

Council on Aging Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday, May 25, 2023

The regular meeting of the Council on Aging Board was held on Thursday, May 25, 2023, at 10:00am at the Walpole Council of Aging with the following members present; Josette Burke, Jim Pellegrine, Janet Fasanello, Mary Jones, Sandhya Malur, Joanne DiPietro, Linda Winslow, Jerry Reicher, Meagan Priest, and JoAnne Mulligan. Also in attendance was COA Director Kerri McManama, COA Outreach Worker Jillian Nauman, and Nancy Aicardi. Three (3) guests were in attendance.

Absent: Marcia St. Louis

10:00 AM: The Monthly Meeting was called to order by Josette Burke

1. Attendance was taken, and then the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. Melissa Bingham, Veterans Services Officer
 - Background
 - a. Melissa is an Army veteran and previously worked at the Brockton VA Hospital in mental health
 - b. She was born and raised in North Carolina and loves the outdoors as the outdoors is where she finds peace
 - c. She is married and her son will turn 5 next week
 - What her role is here at the Walpole COA
 - a. She has added one new person to the Walpole Veterans Committee so that it is now full
 - b. She helps veterans with disability benefits, survivor benefits, burial benefits, etc.
 - c. She would like to bring different speakers in to speak at the monthly veterans' meetings
 - d. She would also like to bring speakers in from non-profit organizations so that veterans can learn of and take advantage of any "freebies" they may offer
 - e. She would like to get a newsletter set up to keep veterans aware of what's "coming down the pike" and how it might affect them. Also, to let veterans know what else may be happening in the area
 - Melissa has realized that the COA does not know how many seniors in town are veterans and would like to compile a list
 - Feel Good Story
 - a. (DD Form 214 comprises Discharge Papers and Separation Documents. It documents length of service, where the veterans served, what branch of service the veteran was in, date of honorable discharge, etc.)
 - b. A family member contacted Melissa as they did not have the necessary paperwork (DD 214) to get full military burial honors
 - c. It's not always easy dealing with the Federal Government, and the family did not have enough time to go through the process online
 - d. Melissa stuck it out until she got a person to talk to to expedite the Form
 - e. The Form was received in time, and the veteran got the full honors they were entitled to
3. Review of April Meeting Minutes
 - Janet motioned and Sandhya seconded the motion to accept the April Minutes as is
 - The vote was 8- 0- 2 to accept the April minutes, with Jim and Josette abstaining as they were absent last month

4. Outreach Update – Jillian Nauman (slides were provided)
 - The total Outreach number for April was 339 to 198 unique individuals
 - a. The numbers were down from March, but there are several individuals who are requiring a lot of work
 - b. The most common method remains by phone (167), and there were 148 in-person office visits
 - c. The most common referral method remains as “self”, and the drivers continue to be a very important resource as they see things that staff may not see
 - d. The total of rides in April was 461 – RSVP volunteers are helping with the demand (note: the total does not include RSVP rides)
 - e. Jillian provided slides including a Pie Chart with the breakdown of categories of Outreach
 1. Medical Rides continues to be a big demand
 2. Well-being checks also is high, and the staff is keeping an eye on several people
 3. There is still outreach for Fuel Assistance as there are some people still waiting for an answer to their applications (filed last October)
 4. Food assistance calls include people with questions about the Food Pantry, giving people information about what help is available, etc. Jillian has reached out to St. Vincent de Paul also for help.
 - Another “feel good” story
 - a. Jillian is starting a Grandparent Raising Grandchildren program
 1. The aim is to help the grandparents connect to Tech Time, learn what resources are available, have other people to talk to who are experiencing the same things
 - b. The grandparent does not have to have legal custody to participate
 - c. June 22nd is the first meeting of the program
 - d. Jillian already has three families interested
 - e. Joanne DiPietro offered to help out, to perhaps speak at a workshop meeting
5. Center Update – Kerri McManama (slides were provided)
 - Check-ins
 - a. Check in count was down a little – there were 3,436 total check-ins in April, though the numbers remain high
 - b. The average daily attendance is up (181)
 - c. We are approaching the total check ins for 2020
 - d. Year over Year numbers are running about the same
 - e. The Center continues to see new people coming all the time
 - Other Updates
 - a. Walpole Day was May 13th – Kerri thanked all the people that helped out
 - b. Senior Self Defense with the Walpole Police Department will have additional training sessions this fall
 - c. Spring Fling Event was held indoors due to 50-degree weather
 - d. The Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon was a great success
 - e. AARP Taxes has concluded for this year
 - f. “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” with Steve Horgan – the “Bullpen Cop” was very well attended
 - Upcoming events
 - a. Coffee and Conversation (George Bird Lasting Legacies, Online and Telephone Scams, Getting Savvy about Senior Living, The War of the Roses with Paolo DeGregorio, A Trip to the Upper Amazon River, How to Maintain Health Resolutions, The Rare World of Reptiles Presentation and Nature Walk with Naturalist, Sourdough Starter for Beginners, Fascinating New World of Artificial Intelligence)
 - b. Get the Scoop - New Member Program – July start date
 - c. Summer Schedule returns in July – late Tuesdays and noon closures on Friday

