



Dominick Pangallo
MAYOR

Tricia O'Brien
SUPERINTENDENT

CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

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SALEM COUNCIL ON AGING REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

Date and Time: March 20, 2024 at 5:15 p.m.

Meeting Location: In person and via Zoom

Members Present: Lynda Coffill (LC, Chair), John Russell (JR, Vice-Chair), Eliud Alcala (EA), Michelle Bettencourt (MB), Abigail Butt (AB), George Barbuzzi (GB) and Patricia Small (PS)

Absent were: Kristin Macek (KM, Secretary) and Michele McHugh (MM)

Also Present: Teresa Arnold, (TA, Director of the COA)

Clerk: Joanne M. Roomey

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

LC called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 21, 2024 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by JR to approve the February 21, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes as amended. Seconded by PS. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

a. Senior Day Update

Senior Day is Saturday, June 1st at Forest River Park from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. GB and TA secured a \$1,000 donation from Eastern Bank. GB has called Salem Five and Rockland Bank to see if they will also donate and will give an update at the next meeting. There will be a page to put logos on for folks who donated.

The April newsletter will have information on how to get tickets and to contact Rosanna Donahue for further information. Lisa Peterson will send a link out to nominate a senior

in the city's newsletter, Salem Snapshot, and will ask Councilors Merkl and Harvey to encourage fellow city councilors to do the same. The Board will follow up with their ward councilors as well.

b. Kitchen Update

JR said there has not been a lot of movement, but we did receive some designs. Joe Candelaria sent back the designs because they were not complete. They are aware of the timeline for committing funds is before June 30, 2024. The money they put aside may not be enough. They may have to go back to the city and ask for more money because all the prices have gone up.

AB suggested if there is a shortage of money, they could possibly go to the Community Preservation Act. LC said that will not help us. JR said the design firm will try to get some numbers together, so we can anticipate expenses and not lose funding.

c. MetroBridge Update

TA said the group representing the COA meets every two weeks via ZOOM with staff from Boston University's MetroBridge program. MM, Julio Mota, LC and Rosanna Donahue have been very helpful. The students are doing a survey and helping the COA staff to identify barriers as to why more Spanish-speaking older adults are not using COA services. Right now, they have about 16 people willing to be interviewed or surveyed.

In line with the mayor's goals, the COA staff will be bringing a program into the community. They are going to have Spanish speaking chair yoga at 135 Lafayette Street. Rosanna Donahue is setting this up. AB suggested offering hybrid or Zoom classes for more accessibility and partnering up with other communities to share the costs.

PS suggested having Conversational Spanish classes, on a one-to-one basis. She is meeting with AB next Wednesday to discuss a plan. This will be a cultural change. She has already found five people who would like to participate, maybe once a week for six weeks for about an hour. It would be geared towards those who do not speak Spanish and want to. They will work out the when, where, and how and suggest different times and places. EA has been working with citizens.

d. Continued Advocacy

LC is waiting to hear from Councilor Harvey to see if he spoke with Solicitor Rennard regarding separating the COA from Park, Recreation and Community Services and changing Teresa Arnold's title from Director to Director of Senior Services. LC will follow-up with Solicitor Rennard first and then contact Mayor Pangallo's office to set up a meeting.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Friends of the COA Report

JR said the Friends had their annual election and every position was reelected: Andrew LaPointe, Chair; Patrick Curtain, Vice Chair; and Suzanne O'Brien, Treasurer.

JR said they have over \$90,000 and have a plan on making more money. They will reinvest the money into CDs that are yielding 4.5 to 5% interest. The *Heart and Soul Conversation Series* has been approved for another six months. He said the letter they wrote for the annual appeal for contributions has been updated. The Friends voted to donate a \$100 gift card to Market Basket to support the project with MetroBridge and are looking for more donations.

JR suggested making a pasta dinner at Bass River, cooking it there and bringing it to the CLC. He also said Rosemary O’Conor will help.

b. Director’s Report

Social Services:

- Housing and Fuel application processing delays and the housing wait list are the biggest challenges for some seniors.
- The following is a breakdown of services provided during the month of February:

Interaction	Duplicated	Unduplicated
Email	34	22
Home Consultation	7	5
Mail	33	29
Office Consultation	55	42
Phone Consultation	181	111
Walk-in	35	30
Work on Case	15	15
Totals	360	195

Dining Services:

- We sold 31 bake stuffed haddock lunches on March 8th.
- *From Our Kitchen* in April will be a Bacon Cheese Frittata and the popular Tuna on Marble Rye.
- We have seen new faces this month for lunch.

Transportation:

- 241 unduplicated seniors were served in February. 944 one-way rides as follows:
Medical - 182
Grocery shopping – 150
Events/COA – 512
Library – 32
Other - 68

Programs:

- We welcomed Elaine Tavis back in March to lead the Meditation Group. This class is very popular, and we typically have 20 people registered for each session.
- District Attorney Paul Tucker's staff were with us on March 19th for a presentation to discuss the uptick in elder scams, especially with Bitcoins and calls to grandparents.
- We had fun at our annual St. Patrick's Day Party on March 13th. There were lots of green outfits, dancing and fun.
- The students and faculty of SSU's Occupational Therapy Department have led two workshops in March as part of our collaboration with them. The themes were *Building Blocks of Longevity* and *Fall Prevention and Home Safety*. They will be back in April to lead three more workshops.
- We said goodbye to our first 2024 group of SSU student nurses a few weeks ago. This very bright and engaging group was a pleasure to have here each Wednesday. They made some great connections with our seniors. A new group started this morning.
- The staff of the CLC is hosting a Volunteer Breakfast Celebration on Friday, April 12th from 8:30-9:30am. This is our chance to thank all our wonderful volunteers for all they do.

Memory Café:

The April Memory Café will be held on Thursday, April 25th and will be a Sound Healing Reiki circle. The Reiki Clinic will be held on April 16th.

Bequest:

Yesterday, Attorney Jack Altshuler from Beverly telephoned TA to say that **Argia R. Migliaccio** left \$15,000 to the COA. She was 99 years old. The attorney said that he would mail the check and we should receive it in a week. TA will earmark this for COA Donations.

V. OTHER BUSINESS:

JR will speak with Joe Candelaria about the panic alarms to see if there are any updates in installing them at the CLC.

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, April 17, 2024. There was a discussion regarding June 19th being a holiday, and the Board agreed to have the meeting the Wednesday before, on June 12, 2024.

VII. VOTE TO ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Council on Aging Board this evening, JR moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by MB. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at **6:20 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Joanne M. Roomey
Board Clerk

Know Your Rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. Chapter 30A ss. 18-25 and City Ordinance Sections 2-2028 through 2-2033.