

MINUTES
SENIOR SERVICES COMMITTEE

February 3, 2011

ROLL CALL

Present: Andy Kehr, Chairman, Betty Bader, Carl Dowden, Jeanne Duntz, Richard Franklin, Kelly Mosher

Absent: Jennifer Fivelsdal, Nick LaCourte, Rose Rider, Judy Walsh

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Andy Kehr called the meeting to order at 9:22 A.M.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES, JANUARY 6, 2011 MEETING

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

DIAL A RIDE ALTERNATIVE

Andy said that Mr. Stark of Northern Dutchess Paramedics told him that NDP's efforts to do a dry run of the proposed transportation arrangement were impacted by the adverse weather conditions. He sent a letter to the Senior Services Committee dated Jan. 28, 2011 which stated that NDP would not be able to provide transportation due to problems associated with transporting non-wheelchair riders. Upon receiving this letter, Andy said that he called Mr. Stark and learned that NDP's major concern was that riders would be facing sideways rather than forward and there are no restraints to protect them. Riders in wheelchairs are protected by floor locks. In the absence of restraints, NDP felt that the transportation of people not in wheelchairs could be dangerous and would pose a serious liability.

Andy concluded that the only viable proposal remaining is for the Committee to purchase a bus from the school district. Rose said that she had contacted the local taxi services. The only company which was even mildly interested was Town Taxi. Although the owner could not come to a meeting as the Committee meets during his working hours, he was amenable to meeting at his place of business. However, Rose said, the Committee would need to decide what it has in mind before talking to him. He can take up to three people at a time, possibly four and could do two pick ups on Thursdays. Andy said that since the number of people accommodated by Dial A Ride on a weekly basis was six or seven, two trips a week might suffice. He noted that the cab company would not be restricted by time; while riders are shopping, they could respond to other calls.

Dick suggested setting up a schedule for Red Hook Commons. Andy said that Nick LaCourte has identified six people at the Commons who are interested in transportation. One day a week could be planned to accommodate them and another day for the rest of the community. Rose said that Town Board approval would have to be obtained because such a plan would use taxpayer money for one specific group of people. Kelly noted that

the Town could not say that on that day only people from the Commons could ride. Since the amount of money available would not pay for picking people up in their homes, she suggested that a central place in the village be chosen to which it would be easy to walk.

Andy said that nineteen people had been using the Dial A Ride services, approximately six of whom were living at Red Hook Commons. Dick said that he would talk to the Masons about the possibility of compiling a roster of volunteer drivers. Andy said that since it is not possible to provide door to door service, the Committee must try to serve those with the greatest need. Carl said that for \$5000 it is not possible to hire someone to drive from door to door. If a senior needs a ride to go for groceries, how are they going to get to the pick up point? And how are they going to get home with their groceries? He felt that the Town Board would not be in favor of having a pick up point at Red Hook Commons as it is in the village and the village is not paying for these services. Perhaps the villages of Red Hook and/or Tivoli could contribute toward this plan. In addition, he felt that the town should not be doing marketing for a local cab company.

Betty asked why Red Hook Commons could not negotiate their own arrangement. Carl said that the only solution might be to get a small school bus. Kelly said that nothing is available at this time, but the school might be asking for a new bus. She felt that Red Hook could then try to get a volunteer coordinator and volunteer drivers as Rhinebeck has done.

Andy said that the Committee seems agreed that any van or other service which could be provided with the money which is available would have serious limitations. Such a plan would involve having a pick up point rather than picking people up as Dial A Ride did. Perhaps the Commons can set up their own arrangement for residents who have difficulty going shopping and bringing their groceries home. Andy felt that people should have the opportunity to try to arrange their own transportation and the possibility of purchasing a van can still remain an option for the future. He asked what such a bus might cost. Kelly said that a bid would have to be submitted, but it might be as low as \$1000.

Dick said that the Committee should inform the public of the problem and urge people to look out for their neighbors. Kelly suggested putting some money into a PR program to do so. Andy felt that over time, people would respond to this challenge and develop their own means for meeting their needs. He was in favor of developing an informational statement and doing some PR. The Committee could enumerate what is available, while also urging people to look out for their neighbors. This statement could be posted or mailed and put on the town website as well as PANDA. Rose said that the document could list each of the taxi cab companies and what their rates would be for up to three people.

Kelly said some money could be used to pay someone to actively recruit volunteers. Dick suggested getting in touch with the Chamber, Rotary, the Lions and the Masons and explaining the problem to them. Andy returned to the idea of preparing a document

which would facilitate the process of people helping people, saying that the Committee members are not necessarily the problem solvers but rather a resource for providing information. He pointed out that even though Dial A Ride was in place for many years, the ridership was low. Betty said that some of the people who had previously utilized Dial A Ride had called Northern Dutchess Caregivers. She expressed concern about helping those who live outside of the village. Kelly suggested that perhaps Nick could work on getting people at the Commons to pair up and provide transportation for each other. Jeanne asked if it might be possible to get a volunteer to pick up a grocery order which has been called in.

Andy asked if it was the consensus of the Committee that trying to look for a contractor within the present budgetary constraints will not adequately meet the need that Dial A Ride was filling. If so, he said, our strategy should be inform people of what the options are and encourage them to develop their own groups and services. Over the long term, a vehicle can be purchased if one becomes available. In the interim, the Committee can notify the various civic organizations, work with them to develop a roster of volunteers and put together a list of resources for people to contact.

MOTION TO PREPARE TRANSPORTATION DOCUMENT

Andy made a motion that the Committee prepare a document which will make people aware of the problems caused by the discontinuation of Dial A Ride services and will offer recommendations and list transportation alternatives. The Committee will also contact local civic organizations to enlist their help in creating a roster of names of volunteers willing to assist those in need. The motion was seconded by Carl and all were in favor.

Andy offered to put something together for the next meeting. Betty pointed out that the Committee should be prepared with a plan before a bus becomes available. Andy agreed but said that in the meantime volunteers need to be identified. Kelly said that a special license is required to drive a school bus. Andy said that perhaps one of the regular drivers could be paid to do the job. Rose said that if the town pays them, they need to be town employees. Andy noted that a dispatcher would also be needed.

Town Supervisor Sue Crane then joined the meeting and Andy reviewed for her the position of the Committee on the transportation issue. Sue mentioned the Bard van and recommended that a spokesperson be identified for each of the local churches. Members of the that church could then contact that person when they are in need. Andy asked the members of the Committee to identify such a person for the churches which they attend. Sue also suggested asking someone from Dutchess Community Action to attend a meeting of the Committee.

FOOD DRIVE

Andy said that Sheila has done the PR for the Food Drive, which is scheduled for February 8th and 15th. The flyer has been done and has been distributed. Jeanne will be there on both days and Carl will be there on the 8th to pick up the donations and transport them. Jennifer will also be there and Rose will transport the donations on the

15th. Kelly said she will try to help. Andy has the letters for the Fire Department sign. He will ask Micki to see if Bob McKeon can help. Any other details will be handled via e-mail. If both days are snowed out, something can be scheduled for the Spring.

NEXT MEETING

Andy said that the Always There home care agency is planning to set up an adult day care program in the area and has expressed interest in attending the next meeting of the Committee. In addition, Rebuilding Together, an organization which assists needy families in getting residential modifications for their homes, is going to send someone to attend the meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Mar. 3, 2011 at 9:15 A.M.

ADJOURNMENT

Dick made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Kelly and all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:42 A.M.

Minutes submitted by:
Sheila Franklin
Secretary, Sr. Services Committee