



Town of Sherman
Commission on Aging
Monthly Meeting Minutes
June 15, 2026

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

Absent: Sheila McMahon, Susan White, Suzette Berger (Senior Center)

Also Present: Lynne Gomez (Social Services)

The meeting was called to order at 4:06 PM by Acting Chair, J. Wey.

Motion made by: J. McRoberts moved to approve the 4/20/26 minutes

Seconded by: M. Lewis

Vote For: Unanimous

Senior Center/Social Services Report:

Senior Center Report

S. Berger was unable to attend the meeting. She provided the following written report in advance of the meeting for the commission:

“We are getting near the end of the fiscal year and will have yearly reports available after June 30, 2026.

New policy – offering limited lift transportation was approved by First Selectman Don Lowe.

The Sherman Senior Center will provide limited transportation for Sherman residents requiring use of a wheelchair lift when other resources are unavailable and only if it doesn't interfere with the Senior Center programming.

Appointments need to be arranged for a minimum of 1 week prior.

Each client must be accompanied by a caregiver/personal assistant able to assist the client to and from the senior bus. Drivers shall attach all safety straps required during transportation as well as operate the lift. The **driver shall not leave the vehicle to escort clients.**

This program has already been successfully utilized although driver availability is difficult. Possible considerations will be to train FISH volunteers to get the required license endorsement to drive the vehicle.

The summer calendar is on the town website, and hard copies will be available later this week. There are trips to summer theater, Italian lessons and our annual Summer Picnic planned at the town beach as well as other enrichment and wellness programs.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzette Berger”

Commissioners discussed the need for this type of program; the number of potential clients for this service; and associated challenges. The commission would like to hear more about the program in six months to see how it develops.

Social Services Report

L. Gomez advised the commission that Social Services had applied for and received a grant to cover the costs of purchasing and installing the Auracast system for the main meeting room at Town Hall. The system enables meeting attendees who have cochlear implants or Bluetooth enabled hearing aids to connect to the system for enhanced hearing assistance. Sherman’s Social Services was one of only 700 agencies selected for the grant award out of 5,000 applicants nationwide. They were able to demonstrate that the system would help people over 50 years of age in a rural community to participate more fully in town government affairs.

L. Gomez is a C.H.O.I.C.E.S. counselor. Social Services recently held a counseling session for town residents on Medicare. They plan to hold the next set of sessions in the evening to increase attendance as while the morning sessions are less attended, they are still able to provide essential assistance to those that do.

In addition, Social Services is continuing to help seniors in Sherman that live alone and have become unsafe in their own home. This is important as there is no senior

housing in Sherman and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) subsidies for housing are hard to obtain due to high demand and resulting wait lists. They help them explore other options both within the home and outside the home.

K. Thomson inquired if Social Services has a list of seniors in town that are at risk. Per L. Gomez, there is no list, however, she estimates there are approximately 300 single seniors in Sherman, of which, 1 in 5 are probably at risk. Regulatory restrictions prevent them from accepting names and keeping such a list even if supplied by relatives or neighbors. They must be invited by the individual to assist.

M. Kroeger asked about the Reach Out program. L. Gomez advised there are two challenges the program faces. The first is the low number of volunteers willing to commit to a six-month period of visiting a senior 1.5 hours per week. The second, is even when fully staffed with volunteers, many seniors are unwilling to accept the assistance. She said it typically ebbs and flows.

Commissioners discussed that many seniors don't want to leave their home and the various reasons why they don't. They also discussed their concerns about at-risk seniors during weather or other emergencies, what is in place presently and what else could be done.

K. Barton asked if Social Services had received a written report yet from the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WESTCOG) ADA compliance analysis. L. Gomez advised they were due to receive the report in August. It will be presented at the Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting to be held August 27th. Per her understanding the report on Volunteer Park alone is 47 pages.

Ongoing Business:

1) Community Expo – Post Event Discussion

J. Wey thanked everyone who volunteered for the expo, and in particular, Lynda Arnold for printing the flyers and K. Thomson for updating them. She believes there were fewer attendees and participants this year, which could be due to the weather or the number of concurrent events in town on the same day. She hopes the commission will agree to participate again next year.

2) Senior Center Building Committee Update

Per K. Thomson the Senior Center Building Committee has issued a request for proposal (RFP) for an architect to finish the project. The town attorney and

insurer have approved the final RFP to be issued. The RFP is posted on the town website. Respondents to the RFP are allowed to submit questions or requests for additional information up to July 1, 2026. Final proposals are to be submitted by noon on July 17, 2026. There plan from that date is to hold a special meeting to review the proposals on July 21, 2026 and by August 14, 2026 make a final selection if possible.

M. Lewis shared that she contacted First Selectman (Don Lowe) to volunteer her services. She has been in the interior design business for over 40 years and has worked on commercial projects in both Manhattan and Hong Kong. She reached out two to three weeks ago but has not heard back yet.

New Business:

1) Any New Business that Comes Before the COA

J. Wey reiterated that the commission is actively seeking new members. She advised D. Lowe put out a call in his column, however, as of yet there have been no inquiries. She is encouraging existing members to reach out.

J. Wey also said it is time for the commission to select a permanent chair as she is likely moving out of Sherman within a year or two.

J. McRoberts **made a motion** that Keith Barton take over as chair in July of this year.

Seconded by: M. Lewis

Vote For: Unanimous

J. Wey will assist K. Barton with the transition and will prepare the annual commission report.

Comments by Commissioners:

M. Lewis has attempted to contact the state representative about repainting the lines on Route 37. She started calling last fall but has not heard back. She will reach out again.

K. Barton raised the matter of the lights outside town hall. He asked L. Gomez if it is part of the WESTCOG report. She will look into it and advise.

Public Comment:

None at this time.

Adjournment:

K. Barton moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:02 p.m.

Seconded by: K. Thomson

Vote for: All in favor

Respectfully submitted by Christine Aruza
Next meeting: July 20, 2026 @ 4:00 PM at Mallory Town Hall