- d. Summer Tuesday Nights: Summer Reading Challenge Launch, Minute to Win It Game Night, Music and Commercials Lecture, GNO Floral Design Class, Lions Club BBQ Luau, Medicare 101 Lecture, Dinner Show, Movie Night - "Air"
- 6. Finance Update – (Sandhya provided slides)
 - Expenses are very much on track
 - Total spent in April was \$1,929.65 (Operating Budget)
 - a. Electricity is still running high
 - b. Kerry hoping to get to 90% spent with 10% to keep in reserve by the end of June
 - A total of \$2,754.70 of the Formula Grant was spent in April (does not include funds spent on salaries).
 - a. The goal is to carry over \$29K to next fiscal year
 - b. Coffee donations are increasing so the cost to the Center is going down
 - c. The Breakfast Program is currently being funded by a large gift
 - Gifts
 - a. The Center received a total of \$450.00 in gifts in April
 - b. A total of \$553.91 was spent in April leaving a balance of \$15,575.62
- 7. Old Business
 - No old business this month
- 8. New Business
 - Walpole Housing Update – Linda was unable to attend the meeting
 - Master Plan Update
 - a. The last go around is back in the hands of the consultants
 - Friends of Walpole Update
 - a. Nothing new to report
 - Select Board Update: no report received this month
 - Nominating Committee: Rich McCarthy and Joanne DiPietro agreed to be on the Committee
 - Topics for Future Meetings:
 - a. June: Brendan Croak, Recreation Department; Election of Officers; also "Anatomy" of this past year, and any topics, etc. for next year
 - b. Sandhya suggested that people could email any ideas for next year
 - Discussion whether to have July and August Meetings
 - a. It was decided to forgo meetings during the summer
 - b. Janet motioned to have a vote, and Sandhya seconded
 - c. Vote was unanimous to not hold meetings during the summer
- 9. Open Forum
 - a. Jerry Reicher brought up a concern regarding the Senior Center Signage
 - 1. Many people have difficulty finding the Center as the only "Senior Center" specific signage is the electronic sign at the corner of South Street and Common Street
 - 2. There is no "senior center" signage on the building or out at the street
 - 3. People think the building is a bank as the sign on the building is "Walpole Cooperative Bank South Street Center". Also, this signage blends into the building
 - 4. Jerry would like to see a vote regarding signage on the agenda for the fall
 - 5. Jerry would also like to see both men and women depicted in any articles, publications, etc. in order to draw more men into the Center
 - b. Jim Johnson, Town Administrator happened to drop into the Center, so Kerry invited him into the meeting
 - 1. Josette asked Jim whether it would be possible to have a sign put out at the street entrance saying, "Senior Center". Jim said he would take care of it
 - 2. Prison – Jim received a call yesterday from the State saying they were going to "mothball" the building and just keep a skeleton crew there

- The license plate program has already been moved to Norfolk
 - All the inmates will be out by the end of July
 - Jim once again told the State the Town would like to be involved in any planning
3. Old Town Hall – the Town will be reusing it as office space. There is still the expense of \$600 - \$800 thousand for a new slate roof. Since the building is on the Historical Register, there are restrictions as to what improvements/repairs can be made
 4. The three-night Taylor Swift concerts at Gillette went well without any major issues

Next Meeting scheduled for June 22nd, 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 11:40 AM