

COA Board Meeting Minutes

January 21, 2021

Attendees: Marge Ackerman, Betsey Boyd, Jane Donnelly, Leslye Fligor, Susan Ruskin Friend, Bob Froh, Linda Johnson, Wayne Johnson, Jean MacQuiddy, Mignonne Murray, Tom Nicholson, Carol Ott, Prather Palmer, Gerri Scoll, Vida Goldstein (associate member), Teresa Young (associate member).

Absent: Alice Benson (associate member), Melissa Galton (associate member).

Due to the suspension of in-person public meetings during the Covid-19 Emergency, this meeting was held via zoom and recorded.

Meeting was called to order at 8:31 a.m.

No resident concerns or comments were expressed.

Linda Johnson asked that two corrections be made to the December 17th minutes. The spelling of Chick Swain's name be corrected and Janice Corduri's last name be added. These corrections were noted, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: (Prather) Mignonne asked that the budget not be approved today because there was an error in the Special Revenue Harvard Vanguard grant allocation money. Mignonne has asked that the error be fixed.

Mignonne recently met with Leon A. Gaumond, Town Manager and Lisa J. Yanakakis, Assistant Town Manager, Susan Kelley, Finance Director and Charles Young, Purchasing Agent for preliminary budget discussions for next year.

Director's Report: (Mignonne)

The town intends to administer the COVID vaccine, however the time frame and location is still unclear. Registration for appointments is currently through the Massachusetts statewide system. The town health department is trying to make the registration easier by setting up a Signup Genius for Weston residents to register their basic information (i.e., age, address, contact info, what category they fall into, do they have any co-morbidities). Mignonne has offered the use of the COA for administering the vaccine. Mignonne has also asked for another way to register those who aren't computer savvy. The COA would like to mail a post card to town residents with information on how to register for the vaccine. The COA has been fielding many, many calls asking a variety of questions such as who is eligible and in which phase, and where the vaccine is being administered.

The COA staff (as an onsite, senior facing staff) is currently not listed as a high priority in getting the vaccine.

As previously mentioned, Mignonne attended a Finance meeting from which Leon will put forth suggestions and recommendation to the full finance committee.

The State Formula grant contract has been received. The Formula Grant money will not expire by June 30th.

Guest speaker, James Fuccione, Mass Healthy Aging Collaborative

Jim Fuccione gave an overview of the Mass Healthy Aging Collaborative. He talked about the movement and how it works, how important it is to establish a town-wide network of departments and agencies and who would benefit from an age friendly community. The Mass Healthy Aging Collaborative is funded mostly by the Tufts Health Plan Foundation which supports health initiatives in the states they serve; New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. Mignonne felt it important for us to learn about this organization, the work they do and how it might benefit us. Perhaps we could take the Needs Assessment high priorities forward to the community for action to make Weston more age friendly and accessible.

From Jim's presentation on the Mass Healthy Aging Collaborative:

"Age-friendly communities strive to become a more supportive and inclusive community for all with a focus on improving the physical and social environment in support of older adults and people living with dementia. These initiatives seek to offer older adults a wider range of choices that make it possible for them to "age in community," including enhanced access to options in housing, transportation, and social engagement. There are online Age Friendly and Dementia resources and tool kits available to towns."

Chair Reports

Springwell: (Jean/Wayne) There isn't much new to report this month. Springwell is 95 percent funded by the state, and they believe the Springwell budget will be fully funded this year. There's a Springwell board meeting next Thursday so an update will be given next month.

Community Connections: (Vida)

In their last meeting, Frank Hillery, from the Brook School, was introduced as a new member of the Community Connections committee.

Vida announced upcoming meeting topics and guest speakers:

- Unexpected Medical costs. Vida said there is legislation which will take effect in 2022 that will cover some of unexpected medical costs, however in the meantime Prather will contact Congresswoman Katherine Clark's office to see if they might address any current programs available. Examples of unexpected, expensive medical bills might be the cost of an ambulance, the use of an anesthesiologist out of network, or when you go to the E.R. and are under observation.
- Melissa Pacey Mahaffey, an audiologist from West Newton will be giving a talk on older adult hearing issues.

- Weston resident, Shirley Small-Rougeau is working on an upcoming program related to diversity, inclusion and racial injustice.
- Dr. Mihir Kamdar, Division of Palliative care in the Pain Center at Mass General Hospital.
- Another session with a specialist on medical marijuana and pain management was suggested.
- An additional presentation on Scams by Marian Ryan, Middlesex County District Attorney, was also recommended, perhaps with other COAs in a joint program.

Vida reported that the COA Awareness and Hospitality (Welcoming) committees have very similar goals and objectives to those of Community Connections. The Community Connections committee was approached to see if they would like to incorporate Awareness and Hospitality. This topic will be discussed at the next Governance meeting.

Teresa Young, a new member of the Community Connections committee sent comprehensive recommendations for Chinese programming for both adults and children.

Governance: (Susan)

Governance met with chairs of the Community Connections, Awareness and Welcoming Committee to share their histories, goals and objectives, and to explore whether to combine the three groups.

Linda Johnson and Carol Ott have agreed to co-chair the Awareness Group.

The Governance Group is establishing a formal orientation program for new board members and are creating a plan to pair new board members with a board mentor.

Housing: (Jane) Attended a meeting on Chapter 40B's, she will get back to us next month with more details once she has a chance to digest the content.

There was an inquiry about the vacant Sunrise Senior Living property on North Avenue. Tom said it has been sold, the residents have been relocated to another location and Sunrise is building a new facility in Newton.

Transportation: (Jean) MWRTA, Mass dot is building bus shelters throughout their jurisdiction, and even though they aren't currently operating in our town, they have asked Weston (Jean/Gerri) for input.

Needs Assessment: (Tom) Tom and the team shared the latest draft of the "Top Ten" key needs document which they hope will be used as talking points in the future with COA committees, town departments and organizations.

Awareness: (Carol/Linda) Carol organized a COA signage field trip (other participants included the Town Manager, Town Planner, a Select Board member, and Marge Ackerman). All agreed

that the current signage is very poor, both for the COA and the Community Center. As a follow up when Carol contacted Selectboard member, Laurie Bent, her response was “It will happen”.

Welcome Group: (Leslye) Leslye shared the original plan for the Welcoming Group which was established by town resident Linda McCabe. This model was based on the Welcome Wagon home visits with gift baskets to new residents.

Leslye reached out to Leon Gaumond, Town Manager to see if there was a way to contact and welcome new town residents over the age of 60. She would like to create a welcome packet with the Council on Aging newsletter and other helpful town information for older residents. She will share more details at the next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:53 a.m.

Next meeting is February 18 at 8:30 am.