

**Salem Council on Aging**  
**Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Salem Council on Aging**  
**Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017 6:00 p.m.**

The Regular Meeting of the Salem Council on Aging held Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017 6:00 p.m., at the Senior Center, 5 Broad Street, Salem, Massachusetts.

**Roll Call**

**Board of Directors Present:** Lynda Coffill (LCf, Chairperson), Elaine Heredeen (EH, Vice Chair), John Russell, (JR), Julie Carver (JC, Secretary), Abigail Butt, (AB), Anthony “Tony” Schettino (TS), Donna Clifford (DC), Alison Thibodeau (AT).

**Absent:** Alice Williams (AW, Treasurer), Elaine Milo (EM, City Councilor advocate to the COA)

**Also Present:** Meredith McDonald, (MM), Director of the COA, Sharon Kearney, (SK, Secretary of Minutes).

**I. Call to Order**

Open the regular meeting Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017 5:55 p.m.

**II. Approval of January 18th, 2017 Regular Meeting minutes**

**LCf:** Has everyone had a chance to review the minutes as they were sent out?

**Response:** Yes,

**LCf:** Are there any additions deletions?

**MM:** No, just what was already sent over.

**LCf:** Hearing none. Motion to accept the January minutes as written.

**EH:** Motion to accept the January minutes as written.

**TS:** Second the motion.

Vote unanimously approved.

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

**1. Volunteer Coordinator** – update from meeting with Trish and Kathy.

**LCf:** Abby, John and I met with Trish and Kathy the 19<sup>th</sup>, Monday after the board meeting. I thought it was a very good meeting. They agreed when we go into the new building we are going to need to at least triple the amount of volunteers. Currently we have 89 active volunteers. That is split between people who working off tax abatements and people coming into volunteer at events etc. In the packet, they already had a couple of things. But they were really happy to see the confidentiality sheet because that was something they did not have. They are looking to us to help them when time comes to advocate for somebody to do the volunteer coordinating because that is all Kathy will do if we get to the point. We are going to go ahead with that when the time comes. I did not realize they had as many volunteers working as they did. They certainly are working hard.

**AB:** I would also add they seem interested in the idea of getting an intern in; to start on the task of compiling the necessary paperwork, like the volunteer job descriptions, so they can hit the ground running when the time comes.

**LCf:** If they have any interns in the summer I would be surprised they would have to come out of the school of social work or recreation and leisure but certainly in the fall.

**AB:** Long before that because a lot of places, people sign up for their courses in the spring for the fall. And, during the summer you are suppose to be looking for your intern placement. So maybe there is a way to remind them at the end of spring.

**LCf:** Sure.

**MM:** There was a change and we actually had some social worker interns upstairs already from Salem State. It is a very recent change; their guidelines use to be that there had to have state licensed actual social workers being a supervisor. That is were we did not qualify. So we could not have an intern here.

**AB:** But, you don't have to have a social worker intern.

**MM:** No, no, no, that is from that perspective we were not able to accommodate. They have since changed their guidelines so it does open us up a little more to who we can bring in and what we can have them do which is great for us before we were working under some constrained guidelines.

**LCf:** Sharon has her license she doesn't have her MSW.

**MM:** They need to have their MSW as well though. That is were we did not meet the criteria. But, now that Salem State, has changed their criteria we don't have to worry about having a supervisor with both a license and MSW.

**LCf:** Anything to add to the meeting?

**JR:** Just the fact that we did suggest the intern and to put together not only the paperwork but to put together their policies and procedures so that when we do start. We could be looking at 300 volunteers.

**AB:** They seemed really surprised about how many volunteers are in Beverly and Peabody. They did not realize how many you need to run a big organization.

**JR:** Yes, we don't have a fitness center. So, the fitness center has about 20 volunteers because somebody has to be there. They have to be trained any more than somebody to call 911 and somebody in there to monitor the activity. It was a very good and productive meeting.

