

Salem Council on Aging
Minutes
Regular Meeting
Salem Council on Aging
Wednesday, May 17th, 2017 6:00 p.m.

The Regular Meeting of the Salem Council on Aging was held Wednesday, May 17, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. at the Senior Center, 5 Broad Street, Salem, Massachusetts.

Roll Call

Board of Directors Present: Lynda Coffill (LCf, Chairperson), Elaine Heredeem (EH, Vice Chair) Alice Williams (AW, Treasurer), Anthony “Tony” Schettino (TS), John Russell (JR), Alison Thibodeau (AT), Donna Clifford (DC, Secretary)

Absent: Julie Carver (JC, Secretary, Donna Clifford (DC), Rosanna Donahue (COA/Activities Director), Abigail Butt.

Also, Present: Meredith McDonald (MM, Director of the COA), Elaine Milo (EM, City Councilor advocate to the COA), Sharon Kearney, (SK, Secretary of Minutes), visitor Teasie Riley Goggin - Friends of the COA Board Member.

I. Call to Order

Open the regular meeting Wednesday, May 17, 2017 6:00 p.m.

II. Approval of April 19, 2017 Regular Meeting minutes

LCf: Have you had a chance to review the minutes?

Response: No.

LCf: Take a couple of minutes.

EH: Make a motion to accept the minutes.

AW: Second the motion.

LCf: Any discussion?

LCf: All in favor? All those opposed?

Vote unanimously approved.

III: Report/Update from the Board Chairperson – Lynda Coffill

a. CBA/Councilor Lovely

Councilor Lovely responded to the letter we sent him. The CBA passed, 10 to 0, unanimous. It is going to go forward. That’s the good news. I will send Councilor Lovely a thank you letter.

IV: Report from the Director – Meredith McDonald

1. Salem for All Ages Update

Salem for All Ages had a meeting with community wide oversight committee on April 25th, at the Hawthorne Hotel. It was a great meeting. All the various community members who are going to be involved in this initiative were there. We as subcommittees could give them an update of what we have been doing since we became certified in January. It was a chance for them to hear what we were doing and great opportunity to meet with them. They were quite pleased to hear how much we have been doing and where we are going in a short period of time. It also gave them all a chance to ask questions or add their input about what we could try ding? It was good interaction with all the players and was beneficial because it gave us nice feedback that validated what we are doing and where we are trying to go with this. It also gave us some useful insight information of where we can go. We are only going to have meetings like that with the entire group twice a year. There were a lot of different people from different parts of

the city with different viewpoints and agendas present. We as a task force meet monthly and if the subcommittees need to meet in between those monthly meetings we do so.

2. Program Updates –

We had a busy month at the COA. On April 27th we held the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. It was a fabulous turnout. The dining room was packed. It was a nice chance to recognize all our volunteers for Park and Recreation and Community Services. Everybody received a pen/stylus. It was nice to have this dinner so we could wait on all of the volunteers. The former nutrition coordinator came to help us serve. There were some of the former Meals on Wheels drivers and senior volunteers present.

May 5th Friday night we had Cinco de Mayo. Eastern Bank and Salem Rotary sponsored the event. The dining room was full. There was dancing and all kinds of entertainment.

May 11th was the first pizza party of the season. It was packed with people and it went off well. There was entertainment. The room was set up a little differently that allowed for more dancing space which was fabulous as the dance floor was packed. It was a lot of fun.

May 18th is the Mother's Day celebration. The Traveling Chef will be at the COA. There are over 90 people signed up.

The Program Manager, COA/Activities Director and I went out to the Morency Building. They have weekly (?) arts and crafts workshops with Jewish Family and Children's Services. We went to meet folks who don't always come to the COA. We gave them gift certificates to come and attend a free class and a free event at the COA. This is a new outreach strategy we are trying to bring more people in from the other buildings who may be afraid to come on their own. We are going to go out to more of the housing authority buildings to try to bring more people in to get more participation going.

LCf: Question directed to Elaine Milo. Do you know anything about a community center going that's going into the Point? Is it a senior center?

EM Response: It is not a senior center. What the CDC, Community Development Corporation, did was rehab the building. A part of it is going to be dedicated to a community center. They did a fund raiser. My understanding is they are going to charge for its use. It is not a senior center. It's a community center. They do have their own transportation.

Question: Is it a private center?

