

Council on Aging Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday, January 26, 2023

The regular meeting of the Council on Aging Board was held on Thursday, January 26, 2023, at 10:00am at the Walpole Council of Aging with the following members present; Josette Burke, Mary Jones, Joanne DiPietro, Janet Fasanello, Linda Winslow, Jim Pellegrine, Marcia St Louis, Meaghan Priest, and JoAnne Mulligan. Also in attendance was COA Director Kerri McManama, COA Assistant Director Debbie Fradkin, COA Outreach Worker Jillian Newman, COA Program Coordinator Lindsey Greener and Nancy Aicardi. Two (2) guests were in attendance.

Absent: Sandyha Malur

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

1. Attendance was taken, a Moment of Silence was held for Cliff Snuffer, and then the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. Brief Introduction of JoAnne Mulligan
3. Jim Johnson, Town Administrator
 - New Middle School
 - a. Well under way
 - b. Favorable Bids – slightly under budget – were received
 - c. Full speed ahead at this point
 - New Veterans Agent has been hired
 - a. She's in her mid-30's and lives in Norton with her 4-year-old son
 - b. She has previously served in the Army and worked for Veterans Affairs
 - c. We will share the position with Medfield
 - Walpole Prison
 - a. The State still has no plan for the property – nothing going on – nothing new
 - b. John Rogers is spearheading this
 - c. Walpole currently receives \$800,000 a year from the State, which will go away once the prison is closed
 - MBTA
 - a. There is a meeting scheduled between the Town and the MBTA for January 27th
 - b. Walpole is the worst handicapped-accessible station, and the T wants to discuss remediation
 - c. Jim Johnson will also bring up safety concerns now that there are more Foxboro trains going through Walpole station and commuters have to cross tracks in front of them
 - Budget
 - a. Town Budget is currently being prepared and will be completed by February 1st
 - Gilmore Project
 - a. There will be 142 units, which will get Walpole over the required number of affordable housing units
 - Potential By-Law change at Town Meeting
 - a. The rules regarding in-law units need to be revised
 - b. Another needed By-Law change is in regard to Senior Housing – additional units are needed
 - c. The Zoning Board and Planning Board need to be onboard before any By-Law change can be made

- Repurposing Johnson School
 - a. It needs approximately \$4-5 million in upgrades and renovations
 - b. Jim Johnson met with the Superintendent of Schools to discuss the possibility of renting it out for 5 – 10 years. Then we would still have the building if needed at that time
 - Old Town Hall
 - a. It needs \$5 million in work, and the Town currently does not have a use for the building
 - b. Will be voted on at Town Meeting whether to sell
 - c. (Also, the East Walpole Library – should this property be sold)
 - East Walpole Fire Station
 - a. Will remain open as money has been put in to upgrade the building
 - b. It would cost \$14.7, \$14.9 million to build a new 3-bay station
 - Tri-County VOC School
 - a. They want to build a new school at a proposed cost of \$280 million
 - b. A vote will be put to the Representatives of all the Towns involved – the majority will carry the vote
 - c. If the vote carries, Walpole will be responsible for a share of the costs, or approximately \$1.1 million annually for the 30-year duration of the bond
 - d. The condition of the VOC schools is a state-wide problem as most are 50-60 years old
 - e. The State is sitting on lots of money and will be receiving additional funds from the new Millionaire's tax, so Jim is hopeful money will come from the State rather than the Towns
4. Review of December Meeting Minutes
- There were no additions or corrections noted
 - Janet motioned and Linda seconded the motion to accept the December Minutes as is
 - The vote was unanimous to accept the December minutes
5. Outreach Update – Jillian Newman (slides were provided)
- The total Outreach number for December was 370 to 217 unique individuals
 - a. The numbers remained steady month to month during 2022
 - b. The most common method remains by phone, but there were 111 in-person office visits which is higher than usual
 - c. The most common referral method remains as “self”, but the number of staff referrals totaled 35 in December – the drivers are amazing in keeping their ears open and referring people
 - d. Jillian provided slides including a Pie Chart with the breakdown of categories of Outreach
 - 1. Categories showing increased numbers are:
 - Medical Rides continues to be a big demand and the Center has had to turn people away. RSVP is now working with the COA to take some of the rides
 - Medicare/Mass Health numbers continue to be high
 - Newer trend
 - a. There is no other social service available for people, so the Center is seeing an increase in the number of younger people calling in
 - There is a huge need for senior housing
 - Kerri spoke of a caller that Jillian assisted
 - a. A son called after trying a number of other agencies to get assistance for his father
 - b. Jillian was able to steer him in the right direction and ensured that his father received the help he needed
 - c. The caller was so pleased with the services he received that he directed gifts in memory of his father be directed here to the COA and we have received a number of gifts in memory of this man
 - d. Joanne DiPietro suggested that maybe an article regarding this should appear in the local paper

