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

# **Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**

# **April 4th, 2022**

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

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

**Present:** *(non-voting members):* Andrea Montgomery, Kelly Zakarauskas

**Absent:** Gail Bisonette, Michael Boprey, Chiara Delosh, Jolene Munger

**Public Attending:** Anna Campbell, Myrtle Reagan

**Meeting Location:** HSC

**♦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** – Anna Campbell asked a question about the SLC Development Project and a flyer that had been sent out. She wanted to know where the rule that one needs to be 200% below the poverty level comes from. Andrea Montgomery responded mentioning that it was a federal guideline. Anna Campbell wanted to formally invite the Office for the Aging to the Madrid summer concert series.

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

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

**♦Old Business**– Barb McBurnie asked about homecare shortage.

**♦New Business** – N/A

**Members Updates** – No member updates.

**County Council of Senior Citizens Report** – *(Brenda Sanderson)* Had a meeting about starting clubs back up. Discussed picnic in August. Wants to honor winners of senior awards at Mayfest. Looking for a place to have meetings. Andrea mentioned Gouverneur or Morristown nutrition sites.

**StateWide Senior Action Council Report** – (*Barb McBurnie)* Conflict with Advisory Council meeting in September, as that is the 50th Anniversary party for Statewide. GetSetUp invited the council to do presentations. Council is very active. There will be a convention in Saratoga in September. There has been an upgrade to EPIC. Statewide is working on trying to raise the poverty level for MSP. Statewide is also looking for people and/or businesses to purchase ads for memorializing people who have passed. Next meeting is Thursday, April 7, at 10AM at the Lobster House. Speaker from SOAR will be presenting at the meeting.

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

**Public Health Report** – *(Jolene Munger)* Andrea Montgomery gave the report.

* Slight increase in COVID cases.
* Dr. Williams predicted a spike with the new BA 2 variant.
* Currently getting about 50 new cases per day.
* The 4th booster has been approved for individuals 50 and older.
* Development for vaccines for each specific strain are coming.

**County Legislator’s Report** – *(Larry Denesha)* COVID reporting is now down to 2 times per week. The county changed the way they report cases by keeping track of incidental cases or cases in the hospitals admitted with COVID. The rate of infection in the state last week was 2.4%, St. Lawrence County is now at 2.8%. Expecting a spike due to the new variant in our county. A new Social Services Commissioner was appointed, Joseph Seeber, from Norfolk. Many individuals from DSS were involved in the interview process. The sheriffs’ department donated bulletproof vests to Ukraine.

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

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

* There was a fire in Ogdensburg at the Riverview Tower. 103 residents were displaced. Tenants were moved to the Ogdensburg gym. Most did not have medications, eyeglasses, or clothes. The fire department went door to door to find missing pets. 34 residents were evacuated to Wadham’s Hall on the first night. John Miller Jr., a teacher at Ogdensburg Free Academy, volunteered his time from 6AM to midnight every day to make sure the residents were taken care of. Senator Richie’s office got involved with Medicaid to push them to approve medications. Our office was there assisting, as was Community Services, Planning, Emergency Services, Public Health, and Social Services. There were about 50 people there at the emergency shelter. 21 of them went to Riverside in Canton.
* We will be having a Walk with Ease class in May in Gouverneur.
* We have 1 permanent and a few temporary nutrition assistant positions available. Potentially discussing raising salaries in the 2023 budget. Considering looking at making nutrition assistants full time in 2023 budget.
* Sent out Congregate reopening survey. Received over 200 back already.
* We have gone from 16 HDM routes before COVID to now having 21 HDM routes.
* Have about 50 volunteers per week.
* Home health aide Fair pay for Homecare Act was included in Senate bill. If included in the Governor’s bill, pay will increase to $22.50.
* Volunteer Appreciation Week is April 17 through April 23. We will have celebrations at the nutrition centers.
* May is Older Americans Month. The theme is “Age My Way.”
* Senior award nominations are coming in. We would like to have an awards ceremony for award winners in June, possibly.
* September 13th meeting will be moved to September 19th.

**♦Adjournment** – Motion to adjourn by R. Backus, seconded by B. McBurnie, all in favor. R. Bennett adjourned meeting at 11:13 AM.

**♦Next Meeting** – June 14th, 2022, Human Services Center, Canton: 2nd Floor Conference Room at 10 AM

*(Electronic Meeting Minutes respectfully submitted by Kelly Zakarauskas)*