

Council on Aging Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday, December 15, 2022

The regular meeting of the Council on Aging Board was held on Thursday, December 15, 2022, at 10:00am at the Walpole Council of Aging with the following members present; Josette Burke, Mary Jones, Sandhya Malur, Janet Fasanello, Linda Winslow, Jim Pellegrine, Marcia St Louis, and Meaghan Priest. Also in attendance was COA Director Kerri McManama, COA Outreach Coordinator Jillian Newman and Nancy Aicardi. One (1) guest was in attendance.

Absent: Joanne DiPietro

10:05 AM: The Monthly Meeting was called to order by Josette Burke

1. Attendance and Pledge of Allegiance
2. Review of November Meeting Minutes
 - Linda Winslow indicated a spelling error in Joanne DiPietro's name
 - Sandyha Malur indicated there were two instances under the Finance Update under Operating Budget and Gifts that read "September", which should be changed to October
 - Sandyha motioned and Janet seconded the motion to accept the November Minutes with the three changes
 - The November Minutes with changes were accepted by a 6-0-2 Vote as Jim Pellegrine and Marcia St Louis abstained
3. Bill Abbott spoke on the AARP Tax Assistance Program and Senior Circuit Breaker
 - Overview
 - a. A collaboration between AARP and the IRS
 - b. Started in 1968 with 4 volunteers and 1 site providing free tax preparation service
 - c. Now over 30,000 volunteers working at more than 5,000 sites
 1. The 4 volunteers at Walpole prepared 120 returns last year with 57 people getting all or part of the Mass Senior Circuit Breaker credit
 - d. Largest free tax preparation service
 - e. Targeted to low- and moderate-income taxpayers
 - f. Not required to be an AARP member – no age limit, but primarily seniors
 - Scope
 - a. All the tax preparers must pass and Advanced IRS Test
 - b. The Advanced Test focuses on the type of tax returns that they see
 1. Wages, interest, dividends, social security, pension, IRA Distributions, capital gains, unemployment, etc.
 2. Child tax credit, Child and Dependent Care credit, Educator tax credit, itemized returns, Student Loan(s)
 3. Out of Scope: Rental Income, Crypto Currency, small business with inventory, Alternative Minimum Tax
 - Tax Preparation
 - a. Taxpayer needs to provide completed Intake Form, provide government issued picture for both taxpayer and spouse (if applicable), Social Security cards for all listed on return (SSA-1099 is acceptable), all tax documents, prior year's tax return, blank check if they want direct deposit

- b. If interested in Senior Circuit Breaker credit
 - 1. Homeowners: copies of property tax bills paid in 2022 or Real Estate Paid Tax Statement from Town Collectors Office and copies of Water/Sewer bills paid in 2022 or ask Town Collector for a copy of paid bills
 - 2. Renters: name and address of landlord
 - Process
 - a. Tax documents and Intake documents are reviewed
 - b. Federal and State tax returns are prepared by the Tax Counselor
 - c. Quality Review – all returns have to be reviewed by another preparer with the same Advanced certification
 - d. Tax Returns are reviewed with the taxpayer(s) – Taxpayer(s) signs Form 8879 (Permission to e-File and that this is your return)
 - e. All documents including the prepared tax returns are returned to taxpayer
 - Senior Circuit Breaker
 - a. Eligibility
 - 1. Must be a Massachusetts resident
 - 2. Taxpayer (or spouse) must be 65 by 1/1/2023
 - 3. Must own or rent residential property and it must be primary residence
 - 4. For tax year 2022, “total income” cannot exceed
 - \$64,000 for single taxpayers
 - \$80,000 for head of household filers
 - \$96,000 for married couples filing a joint return
 - 5. Assessed value of homeowner’s personal residence as of 1/1/2022 cannot exceed \$912,000
 - 6. Property Tax plus 50% of Water and Sewer bills paid in 2022 is greater than 10% of “total Income”
 - 7. Renters: eligible if rent paid in 2022 is greater than 10% of “total Income”
 - 8. Maximum credit is \$1,200
 - b. Who is not eligible
 - 1. Not a Massachusetts resident
 - 2. You are married and filing status is Married Filing Separately
 - 3. You are a dependent of another taxpayer
 - 4. You received a federal and/or state rent subsidy
 - 5. Property is owned by an irrevocable trust
 - Misc. Items
 - a. 1099-C Unemployment is taxable
 - b. Chapter 62F Mass Tax Payment Refund – is it to be taxed? (may have to have 2021 Return amended)
 - c. Essential Worker payment – is it to be taxed?
 - d. 3rd Party Payment Processors (Pay Pal, Venmo, Cash App, etc.) – a 1099-K needs to be issued and income taxed
4. Kerri “introduced” Lindsey Greener – new Program Coordinator – normally works Thursdays, but switched to Friday this week for Open House
5. Outreach Update – Jillian Newman (see slides)
- The total Outreach number for October was 448 with 251 unique individuals
 - a. The most common method remains by phone
 - b. October In-Person visits were 151, many of which were fuel assistance concerns
 - c. Jillian provided slides including a Pie Chart with the breakdown of categories of Outreach
 - 1. Categories showing increased numbers are:
 - Medicare/MassHealth due especially to Open Enrollment period
 - Medical Rides

