

## **COA Board Meeting Minutes, April 21, 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 22 of the Acts of 2022, 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, Jean MacQuiddy, Tom Nicholson(Associate Member), Carol Ott, Gerri Scoll, and Shirley Small-Rougeau(Associate Member).

**Absent:** Wayne Johnson, Prather Palmer and Teresa Young(Associate Member).

**Resident:** Sue Pauker

No resident concerns were expressed.

**Guests:** Anthony Senesi, Assistant to the Town Manager.

The March minutes were reviewed and approved unanimously.

**Director's Report:** Mignonne said a COVID clinic was held last Friday and over 100 people came for vaccinations. The Health Department plans to offer another one next week. They also ordered more COVID home test kits and will distribute them around town in places like the COA, the library, and Town Hall. These kits will be available to town residents. Mignonne reported they are interviewing for the part-time social worker position and have a potential candidate. Land's Sake asked Mignonne to speak at their annual meeting last week. Since she was attending a conference on aging in New Orleans, Social Worker, Joyce McSweeney, made the presentation to them about our partnership with their organization, and food insecurity in Weston. Land's Sake will continue their voucher program with the COA. They are planning an Earth Day event on Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, and invited the COA to staff a table for a food drive benefiting the COA, and to talk to residents as they donate. If anyone wants to volunteer to join Mignonne, they are welcome. Mignonne returned from the New Orleans

Aging Conference with many thoughts and ideas which she will share with us later. Jean asked about the growing popularity of the villages programs and if these were discussed at the conference. Mignonne said she thought these were more grass roots programs rather than COA sponsored organizations.

**Treasurer's Report:** Prather was absent so Mignonne presented the budget information. The Town's accounting department is better staffed now and sent our reports. The state has finally released this year's \$32,952 Formula Grant Funds. This sum is based on the 2010 census figures because the 2020 results haven't been completed.

**Slate of Officers:** Sue presented the Officers Slate for 22/23. This needs to be presented to the COA Board 30 days prior voting. The actual vote will occur at the May meeting.

Chair: Linda Johnson, Vice Chair: Joan Heilbronner, Treasurer: Prather Palmer

Linda reported that no one has volunteered to serve as recording secretary next year. She spoke to Anthony Senesi at Town Hall and was informed that this position does not need to be on the Officers Slate. The search for a secretary will continue.

**Recreation Department Pool Renovation Vote:** Leslye asked how much this will affect individual tax bills and for how many years. Mignonne said she thought some of the money would come from CPC funds. Gerri confirmed that they qualify for those funds, but they are still trying to fine tune the feasibility and design study so exact figures may not be available. Shirley said the CPC decision was postponed. She is on the Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee and said all the other things they looked at are youth oriented. The pool is the only area which is truly intergenerational. She suggested that the COA Board support the pool renovation project. Linda made a motion that we support the plans to keep our pool functional and improve its intergenerational resources. Jane seconded the motion. The group approved the motion unanimously.

**Town Celebration Committee:** Joan reported that, along with many other community groups, the COA is planning to have a table set up in the Josiah Smith

Tavern parking lot. Information about COA programs and services will be available. The special events volunteer group is working on getting a drum circle in the morning. A Salsa instructor is coming at noon and they plan to provide grab bags with chips and salsa as well as a handout describing the COA. They are looking for volunteers to assist during the celebration. The event is scheduled for May 21 with a rain date of May 22. Linda suggested getting some seating, preferably with arm rests, for people that might need them.

**Housing Committee:** Alice presented the committee's goals:

1. Increase the awareness in the community and with older adult housing developers of the need for different housing options, including affordable ones.
2. Work with the various town committees and officials on collaboration of specific potential areas of development.
3. As developers approach Weston, reinforce the interests of older adult housing options.

Alice said one developer who lives in Weston told her he's never worked with a town that had an active older adult group interested in supporting his efforts. He also said working with Weston can be challenging. She was encouraged to reach out to other developers to let them know that this committee might be interested in working with them.

**Community Connections Committee:** Vida presented their Mission Statement: Community Connections is a committee of the board of the Weston COA which meets and works with the staff to develop and publicize programs. It is composed of COA staff, board appointees and community volunteers. Their goals:

1. To develop, publicize and produce programmatic events of interest to older adults and their families.
2. Inform and educate the public about the programs and services of the COA.

3. Inform and educate the public about issues and concerns relevant to older adults.

Their objectives:

1. Consider events that appeal to older adults and their families who may not be currently involved.
2. Co-sponsor programs with other groups in town, like the library, recreation department and the PTO.
3. Publicize the availability of services to the older population of Weston, residents with parents living outside of Weston and the out of town children of Weston's older adults.
4. Compile a list of members of our community who have expertise of value to our clients' health and find opportunities to engage them.
5. Seek out current and new committee members interested in taking on committee leadership responsibilities.

This past year they've had a series of medical professionals provide presentations on a variety of health issues. The Social Justice discussion group led by Jane Donnelly and Shirley Small-Rougeau is under their umbrella. There is an upcoming program on "Surprise Billing," concerning medical expenses. They are planning a program on scams to be presented by the Police Department. They are talking about developing a housing fair including the financial implications of moving.

**Springwell:** Wayne was absent so Shirley volunteered to discuss his presentation about Springwell which he gave at The Brook School. She reported his talk was very well received and many people that attended knew nothing about their services. Springwell merged with BayPath and has a 72 million dollar budget now, however, they have a serious problem finding sufficient home care staff to meet current needs. If you want to see his presentation in its entirety it is available on the Weston Media Center.

**Guest:** Anthony Senesi, Assistant to the Town Manager. Sue introduced Anthony to the board members as the recently hired Assistant to the Town Manager. He said he began working in this capacity in December. He's originally from the Arlington-Lexington area, attended school and worked in Worcester for a few years with a regional planning agency. He did a lot of work with communication and community outreach in that position. His current role is multifaceted and includes administrative tasks with the Town Manager and the Select Board. He writes minutes, sets agendas and answers the phone in the Town Manager's office. He is the public information coordinator and works on the Town website. He's also involved in communication efforts with social media and newsletters. He said he's happy to work and collaborate with the COA in any way he can.

**Other Business:** Linda said all 5 candidates for the 3 upcoming vacancies on the COA Board were interviewed by the Select Board last week. She said they all did well and the Select Board commented on the experience, interest and passion of the candidates. Next Friday, the Select Board will make the appointments of the incoming board members. She reminded members that haven't submitted their bios and those that have not yet completed the mandatory LGBTQ training to please do so as soon as possible.

**Next Meeting: 8:30 a.m. Thursday, May 19, 2022**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Marge Ackerman

