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

# **Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**

# **February 10, 2025**

**Meeting called to order:** 10:02 AM by Linda Wilkinson

**Present:** *(voting members)* Roger Bennett, Larry Denesha, Linda Wilkinson, Russ Backus, Joan Howlett, Barb McBurnie, Kathy Skelly, Laura McGrath

**Present:** *(non-voting members):* Andrea Montgomery, Michael Boprey, Chiara Delosh, Jacob Kormanyos, Erin Streiff

**Absent:** Matt Manierre, Gary Berk, Gail Teele, Mary Jones

**Public Attending:** None

**Meeting Location:** HSC

**♦Introductions** –Meeting brought to order by L. Wilkinson. Opened with Pledge of Allegiance.

**♦Moment of Reflection** – Larry Denesha, Legislature

**♦Guest Speaker** – None

**♦Public Comment** – None.

♦**Approval/Minutes** – motion to approve minutes by R. Backus, seconded by R. Bennett. Motion passed.

♦**Correspondence** – None

**♦Old Business**– None.

**♦New Business** – None.

**County Legislator’s Report** – *(Larry Denesha)* 2025 Organizational meeting on January 22. David Forsythe was reelected as Chair and Larry Denesha as Vice Chair. Renovations are complete for the Public Safety Building. Everything will officially be done within 2-3 weeks. Planning on having a couple of open houses once completed. Came in $100,000 under budget for the project once things are said and done. Focusing on getting a handle on gas prices in SLC. Introduced a resolution regarding petroleum prices. Would like a CEO/CFO from Stewarts and Mountain Mart to come to a board meeting.

**Public Health Report** – *(Erin Streiff)* Seeing high levels of respiratory virus especially flu A. Fewer individuals are getting vaccinated this year. Get vaccinated. There have been some COVID and RSV that has been reported. Keep an eye out regarding the bird flu. The only way to catch the bird flu is if you come in direct contact with a wild bird or mammal that has been infected. This doesn’t spread from person to person. NYS is testing milk right now regarding this.

**County Council of Senior Citizens Report** – *(Laura McGrath)* Was wondering about the August picnic. Andrea said they can talk about it at the County Council meeting next month.

**StateWide Senior Action Council Report** – *(Barb McBurnie)* Need advocacy for the patient rights helpline. This hotline helps with MCR. Asking for more funding. There will be a budget briefing on February 21 @ 9. This presentation will address issues throughout the rest of the budget that are of interest to older residents. Registration is required. Handed out flyer regarding this presentation and action alert regarding state budget. Law passed through house where you speak out against the White House agenda you are going to jail. Trying to fix MCD which means there are talks about MCD cuts. These cuts affect the disabled and people in nursing homes.

**Veterans Services Report** – *(Mike Boprey)* VA is expanding Community Care. Already up to $350,000 in claims for this year. Trying to bump up Teshia’s job to be able to do outreach. Still handling pensions.

**Members Updates** – Russ Backus- The State Budget is most likely still not enough. Still advocating to add more state funding to help hire new employees and retain the ones that are working there. Right now competing with McDonalds, Burger King, Walmart, etc. regarding wages for employees. Consumer directed program for seniors, Hochul is looking to turn one company to be the broker for NYS. If this happens there will be more concerns about the bottom line.

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

* During the Holiday Gift Drive the office was able to give out 160 gift cards or gifts to our senior citizens.
* Governor Hochul put $45 million in state budget. The allocation of this funding is based on waitlist and unmet needs. There is no county match with this state funding. There would have to be a lot of policies and procedures written out on how to spend the money.
* Nutrition aide salary in the new contract is $19.86. The individual works 30 hours a week and gets benefits and retirement. Have been receiving a lot of applications for this position.
* Next month will be doing March for Meals to help raise awareness of our meal program. Greg Olson and Becky Preve will be attending this event. Still trying to work on a date with Greg.
* There was a personnel change for fiscal. Taylor is our new fiscal officer and Jacob has been assisting. They have been fixing errors since when John left. They have been doing an incredible job doing this and getting vouchers sent into the state.
* Looking at late March or early April to start up Health Promotion classes again.
* Accepting Senior Award nominations right now. Haven’t received very many applications.
* The Empowered Caregiver Series on Responding to Dementia-Related Behaviors will be on Monday, March 10 @ 11:30.The Empowered Caregiver Series on Exploring Care and Support Services will be on Tuesday, April 8 @ 11:30. Both of these presentations will be held on the second floor conference room in the Human Services Building.

**♦Adjournment** – Motion to adjourn by R. Bennett, seconded by R. Backus, all in favor. R. Bennett adjourned meeting.

**♦Next Meeting** – Monday, April 14, 2025 at 10AM

*(Electronic Meeting Minutes respectfully submitted by Chiara Delosh)*