EM Response: The CDC, Community Development Corporation, is a non-profit. It's not run by the city. They do a lot with housing. They purchased and rehabbed several the buildings down in the Point. They raised twenty-three million dollars to rehab buildings and this was a piece of the rehab. They rehabbed sixty-four units.

Question: Are they going to siphon off some of the seniors and people that would come to our CLC?

EM Response: I don't believe so. I don't think they are going to have formal programs like our CLC. It's not a huge space but it's for renting out. It is community wide. It's not just the neighborhood.

Question: Is it open?

EM Response: The space is open but not functioning as a center yet. They were talking about it at the Point Neighborhood Association a couple meetings ago. They were still trying to raise money for a challenge grant they had.

V. Old/New Business

1) COA Organizational Chart/Structure

A page with the organization chart on it was handed out.

LCf: The Activities Assistant is still vacant?

Response: No, there is a new person, Chris Dempsey. He started on May 8th as the Park and Recreation Activities Coordinator. Both Activities Assistants are Activities Coordinators.

Question: You only have one open position, Facilities Manager?

Response: Everything is filled. The Facilities Manager is Joe Candelario. We currently have two Principal Clerks but one has given notice and will be leaving a week from Friday.

EM Question: Was Roselia the one who introduced this chart to us?

LCf Response: No. The reorganization started about 2 or more years ago. We were asked as a board to support the organizational restructuring to facilitate communication. To bring everybody under an umbrella so administratively it would be easier to coordinate and communicate. Then Roselia was hired. And Roselia did bring the chart to the board and we had an issue with it because we thought Rosanna wasn't going to be for the COA but she is for the COA.

JR: It was important to us.

LCf: Floor is open for discussion.

JR: I don't have much of a discussion on the organizational chart. But at some point, we need to continue the discussion on a full-time Volunteer Coordinator. Is it time to talk about that now to keep that in the works? A good full-time Volunteer Coordinator is going to save the city their salary plus. It is important to start putting that together. Now is the time to start compiling the volunteers. Have a professional volunteer process where you fill out an application and interview for the position. They are not for just filling a void. They are needed. We are not too far off possible 18 months before the building hopefully opens.

LCf: We had a meeting with the Park, Recreation and Community Services Director and the Program Manager and they are on board with it. We are talking about the next budget cycle. The budget cycle starts in July. This would be for fiscal year 2019. So, we start now in July to advocate for a fulltime Volunteer Coordinator in 2019.

MM: The 2018 fiscal year budget has already been done.

Comment: February is when they start doing plans for the next fiscal year.

JR: We have a few months to build a case that it will save money or give us an enhanced program or a very short one.

LCf: There is plenty of evidence in other cities and towns to talk of the wealth and value of these folks.

JR: Are we going to continue the conversation of having the COA Director being pulled out from under the Park and Recreation? It was something we discussed. It doesn't seem to fit there. They did it years ago. Things have become so busy now where in the past one person could manage both departments.

Response: I don't think the Mayor will go along with that.

LCf: I would love to see the name changed to Community Services and not Park, Recreation and Community Services. If it stays as it is it feels like the COA and Veterans are add-ons. Neither should be an add-on. It should be Community Services. Under which comes Park and Recreation, Veteran's Affairs and COA. That maybe part of the issue. The Director of Community Services should be the administrative head working to make sure that the COA Director's and Program Manager's lives are easier. Why, do you think the Park, Recreation and Community Services Director is doing more than she should be?

JR Response: I don't think she is doing more than she is doing. The COA Director should have its own department head. They have totally different missions. Everybody has a different mission here. In most cases in other towns the COA Director is a separate entity. They work hand in hand in the building and the building is shared. It seems like there is an extra step to getting things done going through the Park, Recreation and Community Services Director. I don't know. I don't see it as a good fit under the Park, Recreation and Community Services Director.

Question: Does the COA Director need more autonomy?

Response: Yes.

Question: Who does the Veteran's Agency report to?

LCf Response: Supposed to be Park, Recreation and Community Services Director. The Veteran's Agency is not on this organizational chart.

MM Response: I don't think the Veteran's Agent reports to Park, Recreation and Community Services Director. To the best of my knowledge I think he reports to the Mayor, but I could be wrong. When we have our all staff meetings for Park, Recreation and Community Services the Veteran's Agent has never been there for over a year.

Response: Curious, if we are talking about mission statements the Veteran's Agency has a different mission.

