

COA Board Meeting Minutes, May 19, 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.

Sue introduced newly appointed board members Paul Foley, Brian Kardon and Sue Pauker who will take office on July 1, welcomed them to the group, and took roll call.

Present: Mignonne Murray(Director), Susan Ruskin Friend(Chair), Linda Johnson(Vice Chair), Marge Ackerman, Betsey Boyd, Jane Donnelly, Bob Froh, Vida Goldstein(Associate Member), Wayne Johnson, Jean MacQuiddy, Carol Ott, Prather Palmer, and Gerri Scoll.

Absent: Alice Benson(Associate Member), Leslye Fligor, Joan Heilbronner, Tom Nicholson(Associate Member), Shirley Small-Rougeau(Associate Member), and Teresa Young(Associate Member).

Guests: Paul Foley, Brian Kardon, Sue Pauker, and Joyce McSweeney and Chris Kjellson, COA Social Workers.

There were no resident concerns.

The April minutes were reviewed and approved unanimously. Linda reminded the group that the secretary position needs to be filled before the July meeting.

Director's Report: Mignonne said the new social worker, Chris Kjellson, began work last week. The new police chief started work today. The fire chief is retiring at the end of July. The MCOA director for the past 30 years recently died and it's a difficult time for them now. The interim director is in charge currently, and there may be some changes going forward. We will be having another COVID booster clinic during the second week in June. Postcards to everyone on the COA mailing list will be sent to inform them of this booster clinic. The COA has at-home

COVID tests available for anyone that wants them. Jean said the tests expire and Betsey warned that leaving them in a hot car could make them unreliable. Mignonne expressed her appreciation for our van driver, Frank, who took 2 residents to Town Meeting and stayed until midnight so they could attend the entire meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Prather reported that the town approved our budget, but he has not received a copy of it yet.

Vote to Approve Associate Members: Sue identified the proposed COA Associate Members for July 2022 through June 2023: Vida Goldstein, Shirley Small-Rougeau, Gerri Scoll, Tom Nicholson and Alice Benson. The group voted unanimously to approve all the candidates and the slate will be recommended to the Select Board.

Vote on COA Officer Slate: Sue read the proposed new COA Officer Slate for 2022/2023.

Chair: Linda Johnson, Vice Chair: Joan Heilbronner, Treasurer: Prather Palmer. The group voted unanimously to approve the new COA Slate of Officers.

Transportation: Gerri stated that the general mission of the Transportation Committee is to preserve, protect, defend and expand transportation services for all older adults in town. The committee tries to evaluate the current services and usage, and also to identify unmet needs. The Ride is a challenge as it expands and we begin to see overlapping jurisdiction between the MBTA and regional transportation, which includes the MWRTA. Our assessment to the MBTA is \$270,000 because we host the commuter rail and a bus line that runs through Weston. She expressed gratitude to Jean for her membership on the MWRTA and her efforts to keep those funds in the MBTA instead of turning them over to the regional transportation authority. The service provided by the MBTA for The Ride is offered 24 hours a day and will take passengers anywhere. The MWRTA offers much more restricted service and is poorly funded. The MBTA received 2 billion dollars in COVID aid and 32 million dollars remain. However, after 2023, funding is uncertain. 176 cities and towns are in the MBTA now, but as the South Coast

rail is expanded more communities will join, putting more strain on MBTA finances and services. Jean emphasized the importance of the MBTA commuter rail which offers hourly service into Boston, from 5:30 a.m. until 11 p.m. and hourly service coming from North Station. In the past 6 months it's been a much more robust service than previously. Gerri thanked Mignonne and her team for running the rest of the transportation services we provide.

Needs Assessment: Wayne reported that the Needs Assessment Committee (NAC) was formed to define and articulate the critical needs of the Weston COA and its older adults based on a Needs Assessment conducted in 2019, and the current environment in Weston. The critical needs they identified are:

Housing: Older adults downsizing and the need for 55+ community living options.

