



Town of Sherman
Commission on Aging
Monthly Meeting Minutes
October 20, 2025

Commissioners Present: Janet Wey (Acting Chair), Keith Barton, Meredith Kroeger, Merialis Lewis, Sheila McMahon, Jeanne McRoberts, Kim Thomson, Susan White

Absent: Lynda Arnold, Suzette Berger (Senior Center), Lynne Gomez (Social Services)

Also Present: Don Lowe (First Selectman), Pat Bailey, C. Aruza (Clerk)

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 PM by Acting Chair, J. Wey.

Motion made by: K. Barton moved to approve the 9/15/2025 minutes

Seconded by: J. McRoberts

Vote For: Unanimous

Senior Center/Social Services Report:

Senior Center Report

S. Berger submitted her report in writing before the meeting (see Addendum).

J. Wey asked D. Lowe about the redirection of the traffic flow at the senior center mentioned in S. Berger's report. D. Lowe thought it was a good idea and believed S. Berger had spoken to the state trooper and Public Works about this. Basically, the bus will be coming in the current exit, which is an easier left turn. J. Wey said it would make it easier to drop off passengers and wheelchairs. It will also be easier to park the bus in the end spot. J. McRoberts said clear signage will be critical.

D. Lowe will speak to the state trooper and to Public Works (the latter to ensure that signage is obvious to clearly indicate the reversed entrance/exit). K. Thomson

asked if they could put a state trooper in front of the senior for the first few days after the transition. D. Lowe said they might not have trooper resources to assist. S. McMahon said the wagon is movable which says, 'turn here'.

Social Services Report

No report at this time.

Ongoing Business:

1) Building Committee Update

M. Kroeger said she went to the meeting last week and it was apparently cancelled. The meeting was held instead on October 14th. The commission asked D. Lowe for an update. D. Lowe advised the meeting started earlier at 6:15 p.m. with the sub-committee to discuss the communications strategy. There is a series of communications plans to support the upcoming forums.

The next in-person forum will be on Saturday, October 25th at Town Hall. It will be followed on Wednesday, October 29th with a virtual forum via Microsoft Teams. There will also be an in-person forum conducted on October, 30th at noon at the senior center. D. Lowe added that there will be NIXLE alerts and there is a tremendous amount of activity on social media with posts on the Facebook pages of the Sherman Senior Center Building Committee and Park and Recreation Commission. He advised the rest of the October 14th meeting was devoted to a review of the wording for the referendum question that needs to be finalized by the bond attorney. The adjourned town meeting will take place on November 22nd and the vote will be held on December 6th.

J. McRoberts said not enough information has been going out especially as the print version of the *Town Tribune* does not go out universally now. Commissioners discussed that the paper is online for free and there are free copies at the American Pie, however, not all readers have made the transition. Commissioners mentioned they have not seen anything yet about the project in the *Sherman Sentinel* but hope to soon.

K. Thomson asked if there was any feedback about how the forums are going. D. Lowe said they are going well and they had about 30 people attend the last forum. K. Barton said the feedback was positive at the forum. J. McRoberts said many who attended were already supporters of the project. D. Lowe said he is also giving a presentation on October 29th at 8:45 a.m. for the Sherman

Parent Teacher Organization (SPTO). S. White asked if there could be more face-to-face information forums scheduled at night for people that work during the day or work on weekends. D. Lowe said he would bring it up with the committee to determine if it was possible.

Commissioners inquired about the committee sending out a mailer as a supplemental promotional effort. D. Lowe cautioned that there is a constraint that you can't use taxpayer money to influence a vote. It can only be informational and would have to be run by the town's attorney.

New Business:

1. Review/Approval of 2026 Meeting Dates

J. McRoberts **made a motion** to approve the Commission on Aging's 2026 regular meeting dates as proposed.

Seconded by: M. Kroeger

Vote For: All in favor.

2. Discuss Role in Promoting Need for New Senior Center

S. White asked D. Lowe for clarification about value engineering efforts and potential impacts to the budget discussed at the last meeting. D. Lowe reiterated it is to ensure it stays within the \$4.3M cost estimate projected for the project. The bonding amount has yet to be set, however, he expects it will be in the area of \$3.95M. Pledged donations are separate and can't be counted until actualized.

Commissioners stressed that they want to help with communications and think there could be more, such as adding print. D. Lowe said he heard them, appreciates their input and will bring this back to the committee. S. McMahon asked if the non-profit 'Friends of the Senior Center' organization can advertise the project in the newspaper if it has the funds. J. Wey said it can but the Commission on Aging can't. K. Thomson asked if the 'Friends of the Senior Center' organization did flyers/ads if they needed to be vetted through the committee for approval. D. Lowe said it would be good to ensure the accuracy of the information but it is not required. Commissioners agreed it was a good idea and discussed how to potentially accomplish in addition to timing (e.g., before the referendum). Further discussion ensued about how to transport seniors to the polls to vote on the referendum and how they can vote absentee at Town Hall.

3. Any new business that comes before the COA.

J. Wey wanted to make sure other commissioners were aware of a program announced by AARP, called the 'Net Equity Program'. This is a bill passed by the Connecticut legislature that makes provisions for affordable broadband internet for seniors and eligible low-income individuals. It will go into effect next September. As an aside, she also wanted to share that in other states they call their senior centers, 'active adult centers' to attract younger seniors.

Comments by Commissioners:

None at this time.

Public Comment:

P. Bailey attended the meeting to seek assistance with recommendations for a roofing contractor to re-shingle her roof. J. Wey suggested she reach out to the building inspector at Town Hall.

Adjournment:

S. White moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:56 p.m.

Seconded by: S. McMahon

Vote for: All in favor

Respectfully submitted by Christine Aruza
Next meeting: November 17, 2025 @ 4:00 PM at Mallory Town Hall

ADDENDUM

Senior Center Written Report:

We offered a successful FLU and Covid Clinic on October 7. The vaccines were distributed from Candlewood Drugs and two nurses, Nancy Garrison and Tina Kowalczyk volunteered to administer the vaccines.

This month we hosted a program on preventing Medicare fraud and tomorrow we are offering a luncheon and presentation on Downsizing. Later in the week, a wellness program will focus on prevention and detection of pneumonia. Friday will continue with a nutrition-based cooking demo with the RVNA.

The last Thursday of the month continues our “updates with Don” series and he will focus on the new building updates. We have very positive comments about this program.

We will be redirecting the traffic flow at the senior center at the end of November. The passengers will be able to disembark directly into the building without walking around their vehicles. (Which can be a slow process.) This will also protect the passengers and wheelchair lift from cars that try to drive around the bus as well as improve the flow. I have met with our State Trooper and Public Work supervisor, and we will carefully communicate about any upcoming changes.

The November and December Newsletter is available in digital and or print copy.

Assistance requested:

I am trying to build the Sherman senior center Facebook page to assist with communication. If anyone is willing, please like/follow the page. We are also trying to collect small gifts/gift cards for our holiday party in December. If anyone can help that would be much appreciated.

Kind regards,

Suzette Berger

Coordinator, Sherman Senior Center