# **St. Lawrence County Office for the Aging (OFA)**

# **Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**

# **June 8, 2020**

**Meeting called to order:** 10:00 AM by Roger Bennett, Chairman

**Present:** *(voting members)* Roger Bennett, Linda Wilkinson, Russ Backus

Larry Denesha, Kathy Skelly

**Present:** *(non-voting members):* Chiara Delosh, Andrea Montgomery, Dana McGuire

Barb McBurnie, Brenda Sanderson

**Present:** *(New Members/Pending BOL approval)*

**Excused**: Carlton Doane, Gail Teele, Michael Boprey, Bob Mead, Gail Bisonette, Vicki Clark

**Absent:**

**Public Attending:**

**Meeting Location:** Zoom

**♦Introductions:** Meeting brought to order by R. Bennett. Opened with Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Reflection. Welcome and introductions.

**♦Guest Speaker –**

**♦Public Comment** – No public comments

♦**Approval/Minutes** – motion to approve minutes by R. Backus, seconded by L. Wilkinson, all in favor.

# Motion passed.

♦**Correspondence** *(Kathy Skelly)* – None

**♦Old Business**– B. McBurnie asked if the 50% reduction was overall or was it staff members in each department. A. Montgomery stated that it was a 50% reduce work force per department. For the county no one was laid off. People worked from home. B. McBurinie said that she noticed in the Work Reports that there is a waitlist in certain areas for Home Delivered Meals. A. Montgomery stated that the individuals on the Home Delivered Meals waitlist are individuals that live in unserved areas.

**♦New Business** –

**County Council of Senior Citizens Report** *(Brenda Sanderson)* The May Festival and the July picnic are cancelled. The St. Lawrence County Jacqueline Sears Volunteer Award winner was Linda Bouchey.

**StateWide Senior Action Council Report (***Barb McBurnie)* There was a meeting in March. Statewide has been working from home with a lot of zoom meetings. Let Statewide know about any fraud activity going on. Seniorama is cancelled for this year. It is booked for the second Monday in August 2021.

**Veterans Services Report** *(Mike Boprey)* No Report

**Public Health Report** – *(Dana McGuire)*

* To date there has been 209 positive COVID-19 cases.
* There are 16 people in isolation right now.
* 75 people in quarantine.
* There was a 10 day period 3 weeks ago where there were no cases.
* Nursing homes are tested twice a week, and hair stylist are tested once every 14 days.
* The positive cases in our county are due to travel, family members, gatherings, and work settings.
* When an individual has a surgery or procedure done they need to be tested for COVID-19 before hand. If their test comes back positive the individual’s surgery or procedure will have to be postponed.
* Social distancing and mask wearing is very important.
* Trying to get as many people tested as possible.
* County is working on opening guidance. To see what businesses are open in each phase go to the website forward.ny.gov.
* Working with colleges and high schools on what they are going to do in the fall and for graduation ceremonies.
* State is trying to test all staff and residents of nursing homes and adult homes.
* During this pandemic please do the following: social distance, wash hands, wear a mask, and watch for any symptoms for COVID-19.
* Most of the testing is being done at the St. Lawrence Health Systems and Claxton Hepburn hospitals.

**County Legislator’s Report** *(Larry Denesha)* Financial is a big concern right now. Sales tax are down 25% or more. We could lose 6-10 million dollars in tax revenue if things don’t pick back up. Trying to put 2021 budget together. Office for the Aging is delivering about 700 home delivered meals daily. There was a 40% increase in SNAP benefits. As of May 11 there was 48.1% of the census completed in St. Lawrence County. There was 52% of the census completed in NY State.

**AARP Report**- *(Vicki Clark)* No Report.

**Office for the Aging Report** *(Andrea Montgomery)*

* On March 13 Congregate Dining was closed due to COVID-19. There was about 150-200 new clients that were switched from congregate dining to being home delivered meal clients.
* There has been a 40% increase in home delivered meal clients since March. All the home delivered meal clients have 2 weeks’ worth of frozen meals.
* There has been 5 employees that are rotating on working in the office. Everyone from our office is working because we are an essential business.
* The goal is to be prepared for anything.
* There has been 300 shelf staple food boxes, and 2 weeks’ worth of home delivered meals delivered to clients.
* We received 10,000 mask from the NYS Office for the Aging, which we have been distributing to clients.
* We have 3,000 shelf staple meals that are ready to go.
* Larry Denesha has been a volunteer driver in the DeKalb area for delivering home delivered meals.
* Working out on our reopening plans to see clients. Will be phasing staff back into the office slowly.
* Our office has started a Telephone Reassurance Program for older adults. Our older adults that sign up for this program will receive a phone call from a volunteer that is doing a wellness check and help reduce loneliness of individuals.
* Will be starting virtual programs like virtual coffee hour, support groups for caregivers, etc.
* Farmer Market Coupon distribution will begin July 1st. We are working out the plans on how it will work to distribute these coupons. Looking into doing a drive through distribution in Massena, Canton, Ogdensburg, and Gouverneur. Also, we are looking into mailing the form out to clients to have them sign, and then having the client mail the form back to our office. Once we receive the filled out form we are able to mail the Farmer Market Coupons to clients. Also, looking at having staff set up a table at the Farmer Market’s to distribute the coupons.
* Volunteer Transportation is doing grocery shopping for individuals and Walmart Grocery has free pickup.
* Our office is receiving $318,377 from stimulus grants for the COVID-19 response. This year and next year our office will be in a good financial position.
* We have received $12,000 in private donations for COVID-19 response.
* We have had some employees that have retired. Nancy Green retired at the end of May. Cindy Ayer has taken over the HIICAP Counselor role. Barb Newcombe was our Nutrition Services Aid at our Star Lake Nutrition Site. She retired at the end of April. Cindy Barse was our Nutrition Services Aid at our Morristown Nutrition Site. Linda Bouchey is our Dekalb Site Supervisor, and she will be retiring at the end of this month.
* Hired a new staff member, Chelsea Thomas, which will be working as a Nutrition Services Aid at our Star Lake Nutrition Site. Having difficulty filling the Nutrition Services Aid position at the Morristown Nutrition Site.

**♦Adjournment** – Motion to adjourn by L. Wilkinson, seconded by R. Backus, all in favor.

R. Bennett adjourned meeting at 11:06 AM.

**♦Next Meeting** – September 14, 2020, TBD

*(Minutes respectfully submitted by Chiara Delosh)*