

COA Board Meeting Minutes, February 17, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chair, Sue Ruskin Friend. She read Governor Baker's Order, Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, which includes an extension of the March 12, 2020, Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law. This meeting was conducted via ZOOM.

Present: Mignonne Murray(Director), Susan Ruskin Friend(Chair), Linda Johnson(Vice Chair), Marge Ackerman, Alice Benson(Associate Member), Betsey Boyd, Jane Donnelly, Leslye Fligor, Bob Froh, Vida Goldstein(Associate Member), Joan Heilbronner, Wayne Johnson, Jean MacQuiddy, Tom Nicholson(Associate Member), Carol Ott, Prather Palmer, and Shirley Small-Rougeau(Associate Member).

Absent: Gerri Scoll and Teresa Young(Associate Member).

Residents: Paul Foley and Susan Pauker.

Guest: Kelly Pawluczzonek, Weston's Public Health Director.

There were no resident concerns or comments expressed.

The January minutes were reviewed and approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Due to technical difficulties, Prather was unable to un-mute himself. Therefore, Mignonne provided the Treasurer's information. On the Special Revenue Report, the Formula Grant has been condensed to one line. The Lounge Space Renovation Gift looks overdrawn but it hasn't been updated yet. The Operating Budget shows a negative salary account, but that is an obsolete account where one of the drivers had been listed. Mignonne will work on getting those corrected. The State has finally sent the contracts for the

Formula Grant. Leon has to sign off on that and send it back to the State before the money is released to us.

Director's Report: Mignonne said Weston is inviting every department to come to the Finance Committee to discuss their budget from the town. The COA budget will be discussed Thursday evening, March 17, and Mignonne will send more information as she receives it. COA Board Members are encouraged to attend. The LGBTQ on-line training program needs to be completed by everyone. The State still has not approved permission to do this as a group. Several members have completed it individually, and said it takes up to an hour and a half to finish. Some people had problems printing the certificate of completion. Joan said she couldn't print the certificate, so she took a photo of it and submitted it to Mignonne. The AARP tax assistance volunteers have slots available on Thursdays for free, simple, income tax help. There was a COVID exposure at the January coffee, and the appropriate people that attended were contacted. So far, there have been no known additional cases.

Springwell: Wayne thanked Shirley for suggesting that Springwell present information about their services at the Brook School, during their recently reactivated "Hot Lunch Mondays" program. Wayne contacted Springwell about doing a presentation some Monday in March. Jean reported about the proposed merger between Springwell and BayPath Elder Services. They are currently working on their due diligence process, and plan to present their proposal to the State on April 1st. If the merger does not happen July 1st, the next target date would be Oct 1st.

Needs Assessment: Tom suggested developing a Town Needs Assessment Workshop. Mignonne spoke to Leon, and he will be speaking to a small group, February 18, at 2 pm via ZOOM about this. Tom identified three needs: 1. Additional physical space for programming. 2. Increased availability of older adult housing. 3. Problems due to isolation and depression. Tom said that Alice suggested working with an outside facilitator. Alice stated she felt this would increase community awareness and galvanize others, beyond the COA, to participate. Tom asked Mignonne when the new census figures would be available, and she said they expect to see those numbers this summer. Wayne said the 2020 census numbers are critical in supporting our requests.

Transportation: Jean reported that Leon is actively involved in extracting Weston from the MWRTA, but it may require a community vote at Town Meeting for that to be accomplished. Jean attended the January 31st quarterly advisory MWRTA Meeting. The group is working on their micro-transit program but they have a significant driver shortage. Ed Carr, the Executive Director of the MWRTA for the past 15 years, announced his retirement, and a search committee has been formed to find his replacement. Jane asked if the availability of handicapped transportation has improved. Mignonne said the system is very fragmented and faces major challenges.

Food Insecurity: Carol expressed concern about a serious issue with food insecurity in our neighboring town of Waltham. She suggested contacting the Waltham COA and their community liaison. Mignonne said she would contact Waltham's COA Director for her input. Jane stated that 300 families in Lincoln and Weston are also food insecure. Sue suggested having a future umbrella discussion about those issues.

Town Center Celebration: Mignonne said the Town Center plans to “Celebrate Weston”, on Saturday, May 21. This will be a town wide event including a parade and a variety of other activities. They are asking the COA and other groups to participate. Information tables will be available which could be a good resource for us, and a great opportunity to meet a broad cross section of our community. Leslye mentioned three or four levels of community sponsorship currently being developed to financially support this celebration. When more details are available they will be shared with the board. There is an opportunity for a trail walk which could be sponsored by the COA. Linda reported that the special events volunteers are already working on ideas for the celebration. Next week they will be talking with a marketing expert about how to raise the COA’s profile. Lee Johnson contacted Kristin and wants to meet with her and Mignonne about the COA’s involvement in the “Celebrate Weston” event. Mignonne invited anyone from the special events group to join them.

Guest: Kelly Pawluczzonek, Weston’s Public Health Director, provided information about the health department. They have three staff members that assist the Board of Health, consisting of Kelly, as the Director, Health Agent Beth Boles, and Administrator Michele Hubbard. A COVID-19 nurse manager, Michele Schuckel, also works for them as a contractor. They are currently looking for a part-time health nurse to work 12 hours per week. The previous health nurse, Jane Brown, retired last August. They are in charge of communicable diseases, septic systems, pools, camps, food inspection, and emergency preparedness. They also work with the Building Department in approving permits for construction and demolition. Every home and business in Weston is on a septic system. All construction and

renovation must comply with current septic requirements, so 75% of their work involves septic issues. After Kelly hires a public health nurse, her goal is to provide more public outreach through wellness clinics; like mindfulness, stress management, blood pressure and sugar screenings. Additionally, COVID-19 takes up a lot of their time. Tom suggested that Mignonne send a copy of the COA's Needs Assessment to Kelly, for her to review. He also asked Kelly if the COA could send a representative to some of the Board of Health Meetings, and she graciously agreed. Shirley asked if mental health would be included in community outreach. Kelly said this is a high priority, and she's trying to get a working group together to assess what is being done and what needs doing. She would like to hire a clinical social worker to work under the Board of Health. Carol asked if the town can decide about COVID restrictions. Kelly responded that the Board of Health has the legal authority to adopt a mask mandate or regulation. She said their Board voted yesterday to rescind the school mask mandate effective February 28. The Town Manager put out his own advisory requirement to wear masks in municipal buildings. Linda asked Kelly how she would like to see her department work more closely with the COA. Kelly said she's already working with Mignonne and emphasized that mental health is a top priority. There is a serious problem finding clinicians and beds for individuals in crisis. Jane suggested contacting Regis College to see if they have programs, or could develop some, to train mental health clinicians to help our community. Town Hall will host COVID vaccine clinics from 2-4 p.m. through the month of March. Moderna vaccines will be offered on Mondays, and Pfizer doses will be given on Fridays. It is open to anyone, even if they do not reside in Weston.

Please contact Kelly's office if you know anyone homebound who needs a vaccine.

Other Business: Linda reminded everyone to review the town committees list that Mignonne put together, and let Sue and Linda know which committees you'd be interested in attending.

Next month's guest is Brian Kardon, an expert in marketing.

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 17, 2022 at 8:15a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:48 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Marge Ackerman