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

# **Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**

# **June 14th, 2021**

**Meeting called to order:** 10:03 AM by Roger Bennett, Chairman

**Present:** *(voting members)* Roger Bennett, Linda Wilkinson, Russ Backus, Larry Denesha, Kathy Skelly, Joan Howlett, Marjorie McCullouch, Matt Manierre, Barb McBurnie, Brenda Sanderson

**Present:** *(non-voting members):* Andrea Montgomery, Jolene Munger, Christiana DeForge, Renee Lomoglio

**Present:** 2021 Bylaw Update

**Excused**: Michael Boprey, Vicki Clark

**Absent:**

**Public Attending:** None

**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** – None

**♦Public Comment** – No public comments

♦**Approval/Minutes** – motion to approve minutes by R. Backus, seconded by M. McCullouch, all in favor. Motion passed.

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

**♦Old Business**– B. McBurnie question on Health Equity Task Force mentioned in Andrea’s work report; community providers to meet to discuss vaccine equity and formulate a plan to target specific areas based on socioeconomic categories.

**♦New Business** – N/A

**Review By-Laws** – Sent out this morning with the change in Article 7 quorum Section 1; change from 51% to 30% of voting members must be in attendance in order to conduct Advisory Council business; no comments or concerns. Motion to approve by R. Backus and second by L. Wilkinson; all in favor.

**Members Updates** – No member updates.

**County Council of Senior Citizens Report** – *(Brenda Sanderson)* Met as a group at Best Western, just the officers and decided to have a meeting July 8th at 10am with the president and one delegate; this will be at the Community Building at DeKalb/Hermon. Requested that an OFA representative attends this upcoming meeting.

**StateWide Senior Action Council Report** – (*Barb McBurnie)* Might be able to have a meeting in the fall. Board of Directors meeting last week; virtual convention in October that may have a live version at the Best Western. Next meeting in September, and StateWide may be at the following community events: Potsdam Summerfest, Waddington Homecoming and Dairy Princess in August. Advocacy to SLC senior residents on how to reach legislatures and advocate for themselves. Attending several zoom meetings.

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

**Public Health Report** – *(Jolene Munger)* Vaccine update: 65+ we are at 81.8% and a 1.8% higher than the state, this is much higher than the 12-18 age group. Cases are low and they are focusing on vaccine efforts; clinic drive-thru tomorrow at the HSC building. There is still a list for homebound residents who need the vaccine. They have all 3 vaccines available; Gouverneur Rescue are allowed to provide the vaccines in the home. Looking to open the regular immunization clinics in August and this will include the COVID vaccine for younger individuals. They also have rabies clinics throughout the county. As a county we are at 58% and hopefully by September we will be at 70%.

*R. Bennett* – If as cases decline and the state reaches 70% will Public Health still be as active in the response?

State and federal records are different due to differences in reporting and the 70% is an arbitrary number, so most response activities will continue, including quarantine and isolation supervision which will last at least through November.

**County Legislator’s Report** – *(Larry Denesha)* Commends Public Health on their work with the response to COVID and the BOL is thankful for their efforts. 7,000 more vaccines to reach the 70% in the county. Full board meeting passed a resolution to declare June Dairy month; were able to have the dairy princess and her court at the meeting. Last year unable to host Bassmasters tournament, funds were held and this year were released and the tournament may move forward. The broadband survey is closed and we had 2,100 respondents. NCHC awarded the 2021 Septic System Replacement program; to inquire contact the Planning Department at (315) 379- 2292 or NCHC at (315) 386-8576 to get your name on the list.

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

**Office for the Aging Report** – *(Andrea Montgomery)* Office is open to the public June 1st, signage is up regarding the mask procedures and sign in and sanitation at the door. Several positions open; 2 temporary nutrition aides; 2 permanent nutrition aides due to 1 retirement and 1 resignation; 1 account clerk, canvassing for since January; 1 keyboard specialist, going to board for approval. Farmers Market Coupons are not here and won’t be until July 1st; $20 per eligible senior for fresh produce at any state market; August is the best time to use and there will be some drive thru distributions and our staff will be at the markets; the farmers market managers may be able to have some on hand. Our goal is to distribute 800 coupon books. NY Connects and Public Transit are partnering to bring seniors to the farmers markets; demystify public transit, information on programs and service; Medicare questions and then the coupons. NYSOFA offered to purchase another round of the robotic pets for isolated older adults; 30 pets are coming and will be distributed to clients; should be here this week. Working on in person fitness programs will Cornell Cooperative Extension and this may resume sometime in August. There will not be a senior picnic this year and we may be able to have an event in the fall or drive thru picnic.

Working on opening the congregate dining centers; Brasher and Gouverneur will open July 1st in a phased in approach to track data. Staffing is also a concern with reopening all the nutrition sites and guidance from the state is always changing as how to open the congregate dining. Gouverneur is expected to have more members from the public dining. All food will be in the home delivered meal trays and individuals will be served the meal. Will be asking for a 24 hour reservation from those who would like to dine to be sure that spacing is appropriate; may have to have separate dining times. Canton is a small location and this is where a space issue may arise; looking at having 2 different dining times. 35 to 40% increase due to COVID and we haven’t seen that decrease; we are in the process of going through our lists of congregate diners who were added to HDM and this is phasing out if those clients do not officially qualify; these clients will be able to pick up at the site until the site is open; the last HDM they receive will be June 25th. Will send out a timeline of when the other sites will be opening. Safety modifications and state signage is going up. The need for volunteers remains detrimental to the nutrition site openings. Opening also requires applicants for the positions; particularly the nutrition positions and we can’t compete with the NYS unemployment. First priority is the home delivered meal clients due to their vulnerability; although congregate is important for those we can leave their homes more easily and socialize over lunch.

*B. Sanderson* – Is Star Lake or Potsdam opening soon?

Biggest hurdle is 18 staff and 19 home delivered meal routes, so currently staff have to close the kitchen to deliver meals. $430,000 received in rescue funds and this will be brought to the board to increase staff and purchase vehicles.

*B. Sanderson* – Can we have meetings?

Meetings are possible; we don’t own the sites and we can give contacts for the site coordinators/housing executives to get permission. Sandstone is having a meeting at Potsdam next month. Larger sites will be easier to accommodate the spacing requirements.

*J. Howlett* - Does everyone who attends the nutrition site have to be vaccinated?

No, there are conversations about the authority to ask clients if they are vaccinated which is forthcoming.

*R. Backus* – Had the meals at the Gouverneur site during a vaccine clinic and the meals were delicious. Public Health appreciated the meals and will be back for another clinic in July.

*L. Denesha* – State decided that seniors cannot deliver the meals, is that still the case?

No, Matilda’s Law was never made a law and not something we were made to follow and we contacted those volunteers to let them know that they were able to still volunteer to deliver. We have some stay at home mothers who will be bringing their children with them to deliver the meals, as long as the child is able to be left in the car with eyes on them.

*B. McBurnie* – Tree planted for Peggy?

Another loss in Peggy’s family and we are giving more time for the family before our memorial. Some point over the summer we will touch base with Peggy’s family to schedule the memorial.

**♦Adjournment** – Motion to adjourn by B. Sanderson, seconded by M. McCullouch, all in favor. R. Bennett adjourned meeting at 10:51 AM.

**♦Next Meeting** – September 13th, 2021, November 8th (TBD, hybrid in-person/zoom)

*(Minutes respectfully submitted by Christiana DeForge)*