

# **Rhode Island Advisory Commission on Aging**

## **Minutes**

**April 19, 2006**

**Members Present: Ann Gardella, Norman Chapman, Sr. Marietta Walsh, R.N., Rev. Paul Franklin Bliss, Libby Arron, Ken Reynolds, Bennett Plotkin, Esther Price, and  
Helen Friend**

**Members Excused: Nancy Pontes, Gloria Williams, Louise King, and Madeline Ernest**

**Members Absent: Lisa Pontarelli, Herbert Constantine, M.D., Joseph Corrente, Herbert Weiss, and Maria Matias**

**Others in Attendance: Corinne Calise Russo (Director DEA) and Paula Parker (DEA),**

### **I. Call to Order**

**Chairperson Ann Gardella called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM.**

### **II. Minutes**

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

### **III. Chairperson's Report:**

**Ann Gardella raised her concern about follow-up on the White House Conference on Aging. She wondered what the Rhode Island delegates were going to do with the results, since federal officials did not appear to be doing anything in particular.**

### **IV. Director's Report**

**White House Conference on Aging: Corinne Calise Russo and Paula Parker reported that Governor Carcieri had received a compilation from and intends to work with the delegates to formulate state-wide initiatives. The delegates intend to share with interested delegates from other states. The delegates will meet with the Commission members from 11:30 to 12:30 PM after the next Commission meeting on May 17th to decide on which resolutions to focus for possible action. A Commission member will chair the meeting**

**Transportation: They will also discuss the following issue at that time. There is a growing concern for improving transportation for seniors. The General Assembly, the DEA, and the Commission will work to resolve what has come to be a major problem area in the state.. The concerned parties will focus on Maine's Independent Transport Network (ITN), which appears to be a model worth adopting. ITN officials would be contacted to gain information, aiding the parties to formulate a plan of action. Further meetings would be scheduled to carry out the plan. Study findings of all parties**

examining the transportation issue would be presented to the Governor by January 2, 2007. The Commission will request RI's Congressional delegation to meet with members during their break from their duties in Washington in July to discuss this and the following issue.

**Older Americans' Act:** The Older Americans' Act is being reauthorized, possibly with significant changes. Fee-based services may very well become reality. An increase in the senior employment age may be changed from 55 to 65. Paula will send Council members a copy of the proposed changes.

**Assisted Living Facilities and Nursing Homes:** Corinne Calise-Russo and Paula Parker reported on a concern about Assisted Living facilities and nursing care. Recently, state inspectors have found that medications are not always being dispensed by licensed nurses, but also by medical technicians. The Governor is aware of the status of inspectors of Assisted Living facilities and the problems with oversight in Nursing Home visits. Regulations are a "mixed bag", and action needs to be taken to assure seniors' health care and safety. Revenue is lacking to carry out an effective program of surveys that are meaningful, especially as large, "for profit" organizations take over operations of these facilities and fewer beds are available. The state is seriously contemplating home-based community care services and care-at-home as a means of dealing with a snowballing problem our ever-growing senior population is

**facing here and now.**

**The AARP is completing its series of “Listening Sessions” to inform and assist seniors with their decisions before the May 15th deadline.**

#### **V. Treasurer’s Report**

**The treasurer reported that the current balance in the RIACOA account remains at \$108.45.**

#### **VI. Committee Reports**

##### **LTCCC**

**Sister Marietta Walsh reported that the Health Department was more positive reporting on Nursing Home Surveys. There are no closings pending. The AARP and Brown University are working cooperatively with the on how to help the state with dealing with cost of care.**

**The Pneumovac vaccination program continues to be promoted, and all seniors are encouraged to receive the vaccination at one of the clinics being held around the state.**

##### **NECC**

**Sister Marietta Walsh reported that the New England Conference has been cancelled for lack of registrants. Sister has talked to her contacts throughout the New England states and is concerned that the Conference may become defunct. Concerned delegates are**

looking at the process. The Council will issue a letter of concern, suggesting a telephone conference be held to keep the Conference alive. The problem stems from a lack of funding. Several state budgets do not allow for delegate expenses, and it becomes unaffordable for the delegates to attend. An alternative approach to meeting must be found. Norm will approach the Apple Computer representative who has contacts throughout New England to see if it is possible to coordinate a video broadcast conference from one or more locations in each state. Delegates would be invited to go to a nearby location and participate in the conference. They would be assisted with all of the technical elements and need no training.

#### **Forum on Aging**

**No report.**

#### **Silver Haired Legislature**

The SHL approved the changes to its By-Laws, enable the SHL to apply for (3)(c) non-profit IRS status in order to qualify for donations and grants.

It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 11:18 AM.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Norm Chapman**