

## **MINUTES OF THE MARCH 25, 2024 SENIOR ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

*Chairman Ken Miller called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM at the Harbor Bay Clubhouse.*

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

*Chairman Ken Miller then welcomed new member Rosemarie Martelli to the Board.*

*Roll call was taken. Board members in attendance were: Ken Miller, Chairman, Linda Cicco, Nancy Cotter, Richard Dutton, Jack Edmunds, Rosemarie Martelli, Donna O'Brien and Lisa Stevens. Ray Gormley and Dan Maxwell, Liaisons to the Little Egg Harbor ("LEH") Township Committee, were also in attendance.*

*The minutes of the last meeting of the Board on February 26, 2024 were then approved by motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried.*

*The first speaker was Earl Sutton, Executive Director of the LEH Municipal Utilities Authority ("MUA"). He began by reporting that he was frustrated with delays to local projects because of state regulatory issues. As a result of COVID, there are new and inexperienced individuals in some state positions, and although work is now getting approved, projects are more than three years behind and both labor costs and interest rates are now higher than they were three years ago. He then reported that a project off Twin Lakes Boulevard involving new water and sewer pipes on eight streets was finally approved, there had been advertising for bids, the winning bid would be awarded on May 14, construction is scheduled to begin in June and it should be completed by the fall. After that, the Township will complete storm drainage and paving, and the work when completed is projected to last for 125 years. He then said that the MUA is also redoing its last water tower, the one at Sea Oaks, that this project is ahead of schedule and involves painting (including art work), and that while this work is being done police communications equipment on top has been relocated temporarily. He added that because there is currently no water in the tower Harbor Bay residents are being asked to cooperate with an odd/even lawn watering schedule until work on the tower is completed, hopefully before Memorial Day. He then reported that he was currently working on a budget, which will involve increases from prior years that are necessary, but any resulting rate increases should be minor. As for the quality of water in LEH, he said that it is exceptional, as will be reflected in a detailed consumer confidence report that will be coming out, and our tap water can be drunk without filtration. Other communities have been concerned about the presence of a contaminant named PFAS used to make teflon, but there is barely any in our system at all, and lead is an issue in some communities with older piping, but there are no lead service lines in LEH. If you ever smell the chlorine that is present in our water, if you let it sit it will "gas off". Mr. Sutton closed by saying that he has twelve people in the field, there is "young blood" coming into the MUA, and he is optimistic for the future.*

*The second speaker was Heather deJong of the Ocean County Meals on Wheels program which, she reported, uses 19 trucks to deliver 1,000 meals a day all over the County, five days a week, and in some cases involving very vulnerable and isolated individuals, cold meals for weekends as well, delivered along with the Friday meal. She said that the program started in 1973 at St. Andrew's Methodist Church in Toms River. Initially, meals were provided just to seniors in the community who came to the church, and a year later the program was expanded to include meal deliveries. She emphasized that it is not a need-based program and meals will be provided to any residents over 60 years old who are homebound (that is, cannot drive), have no one at home to prepare meals, and have difficulty preparing meals themselves because, for example, they cannot stand or have memory issues. The program is concerned about recipients' safety and, therefore, the driver must see the recipient at the time of each delivery and cannot just leave food at the door. Because both hot food and perishable cold food are served, the trucks have both heated and refrigerated sections. Each meal includes what is considered one-third of a person's daily dietary needs and there is no individual tailoring for kosher or other special diets or medical needs. The program's kitchens are in Manahawkin and served 8,000 meals last year to 50 residents in Little Egg Harbor alone; by comparison, in a community such as Manchester, which has the most seniors in the state, 50,000 meals were served. Meal choices follow a set schedule which is repeated. The*

*program also has an outreach section that assists seniors with benefits paperwork, furnishes information about other programs and agencies, and provides social contact by telephone. In addition, it is planning a "Community Café" (an onsite meal program) in LEH which will include physical, social and educational activities for meal recipients. Although the program requests a \$2 donation per meal from meal recipients, about 35% cannot afford this. There are currently about 100 people on the waiting list to begin receiving meals. Thefts of catalytic converters from delivery vehicles have been a problem. Drivers are paid and do not need special drivers' licenses because they are not transporting people. The program's phone number for inquiries is 609-978-6868.*

*Township Committee Liaison Maxwell then provided the dates of the following upcoming events: The Ocean County Health Department ("OCHD") Senior Health Fair on April 8 from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM at OCHD, 175 Sunset Avenue in Toms River; the LEH Green Fair sponsored by the LEH Environmental Commission on April 20 from 10 AM to 2 PM at the LEH Community Center; and the annual LEH Senior Expo on May 1 from 9 AM to 12 PM, also at the LEH Community Center.*

*The next meeting of the Senior Advisory Board will be on Monday, April 29, 2024 at 10:00 AM at the Cranberry Creek Clubhouse. All seniors are welcome and urged to attend.*

*The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:15 AM.*

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