

Council on Aging Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday, January 25, 2024

The regular meeting of the Council on Aging Board was held on Thursday, January 25, 2023, at 10:00am at the Walpole Council of Aging with the following members present; Josette Burke, Janet Fasanello, Mary Jones, Sandhya Malur, Jerry Reicher, Marcia St Louis, Jim Pellegrine, JoAnne Mulligan, Joanne DiPietro, Meaghan Priest, and Linda Winslow. Also in attendance was COA Director Kerri McManama, Jillian Nauman, and Nancy Aicardi. Four (4) guests were in attendance.

Absent: none

10:03 AM: The Monthly Meeting was called to order by Josette Burke

1. Attendance was taken, and then the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. Rich Kelleher, Walpole Chief of Police
 - Safety Concerns regarding seniors crossing South Street from far parking lot
 - a. Chief Kelleher is aware of the safety issues and mentioned the possibility of additional signage, repainting the crosswalks and possibly flashing signs, as some are solar-powered and less expensive
 - b. Nancy asked about the possibility of the higher, wider raised speed bumps as used in other towns. Chief Kelleher said it would be worth his bringing this suggestion to town departments
 - c. Meaghan asked whether rumble strips could be used
 - d. Chief Kelleher said there is a definite need for bringing better attention to the crosswalks
 - Jerry asked what the members of the COA can do to help the police
 - a. Rich mentioned that Walpole police are very fortunate to have a lot of town-wide support
 - b. Members mentioned the File of Life cards that seniors can carry as well as the “Yellow Dot Program”, where seniors have a yellow dot sticker in their rear car window and then an information packet in the glove compartment
 - Chief Kelliher said that Walpole is currently fully staffed with 48 officers
 - a. Requirement to become an officer is either an associate degree or four years of active military service
 - Chief Kelleher had high praise for his officers, and gave the example of Dylan Thomas, the Law Enforcement Support Clinician for Walpole coming on board
 - a. He spoke of how some of his officers overcame their initial resistance of having him in the car, and now Dylan has a great relationship with all the officers, and they welcome his expertise
 - Before he left, Josette thanked Chief Kelleher for all he does especially as a new Chief, and that he is very approachable
3. Monique Bergeron, Executive Director Walpole Housing Authority – unable to attend
4. Review of December Meeting Minutes
 - There were no corrections noted. Janet motioned and Sandhya seconded
 - The vote was 8 – 0 – 3 to accept the Minutes with Joanne, Linda and Meaghan abstaining as they were absent in December
5. Outreach Update – Jillian Nauman (slides were provided)
 - The total Outreach number for December was 295 to 165 unique individuals
 - a. The monthly numbers were down a little due to closures for the holidays

- b. Though the total number of Outreach was down, the number of unique individuals was up as December was a busy month with many activities, and while in, people stopped in to speak to Outreach
 - Jillian provided slides including a Pie Chart with the breakdown of categories of Outreach
 - a. Nursing/Wellness Clinic continues to have large numbers. Another category that is growing is the Grandparent group
 - b. Grandparent Group
 - 1. Currently there are 11 members ranging in age from 60 years to 90 years old, raising 12 grandchildren ranging from 3 years to 16 years old
 - 2. The reasons the children are in the care of their grandparents is often due to drugs, overdoses or a severe mental health problem in the parent(s)
 - 3. NCOA has a Grant Program for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren groups
 - NCOA Grant is for \$500 for the grandparents and grandchildren to do an activity together that is not parenting, nor disciplining
 - Jillian has applied for a Grant and hopes to hear next month
 - c. Over the last month, Kerry, Jillian, and Lindsay have worked many hours with Protective Services and the Police on an issue with a senior
 - 1. The COA staff received a lot of support from the Police
 - 2. Kerry hopes the Police will ask themselves “how can the COA help?” when they run across a similar issue in the future
6. Center Update – Kerri McManama (slides were provided)
- Check-ins
 - a. The numbers were down a little with a total of 3,140, reflective of December holiday closings
 - b. The total check-ins for 2023 were 54,355, an incredible amount
 - c. Unique participation for 2023 was 2,128
 - d. The In Town and Out of Town participants as well as the Female and Male participants ratios remain the same
 - December Events in Review
 - a. Ultimate Vegas Show at Lake Pearl
 - b. Two-part plant care series
 - c. Newport Christmas – sold out
 - d. December Daily Project
 - e. Cookies and Cocoa with Commonwealth Dance and Scouts
 - Staffing Update
 - a. The Center is in the interview process for the Program Coordinator position with interviews scheduled for Monday, January 29th
 - b. The bulk of this position is planning
 - Center statistics for the first five years
 - a. 3,056 New Friends
 - b. 5,038 Unique Participants
 - c. 187,331 Total Participation
 - d. 18,667 Rides to 405 Unique Riders
 - e. Outreach to 3,576 Unique Seniors
 - f. 130,560 Total Check Ins
 - Notable
 - a. Priority Registration (new format) went so smoothly despite weather that the Center was able to answer live phone calls before noon
 - b. Waitlist continues for Zumba, drums, and chair yoga
 - c. Out of Town registrations were also smooth, but many expressed concerns about the time between Priority and Out-of-Town. Center will look at this and may be able to move them to the same week
 - d. 84 calls and about 65 walk ins for Priority Registration
 - e. 22 calls and 15 walk ins for Out-of-Town Registration
 - f. AARP Registration opened on Monday January 22nd
 - 1. All but 25 slots have been booked – 113 total appointments have been scheduled (Westwood cancelled their program and there are none in Foxboro)