**LCf:** Another update is I'm trying to experience all the exercise options we offer.

### **III. Report from the Director**

#### **1. New Building Update** Meredith McDonald, (MM), Director of the COA

**MM:** I don't have a lot on the new building there is an interiors meeting that is scheduled for next week. I was assuming, we asked that the two of you were notified?

**JR:** I was notified and I responded. Can I point out that we asked for Mondays?

**MM:** I did relay that and that was Dominick's scheduling. I will not be there again, I will be on vacation and I let them know that as well. The meeting is Wednesday the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**JC:** Originally, it was going to be at 9:00 which I could make because I could have gone into work a little late. It is now at 1:00 and in my calendar at work. I will try to leave to attend but if something comes up with a client I will not be able to make it.

**JR:** The original schedule I could not make and I didn't think you, (JC), could make it. We need to have somebody to be there because we seem to have lost some ground that is very important to us.

**LCf:** Where are those meeting held?

**MM:** Usually, at 120 on the third floor in the conference room or in the Mayor's office depending upon what is available and open. Sometimes at the city council antechamber they rotate. Lately, they have been at the annex.

**TS:** If I'm available would it be ok for me to go? If the others can not make it, I could represent.

**MM:** I will run it by Trish. They sent out a very specific invite list. I will ask. Sure.

**JR:** There have been a lot of things that are unsanctioned, not by anybody here, I guess there has been a little bit of animosity and they are just trying to get it back to just the group. I think it is all well intentioned.

**MM:** I don't anything about that. Let me find out. I will ask that question.

#### **2. Salem For All Ages Update**

**MM:** After we had our last meeting we were certified by the AARP as being the very first city in Massachusetts to receive the certification as an age friendly city. We were no where close to being the first city inducted into the group. But we were the first city once inducted to put forth our action plan. And, they were so impress with it they are now using Salem's action plan as the model for other cities joining the initiative. This is very cool and a nice pat on the back. Great thank you

to everyone's had work to help this plan to fruition. But, now we really have to step up our game and make sure we actually adhere to this action plan because if we fail all eyes are on us. They formulated a task force and we have formulated subcommittees within this whole initiative so that there is a small group working on specific areas targeting smaller issues at a time because you can not tackle everything all at once. Nothing would get done effectively. So now we are tackling transportation, volunteerism, and communication. I'm chairing the transportation subcommittee. From the transportation perspective we are looking at the feasibility of an all Salem shuttle that would be a continuous loop. We have two routes earmarked. And the way we determined those, was sort of, what areas in Salem are the least well served on the terms of other modes of transportation, meaning the T, the Trolley when the trolley is running. We found that North Salem is by far the worst served in terms of other modes of transportation. Throughout downtown Salem there are T buses that run, even through south Salem, because of Salem State there are T buses that run. But when you look at it there is a disproportionate serving in the North Salem area. So we proposed that.

**LCf:** I think ward four is underserved which is Gallows Hill, Witchcraft Heights.

**MM:** Yes, we identified that area as well. But to get just a generic loop running they earmarked these routes. We are working on it with Mass in Motion. Pat Ziado was able to get great information from the T. All of the T bus stops in Salem and what the rider ship from each of those stops is throughout everyday. It is shocking, how many bus stops that have zero riders ever get on the bus. Ok, why? Is the bus stop in the wrong place and is not an area that needs to be served by the T? Is it an area that needs to be served by the T but is there a bench? If not are the folks that live in that community that use the T are they in need of a bench? They can't stand and wait. So there are a lot of sub questions that come out of this. But, it was a very interesting report that we want to cross reference into our proposed shuttle route and see can we link up together? Is there a collaboration opportunity here?

**JR:** Question as well, are they afraid to ride the bus? Not just because of street reasons but because where is it going? They don't want to get on the wrong bus.