LCf: That is the first thing we have to find out. If the COA Board wants to go on to advocate for pulling the COA out then if the Veteran Services is not part of the Community Services. Then that gives the board more leverage.

JR: I think it is worth further discussion. Maybe it won't go anywhere but we as a board think it is prudent. I think it is worth given it a shot.

EM: Historically I thought the understanding was when part of the new building coming on line was having the COA, I think what everybody referred to as a standalone. Whatever that means? Director?

LCf: What does the rest of the board think?

Response: A couple of board members agreed that the COA Director should be a standalone position.

Question: What activities does COA Activities Coordinator do for The Park, Recreation and Community Service side?

Response: We as a team will help them if they need help. We will volunteer at their events but the COA Activities Coordinator doesn't do any of the execution of Parks and Rec. activities/events.

LCf: The Program Manager and Park, Recreation and Community Services Director are here when the COA do our big events.

Response: Yes, they are at a lot of the events.

JR: There are two things that are going to have to happen if it is going to ever happen. The two things are: 1) Taking the COA Director out from under the Park and Recreation. 2) Getting the full-time Volunteer Coordinator. If it is not going to happen in the next year it is not going to happen. This is the perfect time to do these things.

EM: How do things work budgetarily? Can Park and Rec. Director switch money around? Can they take money out?

Response: Yes, The Park and Rec. Superintendent can take it out because the COA budget comes under the Park, Recreation and Community Services umbrella.

LCf: Money is taken out for utilities?

Response: Yes, and other things.

LCf: Like?

Response: The COA budget paid for the seniors to eat at a retirement party. Food for the staff was paid for out of personal money – NOT budget money!! The COA budget also pays for some maintenance items. The way it has been explained is the COA portion of the budget covers all the interior of the building maintenance issues. The COA budget covers the entire cost of the elevator. The COA pays for all the lights and supplies that are needed in the building. The Park and Recreation budget pays for all the exterior maintenance.

Question: It's not really costed out?

Response: No, it is not costed out. The COA Director tried asking the Park and Rec. Superintendent about this in the fall because the COA was paying for lights in the Veteran's area which is fine, but their budget is not part of the COA budget. They are separate and they do not have a maintenance line item. The budgets are not necessarily set up to reflect a blending. It is a little awkward because the COA has a budget but the principal clerk reports to the Program Manager who does not report to the COA Director. The COA Director can go to the clerk and ask to see the budget but the COA Director is not necessarily confirming all the purchase orders. The COA Activities Coordinator doesn't report to COA Director. The COA Activities Coordinator reports to Program Manager. The Program Manager reports to the Park, Recreation and Communities Services Superintendent. The COA Activities Coordinator does keep the COA

Director in the loop as to all the POs that she will be submitting – making sure they are being drawn against the correct budget line. From a budgetary stand point, the COA Director oversees the 2 COA Social Workers; their amount of traveling, home visits and the conferences they go to and fees attached to that. The COA Director also oversees the budget for the Transportation Coordinator and the drivers as well as the hours for the Nutrition Coordinator. Those are the parts of the budget that the COA Director directly controls. The COA Director does have access to the MUNIS system, and can login look at the budget to make sure nothing looks out of line.

Board Response: That's not right at all. If you want to pull out a few extra dollars to use it for something you can't just make that decision.

MM Response: I have to make sure no one else has decided to use it. That's when the donation account comes into play. For example, the Friends of the COA donates money to fund a program. The COA Activities Coordinator tracks this money meticulously on a separate spreadsheet so that she knows exactly what monies they have given us and what we are allocating it for, and how much is left to spend. Unfortunately, this donation goes into a gigantic COA donation bucket/budget line. Monies can also be taken from this bucket/budget line by the Program Director or PRCS Superintendent.. It has happened in the past where the Program Director drew money out of this line for something else, but we had already earmarked it for another purpose. What this did was simply create some unfortunate confusion. We were able to fix it – just had to have the clerk move money from one budget line to another to cover. Not a big deal, just extra steps. It just can get confusing when there are a lot of hands that can touch the same accounts.

Question: How often do you meet with the Park and Recreation Superintendent solely about budget information?

MM response: Solely about the budget once a year. But, if I had a question we have a standing meeting every Friday. And our offices are next to each other so if the Park and Recreation Superintendent is in the building and I have a question I ask it.