2. Appointments are booked through the end of March with April reserved for people who may have to come back, or for appointments that may have to be rescheduled due to weather
 3. Because it's AARP, Center cannot limit appointments to Walpole residents
7. Finance Update – Sandhya (slides were provided)
- Total spent in December was \$4,115.18 (Operating Budget)
 - a. FY spending is right on target
 - A total of \$633.30 of the Formula Grant was spent in December (does not include funds spent on salaries).
 - Gifts
 - a. The Center received \$1,738 in gifts in December - \$1,373 was from the Friends of Walpole Elders for Holiday Open House and catering
 - b. A total of \$3,241.91 was spent in December - \$1,902.05 spent on Events expenses
 - c. The Gift Account balance is \$13,099.68
8. Old Business
- Front Door Decal
 - a. Jerry will have three finite sketches for the next meeting – it will be 26"
 - b. There will be as much emphasis on COA as Senior Center on the decal
 - Increasing membership for men
 - a. Steve Avellino mentioned to Jerry that Walpole is good in comparison to other Centers
 - b. Breakfast is also bringing men in
 - c. Jerry is trying to get more publicity about men's programming in the weekly free paper
 1. Hopefully in the "Events Column"
 2. Jerry hopes to send in press releases
 3. Joanne D. suggested going to men's clubs such as the Lions, K of C, etc.
 4. Deb also goes to physician's offices to drop off information – some are receptive, some will not let her leave anything
9. New Business
- Walpole Housing Update
 - a. Quite a bit of work has been done in the community room at Diamond Pond – it was cleaned, and furniture removed and moved to make it more of a community room
 - Master Plan Update
 - a. There is controversy regarding the Final Report as there are several items in the Report that weren't agreed on with the Planning Board
 - b. The Planning Board is still trying to get the consultant, Judy Barrett to appear before the Board
 - Friends of Walpole Elders
 - a. Rich McCarthy provided a report as he was unable to attend
 - b. The Friends gave a total of \$9,987 to the Center in 2023 – Monthly Mailings \$7,165, Gift Cards \$200, Pool Table maintenance \$1,000, Holiday Party \$1,372 and \$250 in gift cards to the Tyler collection for Holiday Party
 - c. The Friends are looking for the Center's needs in 2024
 - d. The Friends would like to Thank the Center staff for all they have done in the past five years
 - Select Board Update
 - a. WFD Promotions
 1. Scott Stacey on his promotion to Captain
 2. Peter Armstrong on his promotion to Lieutenant
 3. Nealy 50 years of experience between the two
 - b. FY25 Budget
 1. Jim Johnson updated the Board on the currently balanced budget for FY25. The budget message will be posted on the Town website in the coming weeks
 - c. State Funding – the State announced 9C budget cuts due to revenue shortfalls. These cuts do not have a large impact on Walpole's fiscal planning
 - d. Spring Town Meeting - The Board voted to close the Town Meeting at 15 Articles
 - e. Johnson Middle School – Town Administrator Jim Johnson updated the Board on the status of negotiation to rent the JMS Building once the schools have moved into the new middle school

- f. ARPA Funds – The Board voted unanimously to allocate \$1.1 million to support the proposed High School project. There remains \$1.2 million in ARPA funds that have yet to be allocated. Multiple infrastructure needs have been addressed to date including drinking water, sewer, roads, bridges and building projects with the ARPA funds.
- Looking ahead
 - a. February 2024 – Town Administrator Jim Johnson
 - b. March 2024 – Jillian Nauman to speak on the Grandparents Group

10. Open Forum

- a. No questions from the guests

Next Meeting scheduled for February 22nd, 10:00 AM at the Center

Janet motioned, and Jerry seconded

After a unanimous vote, the Meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM