



CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

PARK, RECREATION & COMMUNITY SERVICES

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MAYOR

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DIRECTOR

SALEM COUNCIL ON AGING REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

Date and Time: November 16, 2022 at 5:15 P.M.

Meeting Location: Levesque Community Life Center Board Room, 401 Bridge Street, Salem, MA

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

Absent: Eliud Alcala

Also Present: Teresa Arnold, (TA, Director of the COA) and Councillor Leveille McClain (LM)

Clerk: Joanne M. Roomey

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

LC called the meeting to order at 5:15 P.M.

LC stated that notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Council on Aging is held in person and via remote participation in accordance with a Chapter 107 of the Act of 2022.

In-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted and the public may also participate, listen and/or view this meeting while in progress via the remote participation platform Zoom.

Roll call was then done.

LC welcomed new Board member Michele McHugh and said the Board is filled now.

II. APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 2022 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES and OCTOBER 2022 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by JR to approve the October 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes and the October 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes, seconded by KM. The motion carried unanimously.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

a. Subsidized Senior Housing Update

KM gave an update and said the Lee Fort Terrace project passed through the ZBA and the next step is to go through the Planning Department. KM stated that the process is not the standard process and there will be different steps to take. The Board decided to send the letter they are drafting to the Salem Housing Authority advocating for additional senior units and also send a letter to the editor with copies to city councilors.

Farmer's Market Coupon Advocacy

AB commented that things look promising to increase the amount of the Farmer's Market coupons. Abby is part of a Task Force with Tara Hammes from MCOA and TA has joined as well. The group will work to mobilize letters of support from several Councils on Aging in favor of increasing the value of the coupons. AB will keep the Board informed.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Friends of the COA Update

JR said the COA has received almost 200 requests for the Thanksgiving meals at \$18 per person. 150 meals were first approved. The Friends of the COA approved for 50 more meals. Rosanna Donahue will be organizing the delivery of meals on Thanksgiving Day. The Friends of the COA have 16 members now and are continuing to grow.

JR led the effort to raise money by offering parking at the CLC over the Halloween season. \$19,000 in parking revenues were received and the Friends of the COA will split with the Park & Recreation Department receiving \$9,500 each.

b. Advocates for Positive Aging

LC said the goals of this new group is to advocate for positive aging, educate themselves regarding agism and once they are educated, discuss what they are getting from the articles. Any actions we could take as a community regarding discussions and research would be helpful. There have been 16 folks that signed up to be in the group without much diversity, but that may change.

The focus group meets the second Tuesday of the month at 3:00 p.m. and the COA is the host of the group. LC will go to the next meeting and will update the COA Board.

c. CLC Engagement Committee

LC and MM are on the CLC Engagement Committee together with TA. It was suggested using the money from Salem for all Ages to create a new website for the COA and hire a web designer. They want to include the staff during the process to get their input and will also need the Board's approval. MM asked if the money they had from Salem for All Ages could be used for anything or was it specifically for a website. LC said it could be used for anything. Patricia Zaido is pushing to get as much done now with the money before the end of the year.

d. Holiday Social

LC asked the Board if they wanted to have a Holiday Social after a quick meeting on December 21st. Everyone was in favor. TA will organize a list of what people will contribute.

Teresa Arnold, Director's Report

Social Services:

Social Services is seeing an increase in **fuel assistance** inquiries this heating season. Many are concerned with raising heating costs and want to see if they qualify. September through November 8, the team have completed 53 applications.

Social Services is also seeing an increase in calls for **SHINE appointments**. Many are finding out the assistance they can receive in the complicated Medicare world. Since open enrollment began, 189 individuals have been seen for their insurance needs.

Social Services continues to receive calls about **senior housing** due to landlords raising rents, selling, or renovating units. We have been working with 36 individuals since September 1st (123 times) about their applications, assistance with documentation needed and follow up with Housing on status.

Programs:

We had local historian, Jim McAllister, at the center on Monday the 14th for a morning lecture. His lecture explored the contributions made by some Salem senior residents over the centuries in various fields.

We have a new six-week Creative Writing program that is being led by volunteer Julian Collins. This will meet on Mondays.

After a two-year hiatus, Salem seniors are invited to Salem High School on November 17th for the annual Thanksgiving Dinner. This dinner is put on by the Culinary Arts Program.

Thanks to the generosity of the Friends of the Council on Aging, we will again be distributing Thanksgiving meals to Salem seniors. Rosanna Donahue will coordinate the deliveries and several volunteers have signed up to help.

Dining Services:

The next few months will be very busy with regular lunches, specials and preparing for many of Rosanna Donahue's holiday events. For the New Year's party on Thursday, December 29th, we will utilize the same service format as we did for the 55th Anniversary Celebration. We will have lots of breakfast goodies!

We received a number of responses from our volunteer advertisement in the newsletter and will be bringing up to three new crew members into the fold in the coming weeks. We are excited about that. We have revamped our training system and daily operations tools to be easier for the volunteers.

Our commercial vendor, SYSCO Foodservice, continues to be an asset by providing us access to better quality and larger quantity products than available from the local groceries. For example, Programs/Activities serves bottled water at many events, and we are now able to receive cases of 80 / 8 oz bottles. We have storage and can bank a supply saving staff from shopping so frequently.

Transportation:

We have had a staff change. David Colpitts is no longer with us and we are looking for a new permanent part time driver. Michael Phelan will be helping out on an interim basis as our volume cannot be met with the staff we currently have.

The COA continues to offer a variety of classes and events which keeps our volume high. In October we provided 1,224 rides.

We have not had any significant changes to our schedule. Our Trader Joe's and Mall trips are not as popular as we had hoped but will remain as a monthly offering at this time.

There is continued van maintenance and repairs as usual.

Memory Café:

The Memory Café for November will feature Mamadou Diop for an interactive drumming experience. The December Memory Café will be a cooking class with Kerry Murphy, Wellness Coordinator, from the City of Salem Health Department. The recipe will be from the *Mind Diet* cookbook.

The next "Cooking with Kerry" video will feature a recipe for eating healthy during the holidays.

The Friends of the COA were not invited to apply for the Cummings Foundation grant to support the Memory Café. Staff will look to additional funding to support the project and the contractor who leads the Memory Cafés. We still have funding for several months.

Kitchen:

TA has been in touch with Michael Lutrzykowski from the Planning Department. He is waiting for a response to some questions he had from the architect's proposal for the enhanced kitchen.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

Eliud Alcala is a Justice of Peace and has volunteered to perform the ceremony for our Vow Renewal Ceremony at our Valentine's Day celebration. AB said he is a very thoughtful and compassionate person. He speaks three different languages and would love to do it for free.

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, December 21, 2022

VII. The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

JR made a motion to adjourn, MB seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

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.