

MINUTES OF THE LEBANON VALLEY COMMUNITY CORPORATION (LVCC)

HELD ON November 21, 2024

**Present:**

Erminia Rasmussen (President), Gregg Carroll, Sharon Powers, Monte Wasch, Sarah Conly

**Advisors Present**: Nina Keller, Tistrya Houghtling

**Guest:** Irene Hanna

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 10:06am by Erminia Rasmussen

**MSC:** To approve the minutes of the October 10, 2024, meeting was made by Gregg Carroll, seconded by Monte Wasch. Motion approved.

**Treasurer’s Report:**

Gregg Carroll reported that, through October 31, we have $25,625 in the account. The food bank has $165 in it. There was a carryover of $1711 in holiday gift drive donations from last year – now up to about $3400 with recent donations.

**MSC:** To approve the Treasurer’s Report was made by Erminia Rasmussen, seconded by Monte Wasch. Motion approved.

**SENIOR SURVEY** – presented by Erminia Rasmussen

100 surveys were sent out. 36 seniors responded. Will now turn over everything to Sarah Conly for follow-up. Sarah wants a list of all the seniors on our mailing list so she can remove the ones that moved or died. We need to fix this list of 649 people.

Northern Neighbors of Columbia County (NNCC) – Louise Marks - $75 membership fee – volunteer program to help those residents in need. Tistrya Houghtling said they have been trying to connect services with needs – need volunteers in New Lebanon to help them and looking for services that can assist those in need, like seniors. Problem is that seniors have to pay the fee and many don’t want to or can’t afford to. Maybe the NNCC could come up with a good deal for a group? Sarah will find out more about what NNCC offers.

**GRANTS**

Gregg reported that she is not having luck with grants but will be reapplying to T-Mobile and the Reeve Grant. For the Reeve grant, we will be trying for $50,000

Tistrya said that the playground is currently scheduled for Spring of 2025 construction. They are not going to be creating a new playground, but instead will be reinvigorating the one that is there in the current location. Will be putting in handicap accessible surfacing (resurfacing material) and adding two pieces of equipment that are wheelchair-accessible.

**RESIGNATION**

Monte Wasch has resigned from the LVCC board, effective December 31, 2024. It might be ok for him to stay on as an advisor. Nina Keller will check into this.

**MSC**: To accept the resignation of Monte Wasch from the LVCC board was made by Erminia Rasmussen. Seconded by Gregg Carroll. Motion carried with Monte Wasch recusing from the vote.

Erminia thanked Monte for his service and also noted that he had raised $244 for LVCC in honor of his birthday.

**NEW LVCC BOARD MEMBER**

Irene Hanna expressed an interest in joining the LVCC board and all agreed that she would be an asset to the LVCC.

**MSC**: To approve Irene Hanna as a member of the LVCC Board was made by Monte Wasch, seconded by Erminia Rasmussen. Motion approved.

We also received interest from Silke Fuchshofen in joining the LVCC Board and she will be invited to attend the December meeting.

**HOLIDAY GIFT DRIVE**, presented by Tistrya Houghtling

The poster for this year’s drive has been sent out and she expects we will have many families who are in need again this year. Gifts are due on December 15. Currently, the Thank You’s for the cash donations comes from the LVCC, but the thank you’s for gifts come from the Town and the LVCC. All Thank You’s will now include both the Town and the LVCC. For adopting people, the cards will be co-signed by both the Town and the LVCC. Irene volunteered to help write the Thank You cards. Tistrya mentioned that she will need help gift wrapping December 17, 18, or 19 and the shopping will be done the week of December 16-20 – she asked for volunteers to go shopping with the group.

Tistrya (first contact) and then Gregg (follow-up) will contact Richard Beckwith at Hilltown Pork to get gift certificates for Christmas if there is money left over after purchasing gifts for the children. We should get our name (LVCC) on the gift certificates – saying they are sponsored by LVCC and Hilltown Pork, (or any other sponsor we get)

Monte mentioned that the LVCC has to do better at “tooting our own horn” and get it out in Public Releases. We now have 229 on our mailing list.