**LCf:** And, is that bus going in the direction they want to go in?

**MM:** Correct. These are all very viable questions. It's been really interesting. Patricia has submitted a letter to Tufts. Tufts is all of a sudden very active in giving out grant monies to some of these types of initiative to help people to age in place and stay safe. So, they have submitted a letter of intent, asking for grant money for a feasibility study of a proposed shuttle. We will find out February 27<sup>th</sup> if our letter of intent is accepted. If it is, then we get to fill out an application to apply. There are many steps. The planning department is helping to write the proposal. They have grant writers that they reach out to. So, there are many hands working on this, to see if we can get some access to some money. Potentially, get access to grant money to fund, the running of this pilot route. Salem did use to have a continuously running shuttle. One of our drivers that drove for it at the time mentioned it didn't stop because of low rider ship. It had very good rider ship. It stopped because at the time some of the drivers were deviating off the shuttle route, favoring certain riders. This irritated the other riders. I don't know when this was and whoever was running the city at the time said enough we are not having it and got rid of the whole thing. It seems like there is potential for it working. The transportation subcommittee is in a holding pattern to see what happens with this grant because we don't want to reinvent the wheel. If we are going to get money to have an outsider come in and do all this feasibility. So we are just waiting to see where we are at. We are tackling the transportation, volunteerism, and communication throughout the city first.

**LCf:** The suggestion for a shuttle came out of the first survey. That was done by the Jewish Family Services. People want to get down to the Willows in the summertime is what I've been hearing.

**MM:** Yes, we are trying to make some progress on that. That was great. They trolley does go. That was one of the things we were looking at too. There is a lot of good transportation going in one direction and not the other. That is what we were working on.

**JR:** Is there an issue with the trolley if you are a Salem resident you can ride it for free but you have to go to the Trolley store to get a ticket? So, you can just get on anywhere.

**JC:** Yes.

***Discussion about trolley transportation:***

*- You should just be able to just show your driver's license.*

*- Maybe there is a way that we sell tickets, if you're a Salem resident, to get your pass. It might be something that we can work with them to be able to promote that more.*

*-Some of the trolleys are handicap accessible. The only thing about the transportation that I heard from lots of seniors is that riding in things like trolleys could be really painful.*

*-Concern from an educator, if I get on a trolley as an elder and 5 teenagers get on with being a teenager which is a wonderful age and they start making noise and do whatever they wanted. That would be the last time I get on that trolley or that shuttle.*

**LCf:** I think that is something the subcommittee could do right away without a grant because we don't have another trolley.

**MM:** Salem for all ages is not just for seniors. Our presentation, our action plan, was geared for every resident in Salem regardless of age and ability. So this shuttle will be servicing the teenager, twenty some things, whomever wants to hop on it.

**AB:** Yes, of course, so this is the board the board for council on aging. So, it is my job to say the concerns.

**MM:** Yes, absolutely and I agree with you. Even some of our vans are not very comfortable for them if they have arthritis and things like that. I totally agree with you.

**LCf:** Let's step back, so, the shuttle is available to teenager?

**MM:** Yes, all Salem residents.

**AB:** If you don't have a license and you want to get down to the Willows.

**MM:** This type of shuttle has been run through Lexington and its run through the town of Lexington for quite sometime. It's proven to be very successful there. Intergenerational use it and use it harmoniously.

**JR:** Also, are the COA buses in play to use? Weekends would be great but they are not just for seniors then?

**MM:** That is part of the whole thing too because if they are they can only be used during off hours when we are not using them. That is why there is a lot to work out with this. Also, can the vans, which are old, handle that much use and abuse? I don't know. I did put forth through the community capital improvement program; I put forth a request for a brand new 12 seat handicap accessible van with a built in cash box. So that if, they want to use one of our vans for the shuttle; we have a built in cash box that provides safety for the driver and for the other riders. Because currently the little tin box is one rap over the head and off somebody goes with the money. So, this would provide more security. Now, if we are granted it or not I don't know.

