

SENIOR CITIZENS BOARD

Thursday, January 28, 2010

1:30 PM, Durham Town Hall, 3rd Floor Meeting Room

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 1:35 PM by Vice-chairman Henry Coe at the Town Hall Meeting Room.

Roll Call: Members present: Henry Coe, Norman Hicks, John Hogarth, Beverly Pedersen and Karen Thody. Staff present: Trish Dynia, Sherry Hill and Jan Muraca. Members absent: Anne Cassady, Stuart Keating and Lainy Melvin.

Approval of Agenda: *A motion was made by Karen Thody, seconded by John Hogarth, to approve the agenda as written. The motion passed unanimously.*

Approval of Minutes: Henry Coe thanked Karen Thody for filling in during the secretary's absence in December. *A motion was made by Norman Hicks, seconded by Beverly Pedersen to approve the December 17, 2009 minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.*

2010 Meeting Dates: *A motion was made by Norman Hicks, seconded by Karen Thody, to approve the following 2010 meeting dates: January 28, February 25, March 25, April 29, May 27, June 24, September 16, October 28, November 18, December 16. The motion passed unanimously.*

Human Services Director: Jan reported that various town officials have been meeting with Carolyn Adams regarding the possibility of renting 4,800 square feet at 350 Main Street (former temporary town hall) as a community center. The rest of the discussion was tabled until First Selectwoman Laura Francis arrived.

Recent census information indicates that there are currently 1,452 Durham residents age 55 and over. Projections indicate that in just a few years that figure will rise to approximately 2,322.

Beginning on February 1, AARP will be providing free tax preparation services to low and middle income residents age 50 years who earn less than \$50,000 per year. Eligible residents can call the Middletown and Middlefield Senior Centers to make an appointment.

On February 8, 2010, the Town of Durham will hold a public hearing on Fiscal Year 2010 Community Block Grants. The town hopes to receive citizens' input on community development and housing needs, and to review and discuss specific project activities in the areas of housing, economic development and community facilities which could be a part of the town's application for funding. In general, the program would offer deferred home loans of up to \$300,000 at 0% interest. There are also income limits based on household size. It is important that the town receive 12 to 15 letters from residents to demonstrate that there is an interest in the program. Board members who do not meet the income limitations are also encouraged to write in or attend the public hearing.

The filing dates for senior tax relief programs are February 1 to May 15 this year.

Recreation Director: Sherry Hill announced that all programs are going well and they are excited about the new facility opportunities.

Old Business: Henry Coe shared the following information received from Anne Cassady regarding the writing course: Anne Cassady will be teaching a "Writing Stories" workshop, which will meet on Wednesdays from 1 to 3 PM at Durham Town Hall beginning March 3, 2010. Details of the new course will appear in the Town Times.

Henry received a suggestion from a local resident regarding a way to raise funds for the Wii system. Her suggestion was to have a Gold Party. Members will look into this further before requesting funds from the Town.

A motion was made by Karen Thody, seconded by Norm Hicks, to remove the \$3,000 line item for a Wii system from the proposed Senior Budget. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business: Laura Frances distributed copies of a proposed 2010-2011 operating budget totaling \$37,988 for a Durham Activity Center. Many of the figures are based on the Town's previous experience as renters of the same space, and include the following items: Rent, interior and exterior maintenance, water testing and utilities. Not include in the budget are sink and carpet installation and furnishings, but those expenditures are not expected to be very high.

The available space can support functions of up to 110 people and the Town Sanitarian has determined that these activities would not over-tax the well and

septic systems. The facility would serve as a focal point for senior activities, recreation department programs, and other programs for residents of all ages.

The next step is to present the budget to the Board of Selectmen and then to the Board of Finance.

A motion was made by Norman Hicks, seconded by John Hogarth, to support the efforts of the BOS and BOF to move forward on the Durham Activity Center by presenting it as part of the 2010-2011 budget. The motion passed unanimously.

Laura Frances encouraged members to spread the word on this new initiative.

Adjournment: *A motion was made by Beverly Pedersen, seconded by Karen Thody, to adjourn the meeting at 2:30 PM. The motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Dynia
Recording Secretary

cc: Town Clerk, Recreation Director, Human Services Director, Committee Members.