**CYPRESS CEMETERY**

We publicized the getting of this grant –press release was sent to the Eastwick Press and Register Star. Sharon will put our press releases on the website once someone sends them to her.

**SCHOOL SUPPLIES & OUR ROLE AS LVCC**

Erminia started a discussion about the role of the LVCC – when we are hands-on, we are more successful. Last year we raised $3000 for school supplies but this year only $500. Why? No boxes out. Seniors already doing the same thing. It was suggested that maybe we do a push for School Supplies needed in February instead of September.

Should we do a fundraising gala? Host it at the Community Center? Should we raise money for a before and after school program? We would need $70,000 a year to run it – can expect to get about $35,000 in enrollment fees. Should we have a spring event with the goal of raising money for a before and after school program?

This needs to go to the Town Board to run but we might want to be the fiscal sponsors of it. Different options – we could find a program, the town could hire the person, town runs it, the person works for the town

Or

We fund it, the school runs it, hosted in the Community Center or at the school.

Sharon will research requirements with the school, then talk to Michelle Bienes to find out about the service they used. Sharon mentioned she already did this research for the BEDC and will provide her notes on this. (Notes attached to this report)

**OTHER**

Monte will turn over the list of media outlets to Irene and she will handle the distribution of the press releases that Frank Abdale currently writes.

**MSC** to adjourn the meeting was made at 11:42am by Gregg Carroll, seconded by Sarah Conly. Motion approved.

**Next meeting**: Thursday, December 19, via ZOOM, at 10am.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Powers
Secretary

(see next page for Sharon Powers’s childcare notes from February of 2023)

Childcare notes from BEDC discussions, by Sharon Powers, February, 2023

This was not only about before and after school, but included childcare, so ignore the parts that are not relevant to before or after school care. It was mentioned that Berkshire Taconic might provide a start-up capital grant.

Pre-K
The school is not funded for pre-K and, at one time, ran it
through Questar, which was based on income (kids who had
free or reduced lunch). 5-6 years ago, they switched from
this to UPK (Universal Pre-Kindergarten) which is
grant-funded from NY State. They have to have a minimum of
18 kids in the class - this requires 1 certified teacher and
1 teacher's aide. If they increased to 20 kids, they would
need an additional teacher's aide, so they keep it to 18. So
they only have one class for pre-K. They would consider a
second class if they had an additional 18 kids. They have to
apply for this grant each year.

Before & After School Care
Any provider can use their space if they have the correct
certification, for a nominal fee.
Previously to Covid, after 5 years ago, Michelle Bienes (who
works as a teacher's assistant at the school), ran a before
and after school care program called Be Happy, run out of
the elementary school (WBH). She stopped doing this because
it became difficult to find staff. Her rates were very
affordable, somewhere in the range of $100/month and she had
10-15 kids who were part of the program.

When she left, they brought in Healthy Kids - a more
expensive program (i.e. about $300/month) and only had 2
kids register. They do take Medicaid, they hire the staff,
but they had a hard time finding anyone to staff it. After
Covid, they quit. So there is no before or after school care
at present.

We could use their school (WBH) for before or after care
program, but nothing during the day, so early childcare is
out. If we want to help with a before or after care program,
we would need to have
1. The space certified by the state - Michelle had 3 spots
at WBH certified: the cafeteria (which has a stage), the
gymnasium, and the playground
2. The program would have to be certified and approved by
the Dept. of Health - there is an application process
3. Insurance

Questions we asked:
1. If we had an early childhood program, could we access the
playground at the school? We could, perhaps, but it would be
limited since the kids at WBH have recess through many periods
2. Any idea how many would be interested in before or after
care - at least 10 parents have inquired, but no idea about
early childcare requirements
3. Any recommendations for previous teachers who might be
interested? No, because most of the teachers do not live
close by and might not want to travel here