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WATERFORD, CT

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Dear Member of the 4th District RTM:

ATTEST: *Doreen J. Conway*
TOWN CLERK

As a resident and constituent of the 4th district I am writing to you with concern. I recognize all the department's budgets are going to be coming before the RTM shortly and would like to address a few topics. I am sending this letter to each of the department heads for the which I am showing concerns about as well as the Board of Selectmen.

- My first concern and yes it personally does affect me. The Recreation and Parks Department as well as the Board of Education have eliminated the Senior Citizen AM Exercise program in the pool. This program has been going on for over 30 years. The Senior Aqua Fitness Class always meets at the Waterford High School Pool usually after the AM Lap Swim program. The time of this program usually would be 7:30am to 8:15am. There were some years where the seniors could not get into the pool until 9:00 or 9:30 am due to gym or special needs classes.

Having retired from the Town of Waterford after 40 years I was finally able to take this class, so taking it from January 2023 until October 2023 and finding out it was being eliminated before the end of the fall session (was supposed to end in December) was very unsettling. I contacted Recreation and Parks after I saw the facebook post about it being cancelled and having met with individuals to make the decision. I then talked with Mr. Girard, Superintendent of the School, as well as a meeting with Mr. Balestrocci, the Chief of Police, about this.

I understand that there was a new ad hoc committee of the Board of Education that was looking into safety in the schools. However, making this decision when there are other options to make sure the schools were safe was not conducive to past agreements with the Town and Board of Education nor the state statute for community use of schools. Having been the individual for years to set up programs and locations from the Recreation and Parks Department I recognize the safety concerns of any school especially in today's atmosphere. However, again I would like to point out that at no time during the horrific asks of violence that have occurred in our country has there been a thought of cancelling programs due to safety reasons.

Seeing that there is one door that could connect the pool entrance to the school which is locked there then becomes no entrance to the school. The door that is under and to the right of the stairway leading to the pool is a hallway between the pool mechanics and the field house. At no time during school hours should there be students in that hallway. In all the years I have been at the pool I have not seen students using that hallway at the start of school (because it is locked). I have seen staff members use that hallway and if I see them, I remind them to -relock the hallway.

Solution to this situation: have the hallway locked, have one of the security staff down there from 7:00am until 8:30am to make sure no one tries to use the entrance to the hallway, and everyone would be gone by 8:30am. Making the AM lap swim 5:30am to 7:00am and Senior exercise class 7:30am to 8:15am and out the doors by 8:30am.

Situation solved.

- Another situation that I have had much concern with and have voiced over the years is that there is not a fulltime firefighter at the Goshen Firehouse. Again, this is district four and since the changes a few years back I have voiced my concerns, especially during the summertime. Of course, I would like to see a fulltime firefighter at Goshen all year, but I do believe it should be rethought about when beaches are open. The amount of time it takes for someone from Jordan, Oswegatchie or Cohanzie to respond could be life or death. I hope the Fire Administrator will consider this concern. I know that Goshen always had an excellent group of volunteers, however they are aging out and there are not a lot of junior volunteers coming up. I believe we have been incredibly lucky in the Goshen District with our volunteers and lack of full-time firefighters.
- Another concern is the entrance to Pleasure Beach. Again, yes this does affect me and a few years ago there was a letter signed by over one hundred individuals who use Pleasure Beach about the entrance. Before the past Director of Recreation and Parks left there was a plan and funds in place to fix this entrance way. It is very disconcerting to see the number of monies that has gone into the landscaping of the Arnold Holmes (formally known as the duck pond) park. Yes, the pond needed to be dredged, however, the expansion of that park must be running at least a few million dollars if not more. Please note that there is a substantial size contingency of individuals who walk down the entrance to Pleasure Beach who range from infants in strollers, moms with multiple children pulling a wagon, middle aged and teenagers as well as elderly individuals. While we all walk down this path there are a number of tripping hazards and individuals have tripped luckily no serious injuries. I spoke with Ryan McNamarra, Director of Recreation and Parks on February 27 and he has informed me the funding for this improvement project has been approved. I as well as others hope this project is done before the upcoming season.
- As I noted above, I retired from the Town of Waterford over 2 years ago. Of course, people come up to you and mention things, such as how things have changed. I am overly concerned about the number of senior citizens who come up to me wherever I am (grocery store, out shopping, at a function, etc.) who have mentioned their concerns about how much the Senior Service Department has changed. The biggest concern is the fact that there are more individuals working for this department now and that not one of them are certified to do Medicare Open Enrollment. I had one lady stop me at the post office and tell me how she could not get an appointment with anyone. Then I ran into her at Stop and Shop a few weeks later and she took my advice and went to the center. Only to be told she missed an evening meeting with someone from Senior Resources in Norwich who was there. She could not have gone anyway as she cannot drive at night. She went back again and was told they had someone who came once a week to help individuals, but that person was booked up. Why didn't they tell her about this the first time she went in, I was asked, and I could not answer her. What I did was take her number and forward it to someone I know who is certified to do Medicare as this individual's frustration was evident by her tears. There have been a number of individuals in Waterford who have contacted others outside of Waterford to do their Medicare enrollment. The Town of Waterford used to have two individuals who did this. When Sally Ritchie was there, she and the assistant did it. When Lisa Cappuccio was there, she and her assistant did open enrollment and went to individuals' homes who were unable to get to the center. I have told the individuals who have contacted me to contact the

Director of Senior Services and if you do not get anywhere there contact the First Selectman. However, they do not feel comfortable doing this. I have also mentioned contacting their RTM representatives and I would also mention the concern. The concern with the number of Senior Citizens who come to me knowing I worked for the town in the past is problematic. Just the fact they are not feeling welcome at the center should be a concern to all.

In closing I am expressing a number of concerns in the hope that they will be taken care of or at least investigated. A copy will be emailed to all the above-mentioned departments as I do believe in proper protocol and transparency.

Thank you for your time and to all I hope you can make some adjustments to make things function a little better. Please note just because there may be positive responses to departments face to face, remember there are many who do not voice their concerns to one's face.

Signed,

Kerry Sullivan