

Minutes of the Ridgefield Commission on Aging (CoA) Meeting
November 17, 2025, at 2:30 pm
Small Conference Room, Town Hall

Co-Chair Yaffa called the meeting to order at 2:35 pm, which was the first Order of Business. Commissioners Richards, Kabasakalian, Mullin, Tewes, and Martin were present. Also present Tony Phillips, Director of Social Services and Karen Gaudian, Municipal Agent for the Elderly. Co-Chair Nolan was excused. Culhane and Orr were not present. Claudia DeMelis of the Redding Commission on Aging attended as a guest. Carolina Gahagan also attended as a guest.

As to the Second Order of Business, Ms. Yaffa invited public comment. Ms DeMelis asked about the Gold Card and was informed that it was listed on the Agenda for a later discussion.

As to the Third Order of Business, approving the October 20, 2025 CoA minutes, Mr Richards made a motion to approve, seconded by Ms. Martin. Said minutes were approved as submitted.

As to the 4th Order of Business, Housekeeping-Financials, Ms Gaudian reported that we have a balance of \$477.09 in the operating budget. \$166 is left in the Leir fund account. Balance from Expo is \$43,466 and \$2,315 is in the Intern fund account.

As to the 5th Order of Business, Transportation - Ms. Yaffa reported start up of the Transportation Task Force meetings, in which parameters of a program are aimed to begin the first quarter of 2026. Mr. Phillips described the pilot framework which includes guidelines for outside radius, time frame for securing additional drivers, and other ride options. Seven new volunteers have been added to Rides for Ridgefield.

As part of the Fifth Order of Business, Food Insecurity, Mr. Phillips reported that Ms. Orr is working on baskets for families for Thanksgiving, Seventy-Seven prepared meals have been offered by a local business owner. Date of delivery is Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Ms. Kabasakalian asked about volunteers for delivery and a list is being prepared. Mr. Phillips spoke about the "on -and- off" SNAP program and the ramifications if 200 recipients need to reapply. Social Services gives out monthly \$17,000 in gift cards and receives \$13,000 SNAP.

Ms. Yaffa and Ms. Mullin announced the Senior Voices topics planned for the next ten months, beginning in January 2026. No program is scheduled for August summer break and December due to the busy holidays.

January - Glen Wagstaff - Wills, Trusts & Estate Planning

February - Meadow Ridge

March - RVNA - Nutrition for Brain Health

April - Susan Davidson, Westchester Senior Health Care

May - Jill Maguire, Union Savings Bank, Scams

June - TBD

July - TBD

September - Ridgefield Library

October - Medicare

November - TBD

Thoughts are welcome for topics, and a suggestion was made to ask our email list members for recommendations.

Senior Housing - Ms. Kabasakalian and Mr. Richards outlined the issues and presented a landscape of different policy tracks. For example: 1) aging in place; 2) accessory dwelling units; 3) assisted living and memory care; 4) direct development where the town is the builder; 5) tax incentives for builders, and 6) affordability. Further discussion centered around how to make the town more livable for seniors and intermediate options to keep people in town. Mr. Richards asked whether the CoA had any other proposals.

Adult DayHealth - Mr. Tewes and Mr. Berkley prepared an Adult DayHealth Progress Update which was handed out. According to MOW, there are currently 1000 Ridgefield residents above the age of 85. Gabriel Corredor from Evergreen Adult Day Programs in Stamford CT has been consulted. Mr. Tewes is in further talks with him to supply more data to see whether Ridgefield is a good candidate for creating an Adult DayHealth program.

The Digital Divide pilot program will begin in the Ridgefield Library. Ten seniors will receive Chromebooks to learn how to use in the Library, where there is connectivity service available.

Commendations are to be presented on Thursday, November 20, at the Recreation Center to the additional staff at the Center for their contributions to the Expo.

New Business - Ms. Yaffa announced the 11/18 Senior Voices forum is presenting Ridgefield CT PRIDE and encouraged attendance. The Senior Central Directory is still being discussed. On Wednesday, 11/19, the BoS are going to decide on the Senior Tax Credit.

Ms. Martin spoke about the meeting with Claudia DeMelis from the Redding CoA regarding an interest in sharing Ridgefield's Gold Card. Ms. DeMelis was invited to the table and spoke of their continued interest. Discussion continued regarding ramifications with other neighboring and/or bordering towns that would also want to share. A fee policy would create problems. Currently, 132 vendors would have to be informed if another community shared the Gold Card. It was determined that the CoA would create a policy statement for the Gold Card program. The matter will be tabled.

As the 8th Order of Business, the next meeting date will be December 15, 2025. The meeting was adjourned at 4:17 PM following a motion made by Ms. Kabasakalian and seconded by Ms. Mullin.

Submitted by Carmen Martin, Secretary