2. First-time Food and Fuel Assistance applications are very time consuming as a lot of documentation is required
 - Many times, the applicant does not follow through as they don't know where documents are, or they feel overwhelmed
 - d. SHINE Part D
 1. Processed 170 individuals
 2. Evaluated a total of \$254,184 in Part D spent by all beneficiaries
 3. Recommended 78 (46%) change their current Part D plans
 4. Identified a potential savings of \$111,431 (44%)
 5. Input the enrollment changes for 49 (63%) of cases evaluated resulting in savings of \$42,095 (38%) for next year
 6. Based on beneficiaries where they actually input the change, the average savings per person is \$859 in 2023
6. State of the Center – Kerri McManama (slides were provided)
- Growth
 - a. Transportation
 1. Is up over October's high numbers
 2. Both drivers are up to 30 hours/week each, but typically are working more
 3. The Center is trying to set a precedent of at least 48 hours advanced notice – two weeks' notice is ideal, one week is okay
 4. The Center has "The Ride" as a backup for medical appointments
 5. Meaghan mentioned COTA Companion Rides – there is a cost, but it is for medical rides with professional assistance
 - b. Check in count continues to increase
 - c. The Average Daily Attendance continues to increase
 - d. The 60 – 65 age group continues to increase
 - Staffing Update
 - a. Lindsey Greener, New Program Coordinator, LSW with past experience in Protective Services with HESSCO
 1. She will work 18 hours/week Monday to Thursday
 - b. The Center is now fully staffed – Kerri and Deb are now officially at 35 hours each
 - Popular Events in November
 - a. "We Did It for You! Women's Journey Through History"
 - b. Let's Talk Falls
 - c. Morning of Remembrance
 - d. Veterans Pancake Breakfast
 - e. Veterans Transportation to American Heritage Museum
 - f. Coffee Hour with Senator Rush
 - g. Ice Cream Social with JWCW
 - h. Lions Thanksgiving for Seniors
 - Upcoming in January
 - a. Revival of the Boston Post Cane Tradition at 1/12 Coffee and Conversation
 - b. Center 4th Birthday Party on 1/13
 - c. Renaming of Newsletter – probably in February
7. Finance Update – (Sandhya Malur provided slides)
- Total spent in November was \$4,341.02 (Operating Budget)
 - a. On track for FY spending (Kerri is conservative in spending in the first half of year)
 - A total of \$1,919.54 of the Formula Grant was spent in November (does not include funds spent on salaries)
 - Gifts
 - a. The Center received a total of \$25 in gifts in November
 - b. A total of \$1,845.98 was spent in November

8. Old Business
 - Outside Use Policy
 - a. The COA went to the Town with possible changes
 1. The Town followed up with the Town Attorney
 2. The wording “insurance may be required” will be left in
 - b. There will be a review by team in consultation with Town Administration if needed on all Applications, but specifically for each Application on need to require adding Town of Walpole to Additional insured
 - c. At the end of the discussion, Janet motioned, and Marcia seconded for a Vote on accepting the Outside Use Policy – The Vote was unanimous.
9. New Business
 - Walpole Housing Update – no update
 - Master Plan Update – still on hold until the first of the year
 - Select Board Update – no update
 - Friends of Walpole Update
 - a. The Friends provided \$500 toward the Holiday Open House
 - b. The COA Board desires a close working relationship the Friends
 - c. Rich McCarthy, a member of the Friends volunteered to be the representative to the COA Board
 - d. Discussion ensued regarding a Liaison from the Friends to the Board
 1. A precedent would be set to have a volunteer to the COA Board
 2. It was brought up that the COA Board and the Friends are “private” Boards, not public Town Boards
 3. Once a decision and vote are made, changes will have to be made to the Policies and Procedures when next updated
 4. The COA would like the right to withdraw the liaison
 5. The decision was made to table the discussion and votes until the January meeting
 - Two votes: 1) to accept the liaison and 2) whether the liaison would be a voting member of the COA Board
 - Potential Board Candidate
 - a. The Executive Board (J. Burke, J. Fasanello, S. Malur and L. Winslow) met with the potential candidate
 - b. The candidate has been verbally approved by the Select Board and will be officially voted on at their meeting next week
 - c. Candidate is Joanne Mulligan
 - Topics for Future Meetings:
 - a. January: Jim Johnson
 - b. February: Sandy Pellegrine
 - c. March: open currently
 - d. April: Brendan Croak of the Recreation Department
10. Open Forum
 - a. No questions from the one guest
 - b. Kerri read a letter from a gentleman who was not able to attend regarding the name of the Center – does not want to exclude people from attending if they feel they are not “a senior”

Next Meeting scheduled for January 26th, 10:00 AM at the Center

Josette asked for a Motion to Adjourn – Janet motioned, and Meagan seconded

After a unanimous vote, the Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM