior Center custodian split and fed this line to the Snack Bar so that the newly-installed television could receive the cable service. He added that in conversation with Stacey, the representative of Charter Cable, he was told that this situation was perfectly legal. Discussion followed concerning line-splicing and its legality, with many commissioners sharing the opinion that the only legal way to change service is to notify the cable service provider and then have their technician do the work. Ultimately the commissioners agreed that Charter Cable should come to the Center to inspect the current set up and to approve or correct any issues, and that J. Henderson would receive a follow-up report from the Senior Center Director.

L. Ciocci stated for the record that the Senior Citizens' Commission is aware of and does understand the proper purchasing policies and procedures of the Town of Trumbull.

**Secretary Report:** H. Weinstein read two messages received by the Director, one from Center member Joanne Zbory and the other from the Senior Center staff, both expressing thanks and praise for the recent Open House event.

**Center Director Report:** L. Ciocci stated that the Director has requested permission to hold a Volunteers' Luncheon, date and time to be determined, for those persons who have contributed their time and talent to the Senior Center. Discussion followed as to particulars on this proposed event.

**MOTION** by G. Raytar to approve \$175 to cover the costs of holding a Volunteers' Luncheon, seconded by J. Mehlhorn.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

**Old Business:** G. Raytar provided background information as to the status of the proposed kitchen upgrade, which he characterized as a "lengthy process". He stated that the Director currently is awaiting a written recommendation from the Monroe/Trumbull Health District following the general site inspection. That recommendation will be forward to the Town Purchasing Agent, Bob Chimini, who will work with J. Ferreira to prepare a presentation for the First Selectman. Upon the First Selectman's approval, the proposal will be presented to the Board of Finance for final approval; thus, the upgrade is proceeding as a Town-sponsored event and not a Senior Commission-sponsored event.

L. Ciocci noted that Gary Koos, computer instructor for the Trumbull Continuing Education program, had been contacted as a possible replacement instructor but that his fees were prohibitive. She asked for an update on adding ceramics to the programming lineup, but no commissioners could provide information on the topic

**New Business:** L. Ciocci requested discussion on membership fees so that a recommendation could be provided to the First Selectman. Discussion followed as to current fee schedules for neighboring centers, pros and cons of raising membership fees and/or adding program participation fees, and the overall effect of same on the membership. A. DeZenzo asked if J. Henderson considered and/or researched this topic as part of his analysis of the Senior Center; however, nothing on membership was addressed in his report. L. Ciocci reminded the commissioners that the membership renewal process for 2012/13 begins June 1<sup>st</sup> and that a recommendation was necessary.

**MOTION** by J. Mehlhorn that the membership fees for the Trumbull Senior Center remain \$5 for residents and \$10 for nonresidents, and that the fee for newsletter mailing remain \$3, seconded by G. Raytar.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

L. Ciocci agreed to write a letter to Town Hall reflecting this recommendation. Per D. Chiota's question, L. Ciocci explained that the various instructors currently working at the Center are paid using funds from the budget and/or the Special Agency account and that participants do not pay additional fees for the classes that they attend accept for the computer class. For the latter, the instructor is paid directly by the participant and does not also receive payment from the budget or the Special Agency account. C. Cleary asked if fees would be assigned to some but not all classes. L. Ciocci stated her understanding that the fees being suggested would be for all classes. J. Mehlhorn expressed skepticism in collecting newsletter sponsorship for programming and then also asking for programming fees. D. Chiota asked how program costs would be covered if the newsletter sponsorship fell short of the needed funds. F. Hanna noted that newsletter sponsorship alone did not cover programming fees. She

suggested that programs currently functioning without instructors (knitting group, card groups) could continue to operate “fee-free” but that programs that require instructors should institute a participation fee to better cover the cost of the service. C. Cleary asked whether or not taxes were taking care of the Senior Center. A. DeZenzo stated her opinion that the taxpayers should not be asked to cover the costs of nonresident participants, and that nonresident participants should be charged a fee for classes offered by any Town program. C. Cleary characterized that scenario as “not reciprocal behavior” and questioned the philosophy of such an arrangement, pointing out that the neighboring centers that charge class fees charge them to all participants, whether resident or not. F. Hanna stated that a person would opt to attend a free art class at the Trumbull Senior Center over an art class at the Baldwin Center of Stratford because it charges a fee even if they were a resident of Stratford. J. Mehlhorn countered that the centers who currently charge class fees are in the minority and typically are centers that are performing poorly. D. Chiota suggested the alternative of requesting a larger programming budget from the Town for the Senior Center to avoid putting the burden of costs directly on the seniors. Fundraising ideas were discussed.

**MOTION** by G. Raytar to not charge for any classes at the Trumbull Senior Center beyond the annual membership fee with the exception of the computer class, seconded by J. Mehlhorn.