Increase COA Space for Programs: Prioritize space needs and activity requirements. Support plans for new wastewater treatment plant for the Case Estate. Explore with large property owners, like Regis College, their interest in partnering with the Weston COA

Health and Safety: Reinstate quarterly meetings with police, fire, COA and social workers. Actively advocate for an age-friendly community. Identify dangers of isolation.

Transportation: Confer with and support the Transportation Committee.

Economic Hardship: Work with COA Social Workers and the Friends of the COA. Promote Springwell.

Wayne asked Mignonne if visiting other COAs in surrounding communities, especially for newer members, would be possible. She said it was a good idea and we should resume doing that.

Celebrate Weston: Linda reported for Joan, who led the Board special event volunteers, and recognized the other members including Betsey, Carol, Brian, Mignonne and Kristen who have worked hard planning the role of the COA in this

celebration. Additionally, Paul Foley will be shooting photographs and video of the event throughout the day. We will have a table located in the Tavern parking lot and will present a salsa dancing lesson at noon. She thanked all the board members that signed up to help out on Saturday. Hats and T Shirts are available at the COA. The shuttle will be available to pick up and take people home. Boston Post Road will be closed 9:45a.m.- 4p.m. between School Street and Colpitts Road. Brian said there is a Q&A for COA volunteers so we have a consistent way to talk about the COA. Linda will send out a volunteer schedule and the talking points that Mignonne has compiled.

Review Sign Proof: Carol, Mignonne, Chris Fitzgerald, and Maija Cirulis-Gooch met about this project and Mignonne showed the group the new sign proof. The Recreation Commission is meeting today and if they approve it and we agree, the order can be placed and the new signs can be installed. The current signage proof was approved by our board.

Next Meeting: June 16, 2022 at 8:30a.m. In person. Linda suggested having a coffee after the final meeting.

Guests: Social Workers, Joyce McSweeney and Chris Kjellson. Joyce explained that mission of the social workers is to identify and provide resources and counseling on a variety of subjects to Weston residents. She and Chris provide referrals for contractors, health care professionals and legal professionals. They also advise Weston home owners about available benefits offered by the town. Additionally, they assist with applications to SNAP, food stamps, Federal fuel assistance, rental assistance and Medicare savings programs. They assist with long term care planning and provide resources and referrals for home care and other safety devices, like medical alert buttons, files of life and lock boxes which are provided through the Fire Department. They offer information about assisted living facilities, continuing care retirement communities, the Brook School and Merriam Village. They meet in person or by phone with family members and spouses of individuals with dementia. They work closely with hospitals to coordinate home discharge care. They partner with Springwell and work with case managers setting up home care and with their protective services workers in

cases of neglect and abuse. They collaborate with the managers of Brook School and Merriam Village. They also work with the police and fire departments, the Assessor's office, and the Board of Health. They facilitate medical transportation and provide durable medical equipment through the loan closet. The COA has a food pantry, and the social workers also refer residents to the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry in Lincoln. They work collaboratively with Land's Sake Farm which offers free vouchers to lower income residents. Chris Kjellson informed us this is her second week working at the COA. Her position is part-time and she works 19 hours a week. Her previous job was at the Department of Developmental Services where she worked 5 1/2 years. Prior to that, she worked for 15 years at the geriatric outpatient department at McLean Hospital and has also worked in assisted living, running low income programs, supporting families and spouses of individuals who had memory and end of life issues. Carol asked if there was an issue that would surprise us about social services needs in Weston. Joyce said the number of people who hoard is significant and the resulting clutter is difficult to manage. Chris commented that the decision to stay at home or to go into assisted living is a challenge many people face. Linda suggested forming a support group for adult children with elderly parents dealing with these issues. Gerri asked if they were seeing more requests for supportive services in the home. Joyce said she thinks those requests have increased, especially during COVID. Paul stated there is a dramatic change in technologic devices that will enable people to monitor a variety of biomarkers, like glucose and oxygen levels in their homes. Sue thanked Joyce and Chris for coming to our meeting and for all that they do.

The meeting was adjourned at 10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Marge Ackerman