

**MINUTES**  
**SENIOR SERVICES COMMITTEE**

December 16, 2010

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Andy Kehr, Chairman, Jeanne Duntz, Jennifer Fivelsdal, Richard Franklin, Nick LaCourte, Kelly Mosher Rose Rider, Judy Walsh

Absent: Betty Bader, Carl Dowden

Also Present: Sue Crane, Town Supervisor; Thomas Stark, Paramedic Field Supervisor, Northern Dutchess Paramedics; Marcia DiBlasi, Chair, Rhinebeck Senior Services Committee

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Andy Kehr called the meeting to order at 9:15 A.M. and handed out copies of his monthly report to the Town Board. He introduced Thomas Stark, Paramedic Field Supervisor for Northern Dutchess Paramedics and Marcia DiBlasi, Chair of the Rhinebeck Senior Services Committee.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES, NOVEMBER 4, 2010 MEETING**

Andy asked if there were any changes or other modifications to the Minutes. Hearing none, Dick made a motion to accept the Minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Nick and all were in favor.

**MEDICARE INFORMATIONAL MEETING**

Andy said that there was a large turnout for the meeting; at least 45 attended. Nina Lynch offered a lot of good information. He asked for comments from those who were present. Dick said that Nina did a good job presenting this complex information. However, she told people not to call her office until next year as she has had staff cuts and is overwhelmed. Andy said that she advised people to call Medicare directly if they have questions. He said that he was happy that Nina was able to come to Red Hook and hopes that she will make more presentations here in the future.

**DIAL A RIDE**

Andy said that he had told the Town Board that the Committee feels that the cost of Dial A Ride for Red Hook, viz. \$8900, is excessive. He said that Betty is looking into the services provided by Northern Dutchess Caregivers to determine if that organization can be of help. He said that he had spoken to Rob Latimer, owner of Northern Dutchess Paramedics and Rob was willing to look at what his organization might be able to do to fill in the gap left by Dial A Ride. To that end, he sent Mr. Stark to attend the meeting.

Mr. Stark said that NDP would consider providing ambulette rides for senior citizens. Their location in Rhinebeck is only four or five miles from the center of Red Hook. He said that he did not know if NDP could provide services which would meet the needs of the senior citizens of Red Hook. The problem is when you provide a service, you cannot have two schedules of fees. That issue would have to be worked out. The step after that would be outreach.

The times of day when services are offered might make a big difference, Mr. Stark continued. These times cannot conflict with contracts which NDP now holds. These are some of the issues which must be studied. Judy asked if emergencies would create conflicts. Mr. Stark responded that they would not. NDP has two divisions and there is no crossover between the ambulette services and the paramedics who respond to emergencies. He explained that the ambulettes have provisions for wheelchairs. There are also ambulettes which can accommodate stretchers, should such a service be required.

Nick said that the needs of the seniors would be going food shopping and going to medical appointments or to the hospital. Mr. Stark said that an ambulance, rather than an ambulette, would be required for a medical emergency. Shopping could be arranged for a set day. He said that the ambulette division is currently contracted to pick up people in Ulster County for their appointments in the morning and take them back in the afternoon. In the middle of the day, he said, they have time. The ambulettes hold eight to nine people.

Rose asked if they have a dispatch service. Mr. Stark said that they do and it would be easy to set up shopping trips on prearranged days. Someone is on duty 24 - 7 for dispatching. Andy said that for Thursdays, the number of rides for Dial A Ride has been in the 30's in the winter and around 47 in the summer. He did not know how many of those rides had been planned in advance.

Mr. Stark indicated that at midday they have a lull during which they might be able to provide services. Andy and Mr. Stark agreed that the issues must be studied so that times which work can be agreed upon. All appointments which are scheduled in advance might be accommodated. Nick said that at Red Hook Commons, residents could be urged to schedule their medical appointments at set times to coincide with the availability of the ambulettes. Mr. Stark said that he will go back and try to formulate a plan.

In discussing the possibility of undershooting the budget line item of \$5000, Rose pointed out that people did pay something for Dial A Ride. Mr. Stark said that the price of fuel has to be taken into consideration. If we are looking at \$5000 plus a supplement, we need to determine what the supplement will be. We do not know if this will work, he said, but it might be a realistic option.

Dick suggested contacting the local medical facilities to see if they might be able to set up a consistent block of time when senior citizens could make their appointments. Nick said that the advance appointments can be worked out. Immediate needs are the issue. Mr. Stark said that there is a legal issue which must be considered. The ambulettes cannot go to the ER. An ambulance must be used. Ambulances are typically covered by insurance. The dispatcher would tell people when an ambulance is required.

In response to questioning, Mr. Stark said that he thought he could formulate a plan pretty quickly. In terms of financing, he said he would need some time to crunch the numbers. It would take at least a week or so to set up a model and see how long it could be maintained given the amount of money available.

Sue Crane, Town Supervisor, joined the meeting and said that the Town does not have a great need for wheelchair accessible vehicles. Only a limited number of calls require a wheelchair lift. We need to determine how we can provide for most of the calls, she said. The number of calls has increased since the opening of Red Hook Commons. Most of the calls come from Red Hook Commons and Provost Park, although there are others in the community who utilize the service.

