

COA Board Meeting Minutes, July 15, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 a.m. by Vice Chair, Linda Johnson. She read Governor Baker's new order covering in person and ZOOM meeting attendees. Linda welcomed new Board Member, Joan Heilbronner and new Associate Member, Shirley Small Rougeau, and then took roll call.

In Person Attendees: Mignonne Murray(Director), Linda Johnson(Vice Chair), Marge Ackerman, Betsey Boyd, Joan Heilbronner, Wayne Johnson and Prather Palmer.

Zoom Attendees: Jane Donnelly, Bob Froh, Vida Goldstein(Associate Member), Jean MacQuiddy, Carol Ott, Shirley Small Rougeau(Associate Member), Gerri Scoll, and Teresa Young(Associate Member).

Absent: Susan Ruskin Friend, Alice Benson(Associate Member), Leslye Fligor, Tom Nicholson(Associate Member).

There were no resident concerns or comments.

The May 17, minutes were reviewed and approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report Prather said the fiscal year is closing and there is no current report.

Approve Spending of Helen Zolla Trust Interest Mignonne explained that Helen Zolla donated money several years ago stipulating that only the interest could be spent. Each year the Board needs to approve spending of the interest in this account. The board voted unanimously to approve the use of this interest at Mignonne's discretion.

Vote to Approve Associate Members for FY22 Alice Benson, Vida Goldstein, and Teresa Young have been reappointed by the Select Board for an additional year. New Associate Members, Tom Nicholson and Shirley Small Rougeau, were also approved by the Select Board. The COA Board voted unanimously to approve all the Associate Members.

Director's Report Currently, most of the meetings are on ZOOM. Kristen and Mignonne are reviewing hybrid options, but don't want to do them unless they can be done well. They plan to keep a ZOOM presence and may try to have some on site programs. Ireta's social service position has not been filled yet and Maria has resigned to accept a programs job in Burlington. Sandy has been relocated to the front area directly across from the main desk to increase social distancing, so the staff do not have to wear masks all day. Large planters will be installed as bollards in front of the handicapped parking area to protect the lounge area. The COA will be without internet for a half day sometime in August, because the town is replacing all the internet switches. The Senior Watch Collaborative(SWC) has been restarted including Mignonne, social service, the fire chief, police, and the Brooks School manager. The group will meet monthly to discuss elder issues. Mignonne has been elected treasurer of the MCOA.

Governance The committee met in June and focused on the search for additional COA Board candidates. One of the two board candidates withdrew. The Select Board requires at least two

candidates to make a choice. The next Governance meeting will be in September. We will have 3 board vacancies next year and need to continue working on our recruitment efforts.

Mass COA Board Task Force Betsey reported that she, Wayne and Linda self selected to be part of this task force which will develop a board training program. Linda has stepped down due to her other commitments. The task force will meet next month and Betsey will share more information in September.

Community Connections Vida said that they have not met since the last meeting, but will meet in September. Jane reported that the Social Justice group met July 6, watched a video and then discussed it. She read a quote by Shirley Leung, "Education and awareness are key to eradicating ignorance." The goal is to educate ourselves and do some self evaluation about race issues. She invited everyone to join the group. The next meeting is August 2.

FCOA Betsey reported they met June 25. Shirley's term on the FCOA has expired and she was thanked for her tremendous service, including the coordination of the button battery donation program. Holly discussed the new donor management software program. She said this past year there were a number of new donors to the FCOA and she believes it's due to the terrific job the COA did handling the COVID vaccinations. They also received their first restricted donation of \$1,000 for the volunteer luncheon. This year's volunteer luncheon will have a special focus on the appreciation of health care workers. Their finances are in excellent shape with a net gain of \$27,000. They voted to approve a \$16,000 block grant, and decided to delay the next appeal until January.

Housing Bob stated that Sarah Ratigan attended the last meeting and that she was very enlightening. Jane said Sarah is very knowledgeable and she would love to work with her more and get the whole town involved in affordable housing. Sarah did speculate about the Brooks Apartments purchasing Sunrise. Jane thought the Merriam Street community gardens would be a great potential senior housing site also.

Needs Assessment Wayne said that Wendy is retiring at the end of the month. She has been a major spokesperson for us about the needs of the septic system around the COA. The Case Campus, including the schools, the library, and the recreation building cannot build anything without spending \$10,000,000 to upgrade a new sewer system. Kelly will be the new health director, and Wendy said she would pass this info on to her.

Transportation Gerri reported that the taxi program needs some attention. They did extend the taxi contract, but decisions need to be made about usage, extension of the coupons and other collateral issues. The coupons are highly subsidized and not sustainable. Springwell's Alternative Transportation program will end this week. A new van driver, Clifford, has been hired.

Springwell Wayne attended their meeting where budgeting, financing and staffing were discussed. Their total budget is \$40,000,000. They provide Meals on Wheels, home care, other services. They are predicting a \$2,000,000 under run in their budget because they can't find enough health care and home aide workers. They decided to increase salaries, add 401Ks, and provide bonuses to attract more

employees. They got a \$50,000 state grant to assist the elderly to get to inoculation clinics. Carol asked if Weston residents knew what services Springwell offered. She thought we needed some education because there are people here who have never heard of Springwell. Flyers or articles in our newsletter might be helpful. Vida suggested Community Connections could sponsor a program inviting Springwell to give a presentation.

Special Events Report Carol discussed the “Welcome Back” Coffee. 27 people attended including board members, staff and community residents. There was a wonderful spirit in the room, just from being together. She considered it a smashing success. They are looking at organizing a second open house at the end of September, which would be very different. The theme would be “What Can the COA Do for You?” Several instructors could demonstrate a bit of what they do and encourage people to engage in activities. Instead of just observing, the event would be participatory. Linda encouraged everyone to find new people who have never been to the COA and invite them to attend. Jane said adding music to the event might draw more people. Joan suggested contacting the schools to see if some of their talented groups would be interested in performing. She said that could also encourage more intergenerational involvement with the COA.

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 23, 2021. This meeting will be on the 4th Thursday in September.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Marge Ackerman