VOTE: Motion passed with a vote of 6-2.

The commissioners briefly discussed the possible motivation behind the recent visit to the Trumbull Senior Center by State Senator Anthony Musto. No first-hand knowledge related to this event was available.

A. DeZenzo requested that a review of the Transportation Survey and the Services Survey documents attached to the Center Director’s Report be entered into the agenda for the June Commission meeting so that the documents can be finalized before distribution to the general membership. Brief discussion followed on proper procedures and rules related to transportation services, leading to an admission by C. Cleary that her use of the medical bus was in violation of the rules regarding curb-side service.

The next meeting of the Trumbull Senior Citizen Commission is scheduled for Friday, June 22, 2012, at 10:00AM.

**MOTION** was made by D. Chiota to adjourn the meeting, seconded by A. DeZenzo.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Adjourned: 11:08AM

Respectfully submitted,

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Diane Donahue, Clerk

**TRUMBULL SENIOR TRANSIT**  
**GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES AND REGULATION**

**Organization:**

Drivers are responsible to their dispatcher who is responsible to the Senior Center Director. The Director is responsible to the First Selectman and the Senior Commission.

**Policies:**

1. All drivers are required to have a drivers license from the state of Connecticut and will obtain a Public Service License.
2. Each driver must submit to the Civil Service Office a signed Doctor's statement indicating he or she is physically fit to operate a motor vehicle
3. Drivers must submit to the dispatcher all requests for vehicle repairs. The dispatcher will complete a work order and then submit to Highway Department. A copy will be placed on file with the dispatcher. No one is to take a vehicle to highway without first getting clearance or work orders from the dispatcher. When vehicles are to be serviced by agencies other than the town, the Purchasing agent is the only person who may schedule the repair of a vehicle.
4. Suggested changes and/or new policy recommendations are to be submitted in writing, to the dispatcher who will refer the memo to the Senior Center Director.
5. Vehicles are for the transportation of Trumbull Senior Citizens: A) to medical appointments; B) to and from nutrition site at the Senior Center; C) scheduled shopping trips; D) special events. This service is to be used for the transportation of seniors only. Any other requests shall be made to the dispatcher who will present it to the director or senior commission.

## **TRANSIT DRIVER REGULATIONS**

1. Comply with all traffic laws and rules of the road (Connecticut Drivers Manual).
2. Be sure that front seat riders have their seat belts on, passengers are seated and aisles are free of purses and bags.
3. Be courteous and helpful to all passengers and be patient with those who are slow.
4. All drivers must report any scheduled passengers who fail to respond to driver's pick up call.
5. Pickup and return seniors to the curb on their side of the street in front of their homes. The only time you may enter a driveway is to turn a vehicle. Put flashers on when passengers are entering or exiting the vehicle.
6. Put bus in Park before opening doors for passenger to enter or exit. Do not drive away until passenger has safely cleared the bus by at least 10 feet.
7. Driver must have a cell phone on them before leaving for duty.
8. If a person is injured on the bus or off the bus, you should not attempt to lift or move the person – call 911. If the injured party picks him/her self up and states they are fine you must call the center immediately and report it to the director or office staff (report all accidents no matter how small they may be).
9. The bus will leave the center at 1 p.m. to return passengers home after Nutrition Program and at a specific time for dances or special events. Seniors shall not be rushed or encouraged to leave these activities earlier than the specified time.
10. Passengers indicate the pickup and drop off location with the dispatcher when making reservations. If the pick up location is different than the drop off location the dispatcher shall alert the driver. Passengers may not change their drop off location with the driver. Should this occur refer it to the Dispatcher or Director. Pickup and drop off should both be a Trumbull address.
11. In the event that a senior should need a ride home because his/her transportation has failed; the driver should report this to the Director – if there is available space we will provide transportation.
12. If a driver has problems with a passenger who breaks the rules (verbal abuse, profanity or

inappropriate behavior) or acts in a rude manner to other passengers, you should firmly reinforce the rules. Do not participate in an argument; report this to the Director who will handle the situation. A written report should be made.

13. Do not operate a transit vehicle under the influence of liquor or drugs ( including some prescribed medications).
14. Do not leave the bus when picking up or delivering passengers. Should this be necessary; shift to park, shut off ignition (take keys with you) and set emergency brake.
15. During winter weather do not leave the bus to sand any icy spots or make path for seniors at their home.
16. Adverse comments by a driver to passengers regarding employment, fellow employee or other passengers is strictly forbidden.
17. You should not assist seniors onto transit vehicles or off. Do not escort into Doctor's office or into their home. If they need assistance they may bring a family member or aid to help them.
18. Family members, friends, unscheduled riders or employees are not allowed to use senior transportation unless they are a Trumbull resident 60 years of age and have registered with the dispatcher.