Sue asked Marcia DiBlasi about the status of the transportation services in Rhinebeck. Marcia said that their program just started in June and they are still getting the word out. Right now we are letting people find us, she said. The van is dispatched through the Town Hall. They do not take wheelchairs because to do so would require the driver to have a special license. The nice thing about having your own van, she commented, is that you can be flexible. She said that their volunteers have been more than willing to help. Their van holds nine people and is handicapped equipped.

Sue asked Marcia if a lot of the calls Rhinebeck receives are medical. Marcia said that they do not take any medical calls; they coordinate with Northern Dutchess Caregivers. They have a program which has worked for many years, she said and we want to build a close relationship with them. Sue said that Northern Dutchess Caregivers is a ministerium sponsored program and provides all aspects of transportation, although originally it was dedicated to providing medical services.

Kelly felt that from an efficiency standpoint, the town's \$5000 would go a lot farther if people on the outskirts of town were not serviced. Mr. Stark said that he did not want to compete with Northern Dutchess Caregivers. He said that there probably will have to be a service radius and perhaps criteria will have to be set up. For example, what would someone outside of the radius have to pay? Rose suggested that perhaps such callers could be referred to Northern Dutchess Caregivers.

Mr. Stark said that shopping trips can be arranged fairly easily. Kelly felt that that is where the money could best be spent. Judy asked if the Committee could find out about past use, e.g. the number of shopping trips versus medical trips. Sue said that this information can be obtained. Andy asked Marcia what the monthly ridership is in Rhinebeck. Marcia said that on Monday the van does shopping trips and on Thursday it goes into the village. There are between six and seven riders per trip. Kelly said that the Committee should focus on shopping trips and let people contact Northern Dutchess Caregivers for their medical needs. Mr. Stark said that his company does not have county limitations, i.e. they can go to Kingston.

In response to questions regarding timeframe, Andy said that these are just the first steps. Sue said that we do not want to raise expectations only to find out later that the

program is not sustainable. Marcia said that that is one reason her Committee is keeping the project at a low key.

Andy felt that the program should focus on providing shopping trips and Northern Dutchess Caregivers can be used to meet medical needs. Dick said that a radius can be set up on a map and costs can be calculated based upon this radius and then published.

Before leaving, Sue told the Committee that town volunteers will be recognized at the December 22nd Town Board meeting and refreshments will be served.

Andy asked Marcia if riders in Rhinebeck pay any surcharge. She replied that they do not. When asked about liability, Marcia said that the Town of Rhinebeck had purchased the van and insurance for it. They check the backgrounds of the volunteer drivers. Riders make out forms giving relevant personal information as well as listing who to contact in case of emergency. Andy asked Mr. Stark if he would need such information. He responded that his organization employs professional drivers, but information on riders could be collected. Also each vehicle has a radio. In case of a medical problem, they could call an ambulance.

Mr. Stark said that there are many issues and he has to build a model and determine what the numbers will be. Given the amount of money available, he felt it should be possible to provide a service. Whether or not the vehicles can be used for shopping trips is a grey area. However, he said that Rob Latimer would like to see if there is anything which the company can do to assist the town. There is a complex web of services available and people should be educated so that they utilize a variety of services.

Judy asked if Northern Dutchess Caregivers can take on these additional riders. Andy felt that this would not be a problem as it is in line with their stated intent. Marcia said that they have individuals using their own cars and therefore they have a lot of flexibility. Judy asked if the Committee should notify people that Dial A Ride services will be discontinued. Andy felt that this is Dial A Ride's responsibility. He said that he will speak to Dial A Ride to see if he can find out how many rides were for shopping and how many for medical appointments.

Andy said that Mr. Stark will crunch the numbers and speak with the administrative staff at NDP. We do not want to jump into this too quickly, he said. Marcia announced that she is going to take over the responsibility of Transportation Coordinator for Rhinebeck and Nina Lynch is going to take over her position as Chair of the Senior Services Committee of Rhinebeck. She said cost sharing between Red Hook and Rhinebeck would not be possible because Rhinebeck is using town money and needs to keep the project town specific. She felt positive about the possibility of an option with NDP as they have a reputation for community service.

Andy concluded the discussion by thanking Marcia DiBlasi and Tom Stark for attending the meeting and providing valuable input.

**FOOD DRIVE**

The Food Drive will be held on Tuesday, February 8th and Tuesday, February 15th. Publicity will be done in January. Food is to be dropped off at the Firehouse between 1:00 and 3:00 PM and Andy will speak to Fr. Fred to confirm that. Judy and Rose will help to pick up the donations and Andy will also ask Bob McKeon if he is willing to help again.

**PANDA**

Discussion tabled until the next meeting.

**FIRE SAFETY ISSUES AT RED HOOK COMMONS**

Nick said that he had had a meeting with Micki. He gave her some material which he had written and she is going to be reviewing that material. Further discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Andy read a letter which he had received from Mr. Arthur Fenaroli thanking the Town of Red Hook for providing the Dial A Ride services.

**2011 CALENDAR**

Meetings will continue to be held at 9:15 AM on Thursdays. The meeting dates for the coming year will be as follows:

- January 6, 2011
- February 3, 2011
- March 3, 2011
- April 7, 2011
- May 5, 2011
- June 2, 2011
- July 7, 2011
- August - No meeting
- September 1, 2011
- October 6, 2011
- November 3, 2011
- December 1, 2011

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Jan. 6, 2011 at 9:15 A.M.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Judy made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Nick and all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 A.M.

Minutes submitted by:  
Sheila Franklin

Secretary, Sr. Services Committee