

**SALEM COUNCIL ON AGING  
Minutes of Regular Meeting**

**Date and Time:** November 17, 2021 at 5:15 P.M.

**Meeting Location:** Via Zoom

**Members Present:** Lynda Coffill (LC, Chair), John Russell (JR, Vice-Chair), George Barbuzzi (GB), Donna Clifford (DC), Kristin Macek (KM), Patricia Small (PS) and Abigail Butt (AB)

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

**Clerk:** Kathleen Fitzgerald

**Meeting Called to Order**

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

LC stated that pursuant to Governor Baker's directive on 3/12/20 which supported certain provisions of Chapter 30A, Section 20, there are strict limitations regarding gatherings, so this meeting is being conducted via Zoom. The public and persons who would like to listen may do so by dialing in. All votes taken shall be by roll call.

Roll call was then taken.

A motion was made by AB to approve the October 2021 Minutes, seconded by JR, roll call was taken, and passed unanimously.

**Old Business:**

**Senior Housing Advocacy:** PS said she was excited to be part of the Steering Committee for the Salem Housing Road Map. She advised it was a very coordinated project designed to come up with final plans and documents to be submitted for affordable housing. She said part of our problem is that we are lumped with the Boston median income of \$113,300.00 and Salem's is \$68,808.00. 80% of median is not affordable to Salem residents and we were looking to make sure that does not happen. There will be an open forum on November 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 P.M. and you have to pre-register for it.

AB asked that the link be sent as she wanted to attend. PS said she would send it to Terry Arnold who can forward it to the Board. PS advised that the meeting would be an introduction to acquaint people about what the project is for. There will be small group meetings as well. They will be called box meetings. It was suggested that at least one meeting should be held at the Council on Aging to get every person possible who lives in Salem to offer their input about what was wanted. The November 30<sup>th</sup> meeting will have all of the information regarding median income, etc.

AB said she had so many comments relating to housing in Salem and asked if anyone sat in on the presentation by DEI and housing and transportation. She stated that Raul Fernandez works out of Boston University and is on the Board of Selectmen in Brookline and stated people from Salem were on the call. She suggested the Board try to access Mr. Fernandez as a resource and suggested asking him to come to one of the Board meetings and the forum.

KM said there was nothing to report on Lee Fort Terrace and that the website had not been updated.

#### **Work Plan:**

A motion was made by PS to approve the new Work Plan and seconded by KM. Roll call was taken and it passed unanimously.

TA advised she sits on the task force for Salem for All Ages. She said Patricia Zaido was looking to take on more of an advisory role and the task force asked to think about how to go forward. Do we want all subcommittees or structured differently? The task force is made up of committee chairs, Trish O'Brien and Terry Arnold and some other key players who meet monthly. They were asked to think about how Salem for All Ages moves forward. TA stated there were good partners on the task force. She said some items probably just needed to be tweaked and that they would meet in December.

LC stated that every month we were doing something around advocating for increased senior housing and asked if the Board should reach out to Cathy Hoog, Director at the Housing Authority to ask her what is going on. The Board agreed to do this and suggested she be asked to the January meeting.

KM advised that there may be questions generated from the forum and at the December meeting which could be presented to Cathy Hoog in January.

KM advised that folks were being moved from Lee Ft. Terrance to Center Street but did not know anything beyond that.

There was a discussion about ARPA and the guidelines where ARPA funds go. TA said she would like to speak with Anna Freedman, the new finance officer about this.

LC asked TA to get the information to see where the money comes from and update at the December meeting.

### Friends Update:

JR advised that the Annual Appeal goes out in January and that it is being tweaked. He advised that this year the Friends would be sending the mailing to all seniors so it would be a little bit more expensive. JR advised that at the next Friends meeting he would bring up sending information out with all tax bills.

LC stated that the Friends were advocating for an exhaust fan in the kitchen and a generator and stated she thought the Board should join the Friends and become active with the City Council and the Mayor. JR stated that his Ward Councilor knew the Building Inspector and he would reach out to him to see about a cost-effective way to get the exhaust fan over the stove. LC said that JR could state that the COA Board was very much in favor of these two projects going forward.

JR stated he thought the Mayor would be on board and may be able to speak with the Building Inspector. He also advised that he was looking to get someone from a generator company to determine what size generator was needed and the cost. LC asked if this would be done within the next couple of weeks. JR said yes. He suggested a joint letter from the Board and the Friends when the cost is known.