**Question:** Have we renamed the vans? I saw one with Salem Park Recreation and Community Services today.

**MM:** No. If that is a newer one that is probably how they are label because that is what our official title is.

**MM:** We had a very successful Valentines party we had 90 seniors come. Cheryl LaPointe, city clerk, graciously offered her services and did vow renewals for any couples that wanted to do them. There were four couples that did their vow renewals. One of the couples, she dressed up in, I'm not sure if it was, her original wedding dress she wore. She made her husband wear something that was coordinating. Cheryl made the couples certificates. We had a catered lunch with entertainment. It was fabulous.

**Update:** LSW Social Services staff member and coverage from the Outreach Social Worker and Director of CAO.

**Update:** Activities coordinator on the park and recreation side is no longer with us. He accepted another job. So, if anybody knows anybody who would be interested in activities coordinator Kathy and Trish will be soon posting the position. It is a full time position.

**MM:** For three Mondays in a row since January 20<sup>th</sup>, I had the privilege of being asked and invited to speak, at three different organizations, in the City of Salem about the council of aging and what we do. And, what I took away from each of those three speaking engagements was how many people have no idea what we do here. I have another speaking engagement in March at another organization. We are finally getting the word out about all the things that we do. Everyone's preconceived notion was this was the place to come play bingo and take some fitness classes and maybe have some lunch. But, they had no idea about the transportation that we provide. No idea about the work that Social Services do.

**AB:** It's sound like you need some outreach events.

**MM:** In the first and second meeting there was an interesting split of wide variety of ages. Some of the younger seniors themselves or the adult children, who have aging parents but there hasn't been a crisis yet in somebody's health in the family that hasn't required them to go outside looking for help and looking for services. I've lived it personally, I had no idea I could call the COA for help and no one suggested it. Not doctor's offices. Not hospice, nobody. It's getting the word out to the younger group that is growing, in terms of the demographics check. By going out and being able to speak and talk about what we do. It's wonderful to spread the word and keep it going. So hopefully, that will continue and the more times we can get out in front of people and tell them what we do. And invite them to some of the events we do so they can experience it first hand. It has been fun and a huge privilege for me. I've enjoyed it immensely.

### **3. In-law apartment ordinance update from Elaine Milo**

**MM:** We were going to have the update from Elaine Milo but she said you had updates.

**JR:** It was a very good meeting. It was the first meeting. We had Topsfield and Danvers ordinances. We are looking at them and trying to put it together to see what is best for us. Right now, it is out to different places the planning board and the building inspector for their input and their concerns. I know the building inspector is concerned because of enforcement. So what we are looking to do is to make sure penalties are in place with guidelines to make him comfortable so we can get him on board.

**AB:** Penalties and also something with terms that it would expire. So that like every three years you would have to come in. And the building inspector would come and look at the space. It would have to be a re-inspection.

**MM:** So, if you had an in-law you wouldn't have to leave after three years, it would just be a re-inspection.

**JR:** Yes, there are certain guidelines for example you can't put a new entrance in unless it is on the side. Everything is very doable. Salem did have it in the past. Right now, it is out there for people to discuss before we have the next meeting.

#### ***Discussion about in-law apartment acceptance : -***

*-There are a lot of people for it but there are a lot of people in our neighborhoods that are total against this.*

*-There are neighbors don't seem to mind that much. There are people against it.*

*-There will always be people who take advantage of whatever.*

**Question:** What happens when you put in a legal in-law apartment and the individual passes away and the three years comes up?

**Response:** The thing that makes it and in-law apartment is, I think, the 220 electrical outlet for the stove and a sink. But you can have a refrigerator; you can have a bathroom, all those things. It is just those two things.

- You can keep those if you are using that for like your summer kitchen but you just can have somebody other than an immediate relative living in that space.
  - When you go to sell your house, you can't sell it with the in-law apartment.
  - You can say it is in-law ready but you would have to get your own permit.
  - Yes, The building inspector may make you cap the sink and take out the 220 outlet.
- JR:** Also, since we had the meeting in the cities solicitors office we did get a chance to ask her about the volunteer van drivers. She is looking into it for us.

