

Rhode Island Advisory Commission on Aging

Minutes

March 15, 2006

Members Present: Ms. Ann Gardella, Mr. Norm Chapman, Ms. Maria Matias, Ms. Ester Price, Ms. Janice Zeichner and Ms. Louise King

Members Excused: Ms. Gloria Williams, Mr. Joseph Brown, Rev. Paul Bliss, Mr. Ken Reynolds, Ms. Helen Friend, Mr. Bennett Plotkin, Sister Marietta Walsh and Ms. Lisa Pontarelli

Members Absent: Mr. Herbert Weiss, Dr. Herb Constantine, Mr. Raymond Tetreault, Ms. Nancy Pontes, Mr. Joseph Corrente and Ms. Madeline Ernest

Others in Attendance: Ms. Corinne Calise Russo, Director (DEA), Ms. Paula Parker (DEA), and Mr. Larry Grimaldi (DEA) and Ms. Mary King

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Ann Gardella called the meeting to order at 10:06 AM.

II. Minutes

The minutes of the February 15, 2006 meeting were approved with minor corrections.

III. Chairperson's Report

Ann Gardella raised her concern about attendance. There was a discussion about the letter, regarding repeated absences, written in accordance with the Methods of Operations policy, which had been approved at the February meeting. The letter will be slightly modified and sent ASAP by Paula Parker.

IV. Director's Report

Statewide events: Corinne Calise Russo and Paula Parker reported on items of interest.

Rhode Island has been chosen to be one of three states to participate in a project called "Owning Your Future". Governor Carcieri has sent a letter to all 50-79 year-olds to inform them that they can obtain a planning kit to encourage them to consider filing important legal documents (wills, living trusts, living wills, powers of attorney, etc.), buying long-term insurance, and asking for assistance (e.g., from The Point).

AARP-produced "Is Your Home a Good Fit", directs seniors to be aware of what they need to look for in their homes in order to be considered safe and sound. Corrine will be meeting with the RI Homebuilders Association to discuss these needs.

Paula and Corinne reported on a public transport initiative, modeled on Portland, Maine's Independent Transport Network (ITN), which is being considered. Numerous complaints have been filed about the

current RIDE program, and Governor Carcieri has contacted RIDE officials about his issuing an executive order to recall the transit task force.

Legislation has been introduced to lengthen the drivers' license renewal period from 2 years to 5 years for those over 70.

There was a discussion about 50 public clinics for the Pneumovac vaccination from April through June. The fee is \$20 in some locations, but, depending on income, can be free. Seniors should receive a dose every 5 years.

Medicare Part D: Larry Grimaldi presented a comprehensive update on Medicare Part D.

The DEA has conducted numerous "public meetings", working with officials from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Social Security Administration, at senior centers and other key locations throughout the state to provide seniors with opportunities to learn more about Part D in order to obtain full benefits. He felt that the DEA can only "react to what we have been handed by the feds". His impression is that the program is making progress and pharmacies are helping with the process. He believes that seniors, who have had to pay for medicines "out of pocket", eventually will be reimbursed.

Larry also reported that the RIPAE recertification is going well, with

9,000 of the 12,000 eligible seniors having been processed. The DEA is calling all those who were notified and have not responded, as yet. At the last recertification there were 40,000 on the rolls. Of the current 25,000 listed, 3,000 are missing information or need eligibility clarification. They are being contacted 1:1, along with those who have not responded.

There was a discussion about individuals who do not qualify for Part D, because they are not part of the social security system. Many school districts' teachers do not participate. At age 65, they can be denied prescription coverage insurance.

V. Treasurer's Report

The treasurer reported that the current balance in the RIACOA account is \$108.45. There was a discussion about reimbursement of members' expenses. The Methods of Operations policy indicates that expenses be approved in advance, and the Commission members had agreed that mileage to meetings would not be reimbursed.

VI. Committee Reports

LTCCC: Sister Marietta Walsh had been excused, but she had sent a written report. She reported that the LTCCC was observing state budget presentations, doing legislative tracking, and examining nursing home reports. The LTCCC is also looking over DHS and DEA reports, trying to determine who is being impacted by budget cuts. Corinne Russo indicated that there is an ongoing grant study to

discover duplications.

NECC: No report.

Forum on Aging: Joseph Brown had been excused because of his daughter's death. There was no report.

Silver Haired Legislature: The SHL has updated its By-Laws with wording to enable the SHL to apply for (3)(c) non-profit IRS status in order to qualify for donations and grants. Members have been informed and the changes will be discussed and voted on at their March 27th session.

It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 11:21 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Norm Chapman