

## Senior Citizens Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes: August 19, 2014

Jordan Conference Room, 11:00 am

Attendees: Chair Brett Seekins, William Marshall, Bruce Nelson, June O'Neill, Barbara Page, Elizabeth Baillie. Excused: Patricia Bredenberg

Visitor: Rebecca Millett, State Senator.

Staff: Matthew Sturgis

1. Chair Seekins called the meeting to order at 11:05 am. He welcomed Senator Millett.
2. The minutes of the prior meeting were reviewed; motion to accept the minutes made by William Marshall, seconded by Bruce Nelson, unanimous approval.
3. Chair Seekins welcomed Senator Millett and thanked her for coming to provide information to the Commission.
  - a. Senator Millett spoke of her view on seniors and in helping them to age in place. We need to have a better approach to their needs. When funds are involved the discussion often becomes unproductive at the State level. Senator Millett recently spoke with a senior who finds home care providers are not well paid often, making it unattractive work and not receiving the best workers. There are companies out there who do pay well, but many are based on the Medicaid rates, which are low.
  - b. Senator Millett spoke of recently visiting UMaine to look at a virtual reality lab for work on helping those with vision limitations and other devices that help monitor "smart homes".
  - c. Senator Millett sits on the Taxation and Education and Cultural Affairs committees. She is Chair of the Education and Cultural Affairs. Chair Seekins asked of the climate on the Taxation Committee. Senator Millett stated it is primarily to focus on not raising taxes, but of spending what we have more wisely. Is the expenditure effective? Can we improve? Lodging taxes are under review to balance them in comparison to surrounding states. Working on a Circuit Breaker cure, as that is currently at an inadequate level.
  - d. There was a discussion on education funding and enrollment, and the increasing senior population. Senator Millett expressed the discussion is not one of promoting one at the expense of the other, the issues are equally important and need consideration.
  - e. Senator Millett expressed that there is a challenge in communication and in transportation. How do our seniors find out what is going on and how do they get there. Maybe an adopt a neighbor program could help.

- f. Elizabeth Baillie asked about what happens when seniors need care? How do we get people trained to help and engaged?
  - g. Chair Seekins commented about the NORC (naturally occurring retirement communities), but Cape Elizabeth may be too small for that to happen yet.
  - h. Elizabeth Baillie commented that often this happens when people organize it themselves, but when the help is needed there may be a breakdown in communication. Senator Millett thought that maybe neighborhood associations could be a vehicle for providing the services.
  - i. Bruce Nelson commented that the primary form of the tax base is residential in Cape Elizabeth, while Falmouth, Scarborough, and other larger towns have a commercial tax base that helps offset the burden of taxes and then taxes don't push people out of communities easily. Senator Millett responded that the hope is the Circuit Breaker will offset this issue.
  - j. Chair Seekins spoke of recently meeting with St. Albans, where he heard of their program with a Registered Nurse who assists seniors by listening to their maladies and then advising them to pursue medical care when needed. Senator Millett commented that there are wonderful things happening all over like this program, but people may not know of them. If the Cape Senior Commission could create an inventory of these services then provide the list to churches, community services, etc. that would be a great asset.
  - k. Senator Millett spoke of how hard the House and Senate are working, and that it is very cordial and respectful. There are many good bills that were passed, and critical veto overrides performed.
  - l. Chair Seekins thanked Senator Millett for coming.
4. William Marshall commented that one of the potential outcomes from the commission may be to fund more senior programming and there may be a conflict with the supporters of the school budget. Mr. Marshall is concerned that that conflict may arise.
- a. Elizabeth Baillie does agree that it should not be framed as one vs. the other. It is not the commission's job to answer where the money comes from. William Marshall agreed.

Bruce Nelson stated that it may be that the recommendations may include items that will need funding like transportation or programming.

June O'Neill commented that the Town did not create the Commission thinking that there may not be recommendations that may cost money.

Bruce Nelson stated that when you consider that the current budget had \$10,000 allocated for seniors out of a \$26 million dollar budget is something that has been identified.

5. There was some discussion related to the potential for the senior forum. How to publicize the forum, and speakers who could come.
6. There was some discussion related to having an open forum at the meeting on September 30. Ask seniors what is on their minds, etc, bring a neighbor, carpool, everyone come on out.
7. Future speakers:
  - a. Elizabeth Baillie stated that Paula Banks would like to come and speak soon.
  - b. Chair Seekins stated that if Commission members find the opportunity to speak with someone related to the work of the Commission, please do and then report back to the group on the new info you receive.
  - c. Chair Seekins spoke recently with Jim Martin of DHHS and he is very interested in the Commission's work.
  - d. William Marshall inquired as to when is the Community Services meeting in September?
  - e. Chair Seekins stated that Councilor Walsh would like Brett and someone else to go to the meeting, and would Mr. Marshall like to go? Mr. Marshall said yes.
  
8. The meeting adjourned at 1:00.