6. State of the Center – Kerri McManama (slides were provided)
 - Transportation
 - a. In many ways the Center is “stuck” as there is a high demand for rides, but the Center is limited in the number of drivers and vans and is at capacity
 - Check-ins
 - a. Check in count continues to increase – there were 2,715 total check-ins in December
 - b. The Average Daily Attendance continues to increase and a couple of days there were over 200 check-ins
 - c. Starting next month out-of-town registrants will need to be excluded from a couple of programs that consistently have large wait lists – out-of-town check-ins were 30% of December’s numbers
 - d. The total check-ins in 2022 is just about double the total for 2020
 - e. For July 2022 – December 2022, there were increases across every category both in duplicated and unique check-ins
 - Staffing Update
 - a. Welcome Lindsey Greener (first official meeting with the Board today)
 - b. Annual Report completed by the Department and letter from the Board written by Chair and Vice-Chair
 - c. Budget Meeting with Finance Committee scheduled for February 13th at 7pm
 - d. Beginning planning stages for spring and summer events
 - e. Working on identifying a new tour company for our trips as Fox Tours is no longer offering tours
 - December Events
 - a. Coffee and Conversation (Mass Audubon, Tri County Students Fraud and Scams, Honor Flight, AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Program)
 - b. WFD Safety Luncheon
 - c. Yuletide Newport Trip
 - d. Until Help Arrives with DA Morrissey
 - e. Holiday Lights Tour – two sold out tours, may have to do two nights next year
 - f. Holiday Open House
 - g. Holiday Songs and Trivia with Blessed Sacrament middle schoolers
 - Upcoming events
 - a. Coffee and Conversation (Social Security, Photo Tour of London with Jim Hinds, Friends Against Fraud, Chocolate Tasting)
 - b. AARP Tax Prep Mondays by Appointment – currently scheduling into March
 - c. Heart Saver CPR AED Class (two classes??)
 - d. Introduction to Tai Chi
 - e. Intergenerational Yoga
 - f. Big Y Lunch and Learn “Cough and Cold Remedies, OTC vs Rx
 - g. Cupcake Decorating
 - h. Movie Matinee – Sleepless in Seattle
7. Finance Update – (Kerri provided slides)
 - Total spent in December was \$3,019.40 (Operating Budget)
 - a. Still on track for FY spending – a total of \$17,340.12 of \$43,600.00 has been spent
 - A total of \$1,018.57 of the Formula Grant was spent in December (does not include funds spent on salaries)
 - a. Kerri has removed 100 names from the Newsletter mailing list due to returned mail – will save money on postage also
 - Gifts
 - a. The Center received a total of \$875 in gifts in December including \$500 from the Friends for the Holiday Event

- b. A total of \$1,647.48 was spent in December

8. Old Business

- December 20, 2022 Select Board Meeting approval of JoAnne Mulligan
 - a. JoAnne lives in South Walpole and is a Town Meeting member for Precinct 5
 - b. She was involved with fundraising for the COA Center
- Discussion regarding Liaison with Friends
 - a. Josette had a conversation with Rich McCarthy to get approval to say he's willing to be this person
 - b. Josette then spoke to someone on the Select Board on how to handle the Liaison position
 - 1. The suggestion was to try it for a year then go the route of Policy and Procedure changes if the Board wishes to continue this arrangement
 - c. Friends Update is always on the COA Board Agenda
 - d. Rich is a great fundraiser, so this is a good fit as the Board is restricted from fundraising

9. New Business

- Walpole Housing Update – no update as there was no meeting posted for January
- Master Plan Update – still on hold as the Committee is still waiting for the red-lined copy from the consultant
- Select Board Update
 - a. Walpole Day has been scheduled for May 13, 2023
 - b. ARPA Funds - The Board approved the award of a contract to perform maintenance on the Old Town Hall clock tower. These funds were previously allocated from ARPA Funding through the County
 - c. Walpole 300th Anniversary – Bill Buckley updated the Board on this Committee's planning for the anniversary celebration to take place throughout 2024. A website will be launched later this spring
 - d. Composting Program – the Waste Reduction Committee and Walpole Green will be hosting a presentation on January 12th at the Library
 - e. Wayfinding and Branding Committee – Pat Deschenes, Director of Community and Economic Development briefed the Board on the formation of a committee to direct this new effort by the Town
 - f. FY24 Town Budget – the current draft budget is balanced and will be finalized in February and presented to the Town
 - g. MBTA Train Station – the MBTA will be meeting with the Town to review possible work to be performed at the train station and the other properties owned by the MBTA
 - h. Spring Town Meeting – the Board voted to close the Town meeting warrant with 31 articles. More information will be provided as the article language is finalized
 - i. Town Clerk update
 - 1. The process of running elections has changed considerably over recent years
 - 2. Mail-in voting has proven to be a popular and accessible change, but it does place a considerable burden on municipal personnel and volunteers
 - 3. Half of the 62% of registered Walpole residents that voted in the last election were by mail
 - 4. The Clerk's office has also had to request a police presence at voting machine calibration, early voting, and mail-in vote processing due to the increasingly aggressive behavior of some residents
- Friends of Walpole Update
 - a. Rich McCarthy was chosen Man of the Year by Friends of St. Patrick
 - 1. He would like to donate half of his monetary award to the COA
 - 2. He would like to target non-participating seniors, possibly something for newcomers/first timers
 - 3. Possibly "When is the Right Time"

- Potential Board Candidates
 - a. Many resumes have been received
 - b. Waiting until the end of January for any further resumes, then the Executive Board will meet with all the candidates
 - c. Following the meetings, the Executive Board will send its recommendation to the Select Board
- New photos for name tags for the Board will be taken
- Topics for Future Meetings:
 - a. February: Sandy Pellegrine
 - b. March: Mark Gallivan
 - c. April: Brendan Croak of the Recreation Department
 - d. May: Formation of Nominating Committee for June Elections

10. Open Forum

- a. No questions from the guests

Next Meeting scheduled for February 23rd, 10:00 AM at the Center

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

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