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Press Release

Retired Citizens Advisory Council votes to reduce senior dances

Friday night dances will be held only twice a month in 2016; door prizes cut

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (December 15, 2015) — The number of Friday night dances at the Arkansas City Senior Citizens Center will be reduced from three a month to just two, starting in February 2016.

The Retired Citizens Advisory Council voted 4-0 on Monday afternoon at the senior center, 320 South A St., to trim back the number of dances due to declining attendance and to reduce staff costs.

Council members present were Larry Gilmore, Jack Givens, Gary Humiston, chair Carol Goldwater and advisor Kristin Sparks, director of senior services. Jerri Achenbach and Glen Morrison were absent.

The dances have been discussed at many of the council's meetings in 2015, with the board voting in September to raise admission fees by \$1, to \$6 per person, to assist with band travel and other costs.

While there have been no complaints due to the price change, Sparks reported, attendance has continued to dwindle to between 20 and 30 for most of the events. She blames the dances' frequency.

"I don't think we need to have three nights of dances," Sparks said. "There's not enough participation to have and warrant three nights of dances. It takes just as much time and effort and cleanup if you have 100 people as if you have 20 people, and we're only getting 20 people.

"I don't think it's a special thing anymore. (People think): 'Oh, I'll get it next Friday if I miss this one.' If you cut it back, they'll think, 'Oh, I've got to make it to this one because there's not going to be another one for a week or two.'"

Humiston agreed, making a motion to eliminate the third dance. Givens seconded the motion.

There already were going to be only two dances in January because the senior center is closed Jan. 1, 2016, for New Year's Day. (The center also is closed Dec. 24 and Dec. 25 for the Christmas holiday.)

For immediate release

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Dances will be held on Jan. 8 and Jan. 15, and then on the first and third Fridays of each month thereafter, starting on Feb. 5 and Feb. 19. Doors will open at 6 p.m. and the dances begin at 7 p.m.

The board also voted 4-0 to eliminate free passes and providing door prizes at the dances, unless one of the attendees brings something to donate, in which case it still would be offered as a door prize.

"You give door prizes to try to draw people in," Sparks observed. "If it's not drawing people in, we don't necessarily need door prizes at all. If somebody brings it, I don't see there being a problem giving those away. But as far as the senior center having something to give away every Friday, (eliminate it)."

Finally, starting next month, the break time during the dance period will be moved up to 8 p.m., instead of 8:30, allowing the dances to wind down by 9:30, instead of the current end time of 10 p.m.

"By the time 10 o'clock rolls around, there's no one here anyway," Sparks said. "9:30 rolls around and they're heading out, either because they're tired and it's late or it's dark and they've got to drive."

The Retired Citizens Advisory Council, which meets every month on the second Monday, governs the operations of the Senior Citizens Center. Five of its seven members must be at least 62 years old.

The advisory council's next meeting will be at 2 p.m. Jan. 11, 2016, at the Senior Citizens Center.