GB advised that an electrical consultant would be needed as well and that this would be a significant expense. LC asked if this could be discussed at the December meeting. JR said he would see what he could get done before the December meeting and would get a price for the entire building and a price for only the first floor.

PS asked when the COA was used as a cooling/heating space, how much of the space had been used. TA advised not many people; only a few over the last few years.

AB said her husband, Aaron, would like to lend his services and would be in touch with JR. JR asked if the Board should reach out to Rep. Paul Tucker and Sen. Joan Lovely. LC said yes, but after the 11/30 meeting.

JR said he ran the Work Plan by the Friends Board and there was a lot of discussion on supporting or not supporting the Lafayette Project. JR stated that on an independent basis, they could use everyone's support but not the Friends as an organization. The Friends are a fundraising arm on of the COA. He said it was a great project and almost 100% would be low income, but it is dedicated to seniors.

LC advised there would be 54 units of senior housing on Lafayette and 24 units on Peabody Street.

JR advised that the Friends made \$6,500.00 during Halloween charging visitors to park their cars at the CLC lot. A total of \$13,000.00 was made but split with the Park & Rec. Department so that each made \$6,500.00.

## **Director's Report:**

### **Social Services:**

Social Services has processed the following since the beginning of this Fiscal year (July 1, 2021 to November 15, 2021): 37 Fuel applications, 26 SNAP applications and 13 new senior housing applications. 40 pieces of durable medical equipment have been taken from our lending closet.

From October 15 to Nov 15, 176 seniors have been seen for health insurance information by the three social workers. In addition, approximately 20 have been seen by our SHINE volunteer during Medicare Open Enrollment.

### **Nutrition/Meals:**

Erica Blumberg has been hired as the full-time Nutrition/Culinary Coordinator. Her paperwork with Human Resources is being finalized and her start date as a permanent employee should be sometime next week.

We are seeing a number of new faces, warmly welcoming and informing them of all the activities held each week.

We had quite a crowd for the monthly breakfast on November 4th with 35 in attendance.

### **Nutrition Education and Outreach:**

October was a month of closure for our spring/summer programs. We had our final free produce market the last week in October. We served an average of 25 people per week through the summer/fall. We had limited quantities this year due to the strange weather this summer.

The Raised Bed Garden was just cleaned up for the winter and we will be planning next year's garden through the winter.

Last week's shoot for "Cooking with Kerry" featured a CLC regular, Neera, who taught us about a classical Indian dish that happens to be a one pot meal that can be modified and easily made from ingredients purchased at Market Basket.

### **Transportation:**

During the last month, the transportation department has welcomed Arthur Jalbert. Arthur has a 33-year career with the USPS and has been a wonderful addition to the COA.

Last month with the help of the Friends of the Council on Aging, we celebrated the COA drivers. We are fortunate to have an outstanding group of folks who are dedicated to the COA mission and providing transportation to our seniors.

We continue to see an uptick in ridership and work towards meeting demand. We are seeing about 1100 one-way rides per month.

### **Memory Café Grant:**

We are receiving a \$50,000 grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs to enhance our work with Memory Cafés. TA has engaged an Alzheimer's expert who will meet with TA and some staff who would be involved with Memory Café programming. The first meeting with consultant Peggy Cahill is November 23rd.

### **Salem High School Thanksgiving Dinner:**

The culinary students from SHS were here yesterday with the annual Thanksgiving meal. Some seniors had their meals inside, but due to social distancing, most received their lunch in a drive-thru fashion. Mamadou Diop performed with his drummers outside and the tap-dancing group performed inside. We served about 160 seniors.

KM said she heard about the Memory cafés but wondered if they were just for seniors or for caregivers and family members. TA advised that right now it was only for those with memory loss. She advised that Rosanna Donahue was working with the residents at Charter Street on this. KM asked if part of the program was to educate family members about Alzheimer's.

AB suggested a caregiver support group. TA stated she was open to anything the COA could do to support this.

AB said she would look at the Mission Statement. KM said she would help. TA said she was happy to help, too.

It was suggested that the Bylaws be looked at in January.

JR advised that the Friends were funding 150 Thanksgiving meals. TA advised that Andy and Rosanna were interviewed by the Boston Globe about the Thanksgiving dinners.

LC advised that Alice Williams was stepping down and they would be looking for a new board member, hopefully with a diverse background.

AB asked if there were any veterans on the Board. LC said no. TA said she would reach out to Kim Emerling.

Next Board Meeting: December 15, 2021 via Zoom.

There being no further business:

A motion to adjourn was made by JR, AB seconded, roll call was taken and passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:24 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk