

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 30, 2023 SENIOR ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Chairman Ken Miller called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM at the Little Egg Harbor (“LEH”) branch of the Ocean County Library.

There was a Flag salute and a moment of silence for our military and world peace.

Roll call was taken. Board members in attendance were: Ken Miller, Maryann O’Neill, Linda Cicco, Nancy Cotter, Diane Coyle, Richard Dutton, Donna O’Brien and Lisa Stevens. Dan Maxwell, Liaison to the Township Committee, was also in attendance

The minutes of the last meeting of the Board on November 28, 2022 were then approved by motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried.

The first speaker was Chief James Hawkins of the LEH Police Department, who gave the customary update on police-related matters affecting the community. He first reported that statistics for his Department for 2022 had become available and that there were 14,113 calls for service, an increase of 1,230 over the previous year; 400 motor vehicle crashes (including many minor parking lot accidents), only one of which involved a fatality (the death of a motorcyclist in the vicinity of Route 539 and the Garden State Parkway); 244 domestic violence calls; 34 burglary calls (including car burglaries); 481 burglar alarm calls (including both commercial and residential calls); and 140 fire alarm calls. He noted that these numbers were just for his own Department and did not include any calls to the Tuckerton Police or State Police. He also said that there were about 550 firearms applications and about 100 applications for permits to carry firearms during the year and 705 motor vehicle stops, many of which ended with just a warning rather than a summons. He then reported that improvements were being made to the LEH Community Center (including the addition of a skateboard park and new pickleball courts) and to the beaches at Graveling Point and Parkertown Dock, and that new Class I officers in his Department would help police the newly improved areas. He then said that his officers had traded in their guns recently for new ones and a meeting had been held recently pursuant to which bid specifications would be put out to find a new location for his Department’s pistol range. Finally, he reported that his Department’s morale remained high despite publicity from some sources fostering anti-police feelings.

The next speaker was Darol Tucker, a resident of Osborn Island and veteran of many years of service in the U.S. Army, who is now a Local Taxpayer Advocate in the Internal Revenue Service’s Taxpayer Advocate Service, an entity within the IRS that helps taxpayers who have problems with the IRS that they have difficulty resolving by themselves. A taxpayer with such problems may call his office and will be assigned a “case advisor” who will provide help and see the taxpayer through the problems until they are resolved. He said that he may be reached at 609-858-7950 and that his email address is darol.tucker@irs.gov. He added that the IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers by telephone and that if you receive a call from someone purporting to be from the IRS it is a scam. He also noted that the vast majority of taxpayers now file their federal tax returns electronically rather than using paper forms and that refunds will be received faster using electronic filing, typically in as little as about 21 days; in fact, you may call his office if you have waited more than 30 days.

The third speaker was another local resident, Dan Kwasnik, who lives in Cranberry Creek and is a volunteer speaker for the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). He gave a power

point presentation titled “Downsizing and Decluttering”, which he described as “what to do with your “‘stuff’”. He noted that about 10,000 people turn 65 every day in the United States, there is currently a shortage of housing for downsizing, a cluttered house or garage is a fire hazard, and the majority of people administering estates reported that handling the deceased’s “stuff” was the most stressful part of their job. He recommended that each item one owns be assigned a “home”, a specific place in the house or garage where it is kept, and that everyone sort all their belongings into four categories, those to keep, sell, donate or discard. Some items in the “keep” category that are regarded as family heirlooms might be distributed to younger relatives now, and often one will be surprised to find, upon inquiring, that no relative wants them, so that they can instead be sold, donated or discarded. Many smaller articles can be sold at a yard sale, and items to be donated can be easily brought in person to local organizations such as the Lighthouse Church or Habitat for Humanity. Do not keep putting off the downsizing process and do not retain clothing that no longer fits or food that you know you will never eat even though its expiration date has not passed. One helpful rule to apply is that no new item can be brought into the home unless something else is removed at the same time.

Board member Maryann O’Neill then reported that free preparation of 2022 income tax returns will be offered at St. Theresa’s Church in LEH on Wednesdays and St. Mary’s Church in Manahawkin on Thursdays and Fridays between now and April. One must go to one of these churches in person on one of those days to make an appointment. They assist about 10-12 people per hour and file returns electronically the same day, and preparers have all been trained and take a test every year administered by the IRS.

Board member Lisa Stevens then noted that Township Committee Liaison Dan Maxwell was now Deputy Mayor of LEH. She also reported that planning was underway for the annual Senior Expo, typically held in May. Liaison Maxwell then noted that there would be no shredding truck at the Expo, but there would be one at the Community Center on a date to be determined.

Ocean County Commissioner and former LEH Township Committee member Bobbi Jo Crea then reported that seniors should be wary of a new scam in which someone telephones and says you owe money to Ocean Ride for transportation services it has provided to you; the caller then attempts to get you to disclose personal information.

The next meeting of the Board will be on Monday, February 27, 2023 at 10:00 AM at the Tall Timbers Clubhouse. All seniors are welcome and urged to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:30 A.M.

*Respectfully submitted,
Richard Dutton, Acting Secretary, LEH Senior Citizens’ Advisory Board*