



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: April 17, 2024 at 5:15 p.m.

Meeting Location: In person and via Zoom

Members Present: Lynda Coffill (LC, Chair), John Russell (JR, Vice-Chair), Kristin Macek (KM, Secretary), Michelle Bettencourt (MB), Abigail Butt (AB), George Barbuzzi (GB), and Michele McHugh (MM)

Absent were: Eliud Alcala (EA) and Patricia Small (PS)

Also Present: Teresa Arnold, (TA, Director of the COA) and Councilor John C. Harvey

Clerk: Joanne M. Roomey

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

II. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 20, 2024 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by JR to approve the March 20, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes as amended. Seconded by GB. 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. There will be seven seniors honored.

b. Kitchen Update

TA said that Facilities Manager Joe Candelaria received the updated designs from DMS, the design team. Mr. Candelaria is still working on the vent issue with DMS. They are aware of the timeline for committing funds. The funds must be committed by the end of December 2024 and used by December 2026.

c. MetroBridge Update

MM said there are 18 students from BU that will interview approximately 25 Spanish-speaking older adults by April 20th and will present the information to MM and TA. The board wants a copy of the survey which MM will provide.

d. Continued Advocacy

Councilor Harvey 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 and Human Services. In the past, there were two proposals to separate the COA from Park, Recreation and neither was signed or vetoed which should have taken place after ten days. Councilor Harvey recommends that he, TA, Solicitor Rennard and Trish O'Brien have a "sit down" to discuss what they should do moving forward. AB said nothing is changing and the city should hire social workers. GB and JR agreed. The main three things they want to discuss are:

1. Recognition for Senior and Human Services;
2. Budget for COA; and
3. Change the title of Teresa Arnold, not the policies.

e. Panic Button Update

LC contacted Mayor Pangallo and he is going to add panic buttons to be installed at the CLC for the FY25 budget but may try to do it before the end of this year's budget.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Workplan Progress Review

LC reported on the COA's workplan for the 2023-2024 time period to date. The Board is going to work with Norene Gachignard and Lisa Peterson, co-chairs of Salem for All Ages since one of the workplan goals is collaborating with Salem for All Ages.

b. Friends of the COA Report

JR said the annual appeal is up to \$17,000 and the Friends have over \$93,000.

They approved a \$100 stipend each for two van drivers to shuttle people to the Senior Celebration on June 1. They also want better signage and want to make sure accessible parking is available at Forest River Park. Councilor Harvey suggested asking the Fire Department for buggies since the golf course cannot spare any carts.

JR spoke about the Easter meals delivery since there were some discrepancies with folks' addresses. He mentioned a recent suggestion to deliver the meals the day before, to avoid delivering meals on the holiday, particularly if we have issues finding a residence. This gives more time to locate/call the person receiving the meal. Approximately 170 meals were delivered on Easter Sunday.

The business appeal letter has been drafted and it is brief and to the point.

Rosemary O'Connor and Cheryl LaPointe met with Bass River regarding having a pasta dinner fundraiser and are waiting for costs to the Friends.

c. Director's Report

Social Services:

- Housing and Fuel application processing delays continue to be a challenge for clients. Fuel applications are backed up from November 2023.
- The following is a breakdown of services provided during the month of March:
- **Services provided between 03/01/2024 and 03/31/2024:**

| Category | Duplicated | Unduplicated |
|----------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Case Mgt/advocacy | 78 | 40 |
| General info | 155 | 117 |
| Health Benefits Counseling | 71 | 48 |
| Outreach/Client Finding | 1 | 1 |
| Durable Medical Equip Loan | 10 | 10 |
| Totals | 315 | 164 |

Dining Services:

- We are seeing new faces; the Food Pantry on Wednesday mornings is bringing new folks here and they are staying on for lunch. This is our busiest day easily with 45 to 50 people each Wednesday for lunch.
- *From Our Kitchen* meals is bringing in 20 to 30 people each time. We are not quite breaking even yet and will examine the small charge going forward.
- Older, as in late 80's, volunteers are terrific but the physical challenges of heavy kitchen work is prompting us to move them to lighter work in the serverly, or coffee station, greeting luncheon attendees, etc.
- The morning café is very popular, especially for those coming to CLC for appointments. The goal is to eventually open at 8 am when the CLC opens, but that is not possible yet.

Transportation:

- John Tachuk, after medical leave, and Mike Phelan, seasonal worker, will be returning to work in May.
- Repairs and maintenance continue.

Programs:

- We celebrated our volunteers last Friday, April 12 with a Volunteer Breakfast. It was well attended with 40-50 volunteers. This was a chance for staff to say thank you for all that the volunteers do. Erica Blumberg, Dining Services Coordinator, put out a lovely continental breakfast. Kathy McCarthy created a slide show for all to enjoy. We hope to make this an annual tradition.
- We enjoyed a performance from the Saltonstall School Band and Orchestra a few weeks back. The students performed various songs for the seniors.
- We have started up Thursday morning Sing-alongs with James Eric Rogers. He has printed out song sheets so that we can sing along to our favorites.
- In honor of the Red Sox Opening Day, we had a baseball themed lunch on April 9th. Participants watched a baseball movie, had hot dogs, popcorn, popsicles, and we streamed the opening ceremonies and the game.

Memory Café:

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

V. OTHER BUSINESS: None

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, May 15, 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 MM. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at **6:25 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.