## **V: OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

### **Transportation**

**MM:** I had Fred run some numbers of where we are at for transportations and rides. So far year to date which goes through January we already provided just over 9400 rides this year alone. If we continue on this same track that we have been on and with some of our busiest months coming up we will most likely surpass our 17,000 rides of last year, maybe by a thousand or so. They are doing a ton of work out of the six vans which is fabulous we are helping to get more people around.

*Note: A page with Transportation Growth Over Three Years was distributed at the meeting.*

**LCf:** Circulating was an article about staying power which is about opportunities of neighbors helping other neighbors putting together an organization. I don't think we are at any place to do that right now. But, it maybe something we may want to consider. An observation about the article was these are wealthy communities. But, maybe it something we may want to look into. Just as a little information Dukes County is the poorest county in Massachusetts with the highest per capita town in Massachusetts.

**AB:** The Beacon Hill wasn't as wealthy when it started but it was started ages ago, Cambridge, Newton, Weston, Lincoln, etc. There has been some research that's been happening recently on that. There are a couple organizations they started doing just that with the middle class individuals because if you are very wealthy you can afford it. And, if you are poor a lot of stuff is covered under Medicaid. The other people that can't spend down and live the way they are use to living so maybe you are hitting on something there.

**MM:** There is something like that in the works locally. Recently the Lynn COA hosted a presentation on "co-housing." A program where young people (i.e college, recent grads, single adults, etc.) share a house with a senior. Instead of renting out a room, you say you can come live here with me and in exchange for rent you will help me with the yard work, housework, we'll share a car and maybe take me grocery shopping or do my grocery shopping when you go. It's like a car sharing but instead a house sharing opportunity. It is a way to help some seniors' age in place. There are a lot of logistics and liability issues that have to be ironed out. But, it is a lot of potential for helping, it's a win/win, help somebody get on their feet and help somebody stay where they are comfortable.

**LCf:** We had three days in which this facility was closed because of the snow. What happens to the meal on wheels?

**MM:** Yes, actually it was two days. North Shore Elder Services closed on Thursday and Monday as well. So what they do, at the beginning of every season, is that they automatically deliver to all Meals on Wheels recipients some shelf stable emergency meals. So, when they can't deliver a senior is supposed to have these shelf stable meals. The thing is if a senior is hunger they will eat their shelf stable meal sooner. So how many still have that available, I don't know. But, that was always their policy. And they sent out an email saying that there would not be delivery and the seniors would need to utilize their shelf stable food. Now that they have been closed twice, I guess they should be sending out another allotment. As we were transitioning away from Meal on Wheels we had sent out/ delivered a survey to all of the Meals on Wheels recipients asking if they

were in need holiday meals and shelf stable meals. So, it does appear they have procedures in place to monitor what is needed.

**LCf:** So there are not activities here?

**MM:** If school is canceled we are not allowed to run transportation and we have to cancel activities.

**LCf:** But, does the staff work?

**MM:** Yes, but what staff works varies. If the schools are closed and we are not running anything theoretically it could be a skeleton crew of essential staff only. Unless the Mayor or Dominick sends out an email saying offices are closed which they did for Thursday and Monday. So, in those circumstances we are shut and nobody reports to work. We did receive our congregate lunches. There were only two people here but we served them.

**AB:** What are the congregate meals numbers looking like in general?

**MM:** On average we are twenty to twenty-five a day. We are growing. We are seeing growth with the Philippine folk. They are spreading the word. There have been quite a few new seniors coming from all throughout Salem coming into sign up.

**DC:** On the days that the senior center is closed is it feasible that Steve's Quality Market or a sandwich shop could make up some soup and sandwich bundles at a discounted price or something to get the seniors a sandwich?

**MM:** We are not driving so for many of them, they would not have the ability to get there to get them.

**DC:** What do you mean, don't they deliver them to the seniors?

**Response:** We don't do that any more. North Shore Elder Services took that away from us.

**JC:** I don't know why if they see a weather pattern coming across the United States why they just couldn't say this week we are going to give you a couple extra frozen meals in anticipation of the storm.