TS: Peabody Council and Friends to the Peabody Council do it differently- there is no money donated to the Council from the Friends. They give them an earmark donation for example they are given \$5000.00 in computers. There is no money there for anybody to touch. For instance, they have their volunteer party. There is not money donate for the party. They just sponsor the party.

MM: The Friends sponsor a lot of our fitness classes and the COA has to pay the instructors because of the MOU between the COA and the instructor. There is also a lot of logistical bookkeeping. There are absolutely somethings that could work. There are sometimes where that does work and yes, it is easier to do it that way.

JR: We do that whenever possible. Anything over \$1000.00 we have to go to the City Council.

Question directed to EM: Elaine, who will this go to for restructuring? The Mayor? How does this work?

EM Response: This is set up by an ordinance, the request for restructuring would have to come from the Mayor and it would be a request for an amended ordinance.

JR Question: Would it be worth to have a small group meet the Mayor to discuss this prior to moving it forward any further to have a discussion?

LCf: Amend the ordinance, you think we should have an informal meeting with the Mayor first?

EM Response: Put in for an informal meeting to discuss what we would like to see within the context of the new building. Explain that you are looking for a good administrative practice in order to be able to carry out the mission.

LCf: Who would like to be at this informal meeting?

Response: John Russell and Lynda Coffill. Abigail Butt may want to attend.

LCf Question: How are we doing on the accessory apartment ordinance?

EM Response: It is in committee. The Sanctuary City has set everybody back as well as reservations for the Chamber. Everybody is vying for that room.

Question: Which committee is it in front of?

Response: Economic development. It is in committee that is good.

LCf: Any other old business? Any new business?

JR: Can I give you a Friends update?

LCf: Please

JR: The Annual Pasta Dinner is June 9th at the Moose Lodge. Tickets are \$7.00 ea. It would be nice to see people there. The Moose pays for everything so anything we make is profit. I will be going to see the printer to have the placemats printed out. The Friends made about \$2,200.00 on the advertisement placemats and will bring in another \$1,500.00. It is a nice event. Last month The Friends donated about \$3,500.00 to the COA in separate increments. The City Council had put in three separate requests. We do get a lot of requests and we do need the money to fund them. We are in talks now to have movie nights down at Winter Island. At a least one of the movie night the Mayor wants to have a Tiki bar. There should not have a bar at Winter Island unless there is a nonprofit attached to it so that the nonprofit would be the recipient of any money made. They are also considering having food truck down there. It may be possible for The Friends to have a grill to sell hot dogs to raise some money. Those are different ways The Friends are looking to raise some funds. We are also considering any grants we can apply for so we are looking for volunteer grant writers. We need to get our name out there. The seniors know who we are. We need to reach out to the younger population of Salem so they can donate for their parents and grandparents. Every penny donated to The Friends to COA goes directly to the seniors. There is no administrator cost, it is all volunteers and everything goes to a worthwhile program.

Suggest: Ask Dr. Abigail Butt about grant writing.

EM: Thinking strategically and it might be difficult to come to the Council at times but if there are things that are not an emergency people need to hear that The Friends of the COA give to the COA as often as they can.

LCf: You are exactly right people want to hear that. People don't want to hear you are going to pay for your Director or whatever.

JR: The Friends have to get out and talk to the people. If we have an audience at the City Council it would be ideal. Another would be the Rotary.

LCf: We also have to start thinking about the rooms and getting donations for example if Eastern Bank could donate the fitness room.

LCf: \$7.00 a ticket for the Pasta Dinner at the Moose. Bring your family bring your friends on June 9th.

LCf: We are not going to do the Tiki bar.

JR: No.

LCf: Thank you to The Friends \$3,500.00 this month. That is great!

LCf: Any other business?

MM: The Transportation Coordinator went to a grant writing workshop on Friday. The DOT is releasing another round of grant opportunities where you can apply for new vans. If you are accepted they cover 80% of the cost of the van. The municipality only has to come up with 20%. The van we are going to request would be a little over \$12,000.00 for the city, which is a great deal. Also, there is a new facet to the grant whereby you can apply for the money and 50% of it will cover your operating costs and the municipality has to come up with the other 50% of the operating cost. If we are able to get this money it would allow us to potentially start up Thursday late afternoon evening as well as a Saturday and Sunday weekend shuttle service for the seniors in the city. So, we are going after the money to replace one of the vans as well as ask for a new van.

LCf: Did we hear about the grant?

