**Advisory Council Meeting Minutes: 11/18/24**

*Minutes submitted by Jacob Kormanyos*

Attendance:

Andrea Montgomery – Director OFA

Jacob Kormanyos - OFA

Mike Boprey – Director Veterans

Russ Backus - ARC

Larry Denesha - BOL

Erin Striff – Director Public Health

Mary Jones - Hospice

Matt Manierre - Clarkson

Barb McBurnie - Statewide Senior Action Council

Dr. Gary Berk

Kathy Skelly

Joan Howlett

Gail Teele

**Meeting Minutes:**

Russ Backus

-Opening of meeting, Pledge of Allegiance, moment of reflection, and new member introductions.

Russ: No speaker today and no members of the public. Asked for approval of September meeting minutes. Kathy Skelly motions for approval, Matt Manierre seconds, all in favor yes.

Joan Howlett:

-No correspondence

-No Old business

- New Business: Concerns from Reachout for potential future funding. Joan reports concerns that funding will be lost and that it will be a huge mistake for our seniors and the rest of the community. Joan urges everyone to reach out to the local legislators and ask for their continued support of Reachout. Reachout needs a licensed professional for the 24/7 Hotline and Joan reports from her personal history of being on call that this may be an unnecessary expense. She again urged everyone to support Reachout and speak to their local reps.

Russ: Now we will ask for an update from BOL Larry Denesha.

Larry: The 2025 budget was presented and reviewed. The tentative budget will be presented to the public and Larry expects very minimal changes. The real property tax decreased this year 2.4% which equals out to a $6.97 per 1000 tax rate. Larry noted the significant real property tax over the past several years noting its decreased more than 16%. He did cite increased property assessment value as well. The public hearing will be December 2nd for the budget review. Larry highlighted challenges for 2025 which includes the ending of the enhanced Medicaid assistance program and with its elimination the Medicaid dollars being kept at the state level which will equal out to a 3.1 million dollar loss. He also noted that NYS retirement will increase 1 million and there will be a 2.2 million dollar health benefits increase as well. Larry noted that there will be 4 collective bargaining agreements that need replacing as well.

Larry then noted accomplishments from 2024. The county completed the 10 million dollar capital improvement project. The public safety complex renovations are nearly complete, expected to be completed and open to public viewing mid-late December. There are also several social services building renovations in progress.

Erin Striff Public Health Update: Erin issued updates on public health vaccines. She reports that they are currently offering the flu vaccine but do not have the 65 plus enhanced flu due to lack of demand. She noted that they are also not carrying the RSV vaccine due to lack of demand as well. They do have COVID-19 vaccines at this time. Erin then discussed upcoming programs public health will be offering including winter isolation workshops. Public health is putting on a campaign called “Humans don’t hibernate”. The campaign will focus on balancing people’s physical, mental, and nutritional health through the winter. Throughout December Public Health will have specific workshops promoting hydration, movement goals, and a family game night. Erin also mentioned the Chronic Diseases Self-Management classes that are ongoing through the local hospitals. She provided brief info on these programs and the benefits they provide.

Linda Wilkson: Russ asked if Linda had provided a report as she was not in attendance at today’s meeting due to an excused health absence. Andrea from OFA provided brief update which stated the County Council will be having upcoming elections at their next meeting. She also stated that during that meeting turkey dinner will be provided by the Potsdam nutrition site and that orders will need to be placed ahead of time.

Barb Mcburnie: Barb provided her update from the Statewide Senior Action Council. Barb reported that she attended the State Wide Convention in Saratoga Springs on October 21st. She will be attending a webinar on November 26. She then discussed upcoming program webinars Statewide will be offering including the upcoming webinar on NY Connects and OFA. Barb discussed open enrollment and to avoid the ads on TV and mailing ads. She want’s people to be cautious of the insurance sales reps over the phone as they are not to be trusted. She discussed scams and to be very cautious over the phone. She mentioned a recent scam in Franklin County involving durable medical equipment. The next statewide meeting will be the 1st Thursday in December.

Mike Boprey: Mike stated there were over 961,000 outstanding claims on Veterans Day and that he has continued to be busy handling the local claims. He’s hoping to update his secretary position to an administrative positon for his office staff. He’s processed over a million dollars in veteran’s claims this year and could use additional assistance. He mentioned the VA home health care program and how it is difficult for the program to function in a rural area with lack of home health care.

Russ Backus: ARC continues support for both public transit and VTC. Russ highlighted the first mile last mile program and its effectiveness with getting the rural seniors to medical appts. Russ stated that they are going through Budget updates at this time and that money was obtained to raise direct support staff salaries which is very much needed.

Mary Hospice: Hospice hosted a recent event called Hospice Café in which there were 12 attendee’s. Hospice continues to inform the local public about home care options for their loved ones as they age. States people are still shocked when they find out the care options in the area and that 24/7 is not an option. Hospice continues to teach caregivers on how to care for their loved ones. Mary would like to work with Rochester regional further on getting patients involved with Hospice earlier. The AIM program is thriving as Hospice currently has 3 Nurse Practitioners providing care throughout the whole county.

Brief note from Larry Denesha: His wife receiving an award from United Helpers recognizing her as the longest tenured volunteer with their programs.

**Andrea OFA Updates:**

Russ: Ending announcements: Upcoming meeting dates including next meeting which is Feb 10th at 10am. Russ asked for a motion to adjourn. Barb McBurnie motion for adjournment, Kathy Skelly 2nd, all in favor yes. Meeting was closed.