**LCf:** We don't know if that happens or not. If you get a chance to check and see what happens

**AB:** That is what happens through senior care.

**DC:** Where are the meals coming from? Where are they being prepared? They have their own drivers and people deliver them?

**MM:** Sidekims Food, a caterer. I believe their kitchens are in Lynn. They are put into hot and cold bags and all go to North Shore Elder Services and are repacked for delivery.

**MM:** Dan, officially started as the new Nutrition Coordinator. He is actively getting to know all of the senior's names and embracing the role. I will be working with him to become familiar with the computer skills, emailing and reporting to North Shore Elder Services because they have to do a big report back to the state. It is nice to have him come from the National Senior network program that is their goal to hopefully have you graduate out from them and get hired by your host agency which the city was willing to do.

**LCf:** I've been reading in the paper a lot about North Shore Elder Services having meetings, fund raising meetings. It would be nice to have a heads up on that in case some of us may want to go.

**MM:** I don't get those. If they are going to host a social services seminar for example Medicare I get those invitations. The only other thing was a gala around the holidays.

**LCf:** Yes, those would be the types of things that would be nice to know about.

**LCf:** Is there any other news business?

**JR Question:** We talked about this a long time ago, before the new building goes into effect. Is it worth a conversation to see if the Director of COA should be separated from the answering to the Park and Recreation Director? Just to take the one step out of it. It would be the management in this case Meredith report directly to the Mayor rather than Trish to the Mayor which gives her the ability to run the place on her own. It is probably is a step that is not necessary.

**LCf:** It's always worth conversation. Let's put that on the April agenda and talk about that in April. I will not be here in March.

**LCf:** No other business?

**AB:** The other thing is my senior center, the volunteer button, I don't know who to talk to about it but it doesn't appear that all of us have the volunteer button to record our hours. So I don't know if any your volunteers have it. The ones of us that do have it I put it in weeks ago.

**LCf:** Who has it?

*Show of hands two people do.*

**AB:** What's happening in part by not recording the volunteer hours using My Senior Center you are not able to calculate the monetary value of volunteers. So, My Senior Center, in Beverly, does that for you automatically based on the role. For example it will give a kitchen volunteer X number of dollars per hour. It makes a nice case for the value of volunteer coordinator using numbers which you can't argue with. I'm happy to show somebody how to do it. If they want to do it. When we are done here I'll show you. Do you know what the button looks like? It's and extra button that pops up on My Senior Center.

**MM:** Rosanna is usually the one plugging everything in to I can have her check. We can go in and say I don't have my card and we can scan it. Yes, I do know what it looks like and I know I put it in for some senior volunteers. They scan in and I'm often the one touching the screen for them because they struggle with upping their hours. They can't figure out how to change it because it defaults to an hour. So I had to go in and walk them through it. We will play with that. It may not be until after I get back from vacation. I'll defiantly take a look at that.

**JR:** One other thing the Friends are acting as a conduit for that grant because they needed a non profit. And they are looking into getting someone with grant writing experience on the board. There maybe grants we might be eligible for if they are defined right to get more money into the Friends. We also put a face book page together. Instead of 8,000 pieces of mail going out at cost of \$4,000 we are down to 400 pieces that give every year which has reduced the mailing cost. So even if we raise the same amount we will have saved.

**LCf:** The Friends are paying for the enhanced fitness, right?

**MM:** No, they are paying for the aqua aerobics and another class. The aqua aerobics is for another six months and it is a drop in so anybody can go. Rosanna has a punch card so if you are interested.

**LCf:** Anything else?

**LCf:** Showing nothing

**VI: VISITOR COMMENTS:** No Visitors.

**VII: NEXT BOARD MEETING:**

Next Regular board meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at time 6:00 p.m.

**VIII: VOTE TO ADJOURN:**

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

**AB:** Makes a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**EH:** Seconds motion.

Vote unanimously approved.

Regular meeting adjourns at 6:49 p.m.

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Sharon Kearney*