

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 29, 2024 SENIOR ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Chairman Ken Miller called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM at the Cranberry Creek Clubhouse.

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, Chairman, Nancy Cotter, Diane Coyle, Richard Dutton, Rosemarie Martelli, Donna O'Brien and Lisa Stevens. Dan Maxwell, Liaison to the Little Egg Harbor ("LEH") Township Committee, was also in attendance.

The minutes of the last meeting of the Board on March 25, 2024 were then approved by motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried.

Ocean County Commissioner Barbara Jo Crea then greeted all those present and introduced the first speaker, Maria LaFace, Director of the Ocean County Office of Senior Services, who began by inviting input from members of the audience as to what seniors would like to see her Office do. She then reported that the County Meals on Wheels Program provides hot meals to homebound County residents who live alone and cannot prepare food for themselves; that her Office can also provide assistance to seniors with home repairs and maintenance and with senior safety aids such as the installation of grab bars, and that such assistance, like Meals on Wheels food deliveries, does not involve any maximum income requirement; that the Office also provides caregivers, some of whom are themselves seniors, to provide relief to a regular caregiver who, for example, must be away at an event; and that the Office can even arrange for a senior who relies on home care to, say, be placed in a facility for a weekend when a regular caregiver is unavailable. She added that her Office also provides information to seniors about property tax relief and counseling about changing Medicare plans during the annual open enrollment period that could result in savings of hundreds or even thousands of dollars in medical premiums and expenses. She then reported that her Office now has a mobile unit that will be scheduled to come to senior community clubhouses and other local venues to provide information and services, and that the Office will coordinate with the LEH senior communities as to such scheduling. Funding for her Office's projects, she said, comes from both the federal government and Ocean County. She then noted that requirements for eligibility for Medicaid vary from state to state and New Jersey requires one to spend down his or her assets to the very low amount of \$2,000 before qualifying for coverage for nursing home costs. She said that her Office will be advocating for an increase in this threshold amount and that she may be calling upon senior residents to assist in this effort by joining in a letter-writing campaign. She then introduced a SHIP counselor from her Office who helps seniors make better-informed decisions about Medicare, including Advantage Plans, she added that some counseling by her Office is done by trained volunteers who are themselves seniors, and she invited members of the audience to volunteer to assist with this counseling. Finally, she distributed copies of her Office's very detailed 2024 Resource Directory, and said that a copy of this directory is also available on the Ocean County website (www.co.ocean.nj.us) or can be obtained by calling her Office at 732-929-2091.

The next speaker was Chief James Hawkins of the LEH Police Department, who began by reporting that he had arrived late for the meeting because there had been a vehicle fire in the Walmart parking lot in which two vehicles were lost. He then said that his Department had participated in several recent community events, including one at the Ocean County Library relating to law enforcement and youth at which there had been about 300 attendees, the periodic community cleanup, and the drug drop box at Walmart on the previous Saturday, and he noted that the annual LEH Senior Expo was scheduled for Wednesday, May 1 from 9:00 AM until noon at the Community Center. He then reported that there had been two recent retirements from his Department: Capt. Michael Hart, who had served for twenty-five years and was moving to Florida, and Ptl. Eric Nelson, who had served for twenty years. He also reported that his Department is undergoing a periodic reassessment for accreditation; the police shooting range at the former Shooters building is now in use; there is no great problem in LEH with auto thefts but residents are still encouraged to keep their homes and autos

locked at all times; there has likewise been no problem with thefts from either residential or U.S. Postal Service mailboxes of which he is aware; and he is trying to reinstitute bicycle patrols by police officers.

Kelly McCloskey from the Terraces at Seacrest Village, an assisted living facility in LEH, then introduced herself and said that she is involved in outreach to the community and will be happy to provide information about the facility and otherwise assist anyone who contacts her. She said that on May 22 at 11:30 AM the facility will be hosting a free “lunch and learn” with an elder law attorney and anyone interested may register to attend by calling 609-857-4141.

Township Committee Liaison Dan Maxwell then reported that there will be more than eighty vendors at the Senior Expo on May 1, there will be a free barbecue at the Community Center on May 18 and the annual LEH Memorial Day parade will take place on May 27. Two dates for free shredding were also mentioned: June 8 from 9:00 to 11:00 AM at Manasquan Bank on Route 9 and June 15 from 9:00 AM until noon adjacent to Freedom Fields Park.

The next meeting of the Senior Advisory Board will be on Monday, May 20, 2024 (the third rather than the final Monday of the month, because the Memorial Day holiday falls on the final Monday) at 10:00 AM at the Sunrise Bay 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*