Attendees: Halee Graham-Days, Marie MacDonald, Pat Miller, Lucille Morisse, Susan Odoms, Jeannette Rivers, Leon Rivers, Shirley Thompson

Guests: CT State Representative Bobby Gibson
       Marie Bezdans & Yvette Huyghue-Pannell (Senior Services Liaisons)

Absent: Robert Berman, Al LeFebvre, Barbara Reisner, Paula Walek, Peter Wilcox

The meeting, which was held at the Human Services Center, was called to order at 12:07 pm.

Old Business:
Yvette asked whether the members would prefer future meetings to be held in person, via Zoom, or on a hybrid basis so that she can share the information with the town manager. Haleeesten would like the hybrid option, while the other members present were in favor of in person as a first choice.

For fully-vaccinated individuals, mask wearing is optional at the Human Services Center.

Representative Gibson distributed a summary sheet outlining legislation concerning seniors (attached to these minutes), and then answered questions and/or promised to do additional research and report back to the Commission. He also stated that he would like to begin attending meetings at least on an every other month basis so that he can share information with the Commission.

Paula sent a letter of resignation which was read to everyone, and which the Commission accepted with regrets. Al LeFebvre called a few days ago to announce that he no longer wishes to serve, and was asked to send a letter of resignation. Yvette polled the attendees as to whether or not they wish to continue. Halee Graham-Days, Marie MacDonald, Pat Miller, Susan Odoms, Jeannette Rivers, Leon Rivers, and Shirley Thompson all expressed an interest in being reappointed. Lucille stated that she has decided to resign and will submit a formal letter (which was later provided and is attached to these minutes).

Yvette also reminded everyone that vacant seats must be filled by a candidate from the same party as the departing member (the seats held by Al and Lucille must be filled by Democrats, and the one held by Paula, a Republican). The question was raised as to whether an Independent/Green Party member may take one or more of those seats. Yvette will look to the town clerk for guidance.

Public Comments: None

New Business
Due to a conflict with a town manager's meeting on the first Wednesday of each month, Yvette asked if the Commission would consider moving their start time to 12:30 pm. Haleeesten moved to change the time; Marie MacDonald seconded. All were in favor. Beginning in January 2022, meetings will begin at 12:30 pm.
With the resignations of both co-chairs, Susan made a motion to have Pat serve as acting chairperson. Shirley seconded; all were in favor. Pat will also continue to serve as secretary.

Halesteen made a motion to accept the November minutes. Leon seconded. The minutes are approved.

Halesteen made a motion to adjourn; Pat seconded. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:35 pm.

The next meeting will take place at 12:30 pm on Wednesday, January 5, 2022.
Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Miller
Secretary
SUMMARY: House Democrats, during the 2021 session, continued to build on their record of protecting seniors quality of life, including prohibiting age discrimination in hiring, expansion of tax relief, and consumer protections for prescription drugs. The legislature this year also passed several key measures related to the experiences of seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic including virtual visitation in Nursing Homes and Long-Term Care Facilities and continued expansion of telehealth.

KEY POINTS
• We created a "Right to Virtual Visitation" in Nursing Homes and Long-Term Care Facilities; allowing residents to use their own virtual technology for monitoring or visitation with their family members.
• We prohibited employers from requiring disclosure of your age, birthdate, or graduation date as a condition of hire or employment.
• We lowered the minimum age for the municipal Elderly Tax Freeze Program from 70 to 65.
• We prohibited health carriers from removing prescription drugs from a formulary or moving them to a higher cost sharing tier mid plan.
• We begin phasing out in 2023 and eliminate completely by 2026 income tax on certain IRAs for filers with a qualifying income.
• We reduced co-payments for the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders from 9% to 4.5%.

RIGHT TO VIRTUAL VISITATION FOR NURSING HOMES AND LONG-TERM CARE RESIDENTS
COVID-19 exposed the devastating effects isolation has had on our nursing home residents, so we responded by ensuring everyone access to virtual visits and monitoring by loved ones. This law strengthens the bill of rights for long-term care residents by adding the right of nursing home residents to treat their room as their home, creates a right to virtual visitation and monitoring with technology of their choice, and requires nursing homes to provide residents with free internet for monitoring and visitation (PA 21-55).

PROHIBITING AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS
We strengthened laws protecting seniors in the workplace by making it a discriminatory practice to require an applicant disclose their age, date of birth, or graduation date unless it is needed as part of the job qualification or required under Federal law (PA 21-69).

LOWERING ELIGIBILITY FOR ELDERLY PROPERTY TAX RELIEF
Making sure seniors can afford to stay in their homes has been a longstanding priority for House Democrats. This law will give towns the ability to increase eligibility for senior property tax credit relief by lowering the earliest eligible age from 70 to 65 (PA 21-84).

LIMITING MID YEAR PRESCRIPTION DRUG SWITCHING OR COST INCREASES BY PROVIDERS
A health insurance company should be held to the drug formulary it markets to consumers. So we passed a law limiting carriers ability to change the benefit package once an individual is enrolled in the plan, including moving a prescription drug to a higher price tier or removing drugs from the formulary without a generic alternative at a lower tier (PA 21-96).

TAX FREE IRAs
This session we passed a law phasing in between 2023 and 2026 an income tax exemption for IRA income, other than Roth IRAs. As under existing law for pension and annuity income, taxpayers qualify for the exemption if their Adjusted Gross Income is under $75,000 for single filers, head of households, or married people filing separately or $100,000 for married people filing jointly (PA 21-2).
November 6, 2021

MEMORANDUM

To: Yvette Huyghue-Pannell

From: Paula Walek

Re: Commission on Aging

It is with sadness that I inform you that I will no longer be a member of Bloomfield’s Commission on Aging.

It was a difficult decision to make, but due to my inability to attend meetings (Wednesdays always bring problems), I feel it is the right decision.

I have enjoyed my relationship with the Commission and the Senior Center, and I wish you and your staff and the other Commissioners the very best as you continue serving a very deserving population.

Cc: M. Phillips
December 2, 2021

Yvette Huyghue-Pannell, Director
Bloomfield Senior Center
330 Park Avenue
Bloomfield, CT 06002

Dear Yvette:

I am regretfully resigning from the Commission on Aging as of January 1, 2022.

I served for 20 years before receiving my wonderful clock that reads: “Commission on Aging – 20 years of service”. That lovely clock sat on my end table for another 20 years (occasionally, but not always, getting dusted).

I have enjoyed almost every meeting, but I have to be fair and make room for the many new people who would like to join the Commission. They will bring new ideas and enthusiasm – let’s welcome them.

Thank you for all the good times I was able to spend together with you.

Wishing you all well.

Sincerely,

Lucille Morisse