

**Village Connections
Board Meeting
December 14, 2023**

**6:00 PM
Livingston United Methodist Church**

President Kathryn Brod called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Members Present: Kathryn Brod, Bill Curlis, Jim Plunkett, Bill Reynolds, Scott Blake, Jenny Brehm, Ed Elberfeld, Fran Schneider, Carolyn Workman.

Members Not Present: Betty Garrett, Cindy Farson, Sarah Lutz, Brenda Gischel

A quorum was present.

Attending: Donald Wiggins, Executive Director; Nikki Young, Service & Communications Coordinator; Shannon Wealthier, Guest Presenter; and Barb Elberfeld, guest.

October 2023 Minutes

President Brod presented the minutes of October 2023 and asked for a motion to approve.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the October 2023 Board of Trustees meeting as written.
[Bill Curlis, Carolyn Workman]
Motion approved.

Consent Agenda

President Brod presented the consent agenda for the meeting of December 14, 2023 and requested its approval.

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda.
[Bill Curlis, Jim Plunkett]
Motion approved.

October 25, 2023 Financial Report

Work continues on having month-end financial reports prepared through QuickBooks. Daily transactions from Huntington Bank are flowing smoothly into QuickBooks, but Huntington has not been able to provide financial statements so that month-end reconciliations can be completed. Huntington is providing support to get this situation resolved. In the meantime, as in the past, Jim Plunkett reported cash receipts (donations/dues/grant receipts), expenses, and the balances in each of VC's accounts through his manual bookkeeping work. He reported that the stock

portfolio was benefitting from the strong equities market and that \$30,000 in CDs had matured in the past month; Donald is researching interest rates for possible reinvestment of all and/or a portion of these monies.

MOTION: To accept the financial report for October 25, 2023.

[Bill Curlis, Carolyn Workman]

Motion approved.

Proposed 2024 Operating Budget

The board received an updated copy of the budget and assumptions used in its preparation in advance of the meeting. Changes from the prior version of the budget received by the board are:

- The Franklin County Office on Aging grant increase is one and a half percent instead of the anticipated four percent.
- The four percent payroll increase is for Nikki only with a potential bonus for Donald if he meets his goals.
 - Kathryn understands that Donald does not want a salary increase. However, she noted that the board is responsible for compensating the Executive Director fairly; as a result, the board should seek to be informed of comparable salaries for his position. VC should have competitive funds should we replace Donald.
- The marketing budget was increased by \$1,000 to cover postage, increases in printing expenses, and other expenses needed to ensure VC can spread awareness about the organization.

MOTION: To approve the 2024 Operating Budget.

[Bill Curlis, Fran Schneider]

Motion approved.

Board Chair Report

Kathryn introduced Shannon Wealthier – a volunteer and Member Council member – to present the member survey results. Highlights included:

- Members stated that their favorite service is transportation, followed by social activities. However, almost every VC service was noted by a member in the survey.
- Member suggestions to help keep people connected, active, and independent include having transportation and services on weekends, creating more affinity groups, and offering more interactions with homebound members.
- Suggestions to spread the word about VC include visiting apartments and communities that serve seniors, recruiting senior volunteers who could transition to members, bringing friends as guests to events, and collaborating with other groups in the area.
- Twelve members gave a 5 (the highest rating) as their overall rating, three members gave a 4, and two members gave a 3.

- Things that would give VC a 5 rating include accuracy in scheduling, more new people at events, listening to members, better driving policies, following driving laws, and vehicle cleanliness.
- Themes to consider include minimizing expenses in activities, other accessibility challenges (physical and individualized), and general barriers to asking for help.

Discussion from the presentation included:

- The Executive Director has authority in his discretionary fund to help members pay for meals, and volunteers also have stepped in and helped pay for meals. Some members do not want to have the costs of their meals covered.
- Porch parties can be a solution to some accessibility issues, especially if the events can be brought indoors. The organization can supplement the hosts with food and supplies if needed. The church basement is available for use, as well.
- A lot of free and reduced-cost activities are available on weekends, but all agreed that we cannot expect staff to assist in weekend activities. If a volunteer wants to organize a weekend event, it is important that the volunteer be with the members for the entirety of the event. All agreed that guidelines would need to be written to ensure weekend activities are well-organized and safe.
- Next Steps: Let members know that we heard their thoughts and what we are planning to do.
 - The December newsletter included highlights from the survey results.
 - Nikki read and the board supported the proposed communication written by members of the Member Council.