MM: No, we have not heard yet. It was supposed to be April but they may have miss spoken when they told us that. We did have an interview with a person on the Tufts Foundation Grant Committee. It was Patricia Zaido, myself and Amanda from planning department who met with her. She asked us what we have already done? What we intend to do? What were some of the issues in Salem are? It was a great meeting. She said when there is a new agency requesting money they like to go out and interview them and get a feel for what is going on in that community. She was very appreciative of our time. It seemed to go well. So hopefully it will well in our favor for getting chosen as one of the recipients for the feasibility study. The Transportation Coordinator and I are going actively go after these vans. We may need your help as a board to advocate to the city for coming up with the 20% it is short money.

Question: Do we have the money put away?

MM: You have to have the commitment. You don't have to have the funds but you have to have the commitment and it does have to be writing from the municipality saying if we are selected we will fund this 20%.

Response: Yes. That could be the operating cost. If we get the van and we do the shuttle to drive Thursday nights, Saturdays and Sundays that would be 19 hours and that would be another part time position. We would love full time drivers but that comes at cost of benefits and everything

else to the city. If we can get the 20% funding and get funding for a part time driver I'll compromise for a part time status over a full- time status if I can get those two things.

LCf: You need to keep us informed. Visitor's comments.

VI: Visitor Comments: Opportunity for visitors to speak Teasie Riley Goggin – Friends of the COA Board Member

Visitor: We have gone up to approximately 8,000 seniors in the city and now we are saying we are going up to about 9,000 seniors in the city. If you look at the school department, they have gone down about 800 students and yet their budget has gone up 1.3 million plus all the grants that they get. Is there some way you, as a COA Board, could sit down and why can't we give at least a million dollars in the budget to the COA? What is your budget now?

Response: A little over three hundred fifty thousand dollars.

Visitor Response: For 9,000 seniors, some of the seniors are not coming here but they are in their own homes. There are going to be many more coming up. We don't have enough money - it is one of the lowest budgets any place around. Why can't the COA and The Friends get together and really push for the next year with the Mayor to do something about it?

JR Response: Before you arrived at the meeting we talked about things we are trying to do to enhance not only the budget but also the staffing. We are on board with that and there are already some actions being taken.

Visitor Response: Sharon Felton spoke at the Alliance of Salem Neighborhood Associations and the people at that meeting did not know all the things that happen with our seniors in the city. If both boards got together collectively they could start a push for next year and put the seniors on the map.

LCf Question: Let's try to plan a joint meeting in September?

Visitor Response: That sounds good.

Question from Board: What would that money be put aside for? Are there needs not being met? Or something you would like to see that is not happening?

Visitor Response: Money is part of the answer as to what the seniors need. On Monday thru Friday we are taking care of them with lunches etc. but there is Saturday and Sunday. But the biggest problem is isolation. The country clubs and malls are loaded with people on Saturday and Sundays and there are not that many seniors doing anything - because there is no transportation.

Response from COA Director and board member: We desperately need more Social Services staff. It is very hard to do out- reach here because the staff is so busy just trying to keep their heads above the water. They can't keep up with the cases. Every single meeting is a crisis. There are seniors that are coming in from other communities because they can't be seen anywhere.

Question: What are the seniors coming in for?

Response from COA Director: Usually it is housing, insurance, medical issues. Usually it is the unfortunately reality is that somebody gets a letter, they don't understand it and they don't know what to do. They ignore it. It becomes an issue and it takes three days to solve the problem. There is a greater increase of seniors being evicted. There is a huge increase in elder mental health issues. We need a larger Social

Services Staff as the senior population continues to expand these issues don't just go away and they don't simplify because economies of scale. They multiply. That is something we desperate need funding for.

LCf Question: There are no social service folks in other communities?

Response from COA Director: There are but there may only be one person. Many of the seniors use to live in Salem but have moved away. They come back to Salem because many of them have worked with the Salem COA Social Workers previously.

Question: Do we take care of those people that don't live in Salem?

Response: Yes, we do and vice versa.

LCf: Anything else?

Visitors Response: No, Thank you.

VII: NEXT BOARD MEETING:

Next Regular board meeting scheduled for Wednesday, June 21, 2017 at time 6:00 p.m.

IX: VOTE TO ADJOURN:

LCf: Requests to make a motion to adjourn the meeting.

EH: Makes a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Regular meeting adjourns at 7:05p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sharon Kearney