

## **Council on Aging Board Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Date: Thursday, April 28, 2022

A meeting of the Council on Aging Board was held on Thursday, April 28, 2022, at 10:00am at the Walpole Council of Aging with the following members present; Janet Fasanello, Linda Winslow, Mary Jones, Meagan Priest, Sandhya Malur, Marcia St. Louis, Richard McCarthy and Joanne DiPietro. Also in attendance was COA Director Kerri McManama, COA Assistant Director Debbie Fradkin, COA Outreach Coordinator Laurel St. Pierre and Nancy Aicardi. One guest was also present.

Absent: Josette Burke, Jim Pellegrine

10:00 AM: The Meeting was called to order by Janet Fasanello

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all in attendance

1. Attendance was taken
2. Review of March 24th Meeting Minutes
  - No corrections or admissions were noted. The vote to accept the Minutes was unanimous
3. Outreach Review – Laurel St. Pierre
  - Slides were provided
  - Total for month was 563 plus 1 service provider, an increase of over 100 from March
  - Numbers seeing an increase were fuel assistance, AARP Tax Assistance (huge increase), foot care, food assistance, Medicare/MassHealth (SHINE), and well-being checks
  - AARP Tax Assistance
    - a. Bill Abbott spearheaded the project and reported back to Lauren and Kerri
    - b. There were a team of 4 tax preparers, and they completed 120 tax returns, and increase of 25 over last year
    - c. This was not limited to Walpole residents
    - d. A total of between \$18,000 and \$24,000 was saved, and many people were able to take advantage of the Circuit Breaker
4. Center Statistics – Kerri McManama
  - Attendance most days remains over 125
  - More people are walking in, not just calling on the phone
  - The Center is seeing more and more of people coming in for one activity, and then staying longer to participate in additional activities
  - The on-line registration system is going well – many people will register for regular classes and then call for special events – this saves much time for staff
  - Update re Ford Transit Connect – painting has been completed and the van has been put to good use
  - Gift Certificates are now available for purchase in denominations of \$25 and \$50 for COA programs and classes
  - Town Events: Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup> DEA National Drug Take Back Day (10 – 2) and Saturday, June 11<sup>th</sup> Walpole Day (11 – 3)
  - Center Events: May 10<sup>th</sup> Castle Island Van Trip, May 17<sup>th</sup> Shredding Event, May 26 Summer Kick Off Party

5. Finance Update – (Jim Pellegrine provided slides)
  - Total expenses were \$3,215.92 with a big increase shown for gas/diesel fuel and equipment maintenance and repair
  - A total of \$4,847.86 of the Formula Grant was spent in March
6. Old Business
  - Walpole Housing Authority Meeting Update – Linda Winslow
    - a. The Housing Authority updated the electrical system and installed a new fire watch system at Neponset View
    - b. There has been better turn around in vacancies as they are now getting better service from the designated providers
    - c. The Fair Market Value rents are to increase
      1. Walpole comes under the Boston Housing Authority, so rents are going up more than other towns not affiliated with the BHA
      2. We need to get our elected officials to get this changed so that Walpole's Fair Market Value rents are not based on Boston's rates
    - d. The State is looking into allowing people in an emergency situation to be placed in another town until a vacancy opens in Walpole
  - Master Plan Update
    - a. Only 18 people attended April 27th Meeting, but there was good response from those that were there
    - b. Easels were set up around the room with the 10 Goals listed so that people could go around and write comments
    - c. There were many good comments regarding the need for more senior housing possibly run by the Town and not the State
    - d. People also want to see downtown kept as is, and not have the many antique homes torn down
    - e. Sandhya suggested that Janet take back to the Committee for them to have a table at Walpole Day with information on the 10 Goals and availability to take feedback
  - Select Board Update
    - a. The Night Before the 4<sup>th</sup> will return this year – the event is scheduled for Saturday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>
    - b. Norfolk County Solar – The County will hold a public forum of the proposed solar project on May 16<sup>th</sup> in the Administration Building Main Conference Room at the Aggie
    - c. New Zoning – Patrick Deschenes, the Town Director of Community and Economic Development, made a presentation to the Board on the timeline for towns with MBTA service being subject to requirements for multi-family development within ½ mile of station stops. The State is still finalizing the requirements and guidelines
    - d. MCI Cedar Junction – this facility will be phasing out operation over the next two years. The Board discussed issues including the loss of State funding on an annual basis as well as the State's intention for the use of that parcel. It was agreed that the Town needs to be pro-active in reviewing the zoning of that parcel as well as invite the State delegation in for a meeting to discuss future plans
    - e. 2022 Election – scheduled for Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup> at regular locations. The State Legislature did not extend the early voting in effect during the pandemic. Absentee ballots will be available at the Town Clerk's office
      1. Linda mentioned that the League of Women Voters will hold a Town-wide Candidate Night on Wednesday, May 25<sup>th</sup> at the library. This will not be live-streamed, but will be recorded
    - f. Spring Town Meeting – to be held on Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am on the WHS football field with a rain location of the High School auditorium

- g. Senior Tax Exemption – Jim Johnson updated the Board on the progress towards this important initiative and mentioned that a group will likely need to be formed to review and augment the findings of Dennis Fils, the Director of Assessing
  - Friends of Walpole Update – representative unable to attend
    - a. Kerri mentioned that the Friends did pledge \$500 for the Volunteer Luncheon
  - Topics/Speakers for Upcoming Meetings
    - a. May – Meagan will discuss ways to talk to and assist people with a new diagnosis of dementia
    - b. June – Jim Johnson, Town Administrator will be here
    - c. Sandhya will look into her friend to come in October as our summer hiatus is July and August and September will be the Annual Meeting as well as a regular meeting
  - Please think of questions for Jim Johnson for next month
7. New Business
- a. Kerri provided a copy of the Council on Aging Policy and Procedures to refresh people's minds of the Officers and Duties prior to the formation of an Election Committee in May
  - b. Johnson Middle School – no decisions yet for use. Senior housing has been ruled out, and the Food Pantry is not interested in relocating here.
  - c. Suggestions/Comments to take back to the Master Plan Committee
    - 1. The general consensus of the Board is that the Committee (and Town) needs better communication out to residents
    - 2. Rich suggested that a notice should have gone out to Town Meeting representatives for them to attend meetings
    - 3. Meaghan suggested that the Committee coordinate with apartment and condominium complexes in Town as they communicate to their residents via email
  - d. It needs to be determined whether it is a conflict of interest for someone to be on both the COA Board and the Friends
8. Open Forum – no questions, comments from the guest

**Next Meeting scheduled for May 26<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 AM at the Center**

After a unanimous vote, the Meeting was adjourned at 11:05 AM