Executive Director's Report

Year-to-Date Goals/Accomplishments

Highlights of the dashboard and Village Connections' progress this year to-date include:

- VC has exceeded its 2023 goal for number of service-receiving members by 60% and number of volunteers by 133%.
- The Welcome Pack campaign has added three new volunteers; Donald expressed thanks for the work of the Membership and Services Committees for this initiative.
- Moving forward, Donald urged each of the VC committees to write a plan on how they will meet 2024 goals established through the work of the 2023 board planning retreat.
- Goals for 2024 will be laid out in the February board meeting.

Kathryn reminded board members that at the October board meeting Donald had asked for each board member to provide one contact in the community that he could meet and introduce to VC and its work. We are behind on that task.

Update Giving Tuesday/Annual Appeal

Donald stated and board members concurred that the marketing committee created an exceptional annual appeal letter.

VC has raised \$24,570 to-date for the Annual Appeal; the budget for the Annual Appeal is \$30,000. The start of the annual appeal is Giving Tuesday. In 2022, Giving Tuesday began with \$10,000—a \$5,000 gift to VC was immediately matched through Home Instead Charities. Including this \$10,000, in 2022 Giving Tuesday donations totaled \$12,600. Home Instead Charities no longer matches donations, so the 2023 annual appeal began without the benefit of a matching gift. In spite of this, Giving Tuesday 2023 resulted in \$18,200 of donations. There was some concern that perhaps donors have simply moved their donations from December to The Giving Tuesday initiative, but the staff researched and found that just three donors appear to have moved their donations forward. Giving Tuesday includes both five new donors to Village Connections and two previous donors who had not given in the immediate past.

Service & Communications Coordinator's Report

Nikki Young, Service and Communications Coordinator, provided an update on volunteer hours in November and December to-date:

- Volunteers completed 241.5 hours in November, with the transportation breakdown as follows:
 - 21 hours of medical appointments,
 - 36 hours of nonmedical appointments, and
 - 22 hours of social activities.
- The largest volunteer event in November was the fall yard clean-up. Livingston UMC provided 15 of the 18 volunteers.
- Volunteers completed 88.5 hours in December thus far, with the transportation breakdown as follows:
 - 23 hours of nonmedical appointments,
 - nine hours of nonmedical appointments, and
 - four hours of social activities.
- Staff filled three percent of the total requests for the period.
- Volunteers completed a total of 2,271 hours so far for 2023, exceeding the 2,000 hour goal.

Old Business

Thanksgiving 2024

Kathryn explained that comments had been received from several members that the Thanksgiving Day meal was not as inclusive as it had been in the past. She noted the following:

- In the past, Thanksgiving was paid for by an individual who felt it was important that the meal be provided without cost.

- This year, members were responsible for paying for their meal at a price (\$45) that was negotiated by VC staff. This cost was more than what many people wanted to spend and may, therefore, have affected participation.

She noted that staff had reached out to connect with those who had participated in prior years, noting that VC could assist with the expense, if needed. However, perhaps because of a reluctance to ask for help, the number participating remained very small. A board member had a Friendsgiving, which was great for the individuals they know, but with concern for all of the members, for Thanksgiving 2024, staff is researching two different ideas: hosting it at the church, among volunteers, or at Brewer's Yard.

New Business

Staff is planning on delivering Christmas Eve Dinners from Bob Evans to 12 members. The meals are about approximately \$20.

Approval of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement.

In order to submit the 2024 Franklin County Office on Aging (FCOA) Grant Application, Village Connections was required to have a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement. Donald prepared a draft statement that was distributed electronically for board members to review and approve. The statement was approved unanimously through the use of email. To have this approval reflected in the board's minutes, Kathryn asked that the board reflect this electronic vote through an in-person motion, as well. Board members were appreciative of the thoughtfulness of the policy.

MOTION: to approve the proposed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement.

[Bill Curlis, Bill Reynolds]

Motion approved

Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn.

[Bill Curlis, Jenny Brehm]

Motion Approved.

The business of the December 14, 2023, meeting of Village Connections having been concluded the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Nikki Young, Recording Secretary

Attest: William Curlis, Secretary

Next Meeting: February 22, 2024, 6:00 p.m.