

**DRAFT**

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

**Date and Time:** January 24, 2018 at 5:03 P.M.  
**Meeting Location:** Dining Room, 5 Broad St.

**Roll Call:**

**Members Present:** Lynda Coffill (LC, Chairperson), Julie Carver (JC, Secretary), Abigail Butt (AB), Elaine Hereden (EH, Vice Chair), George Barbuzzi (GB), Elaine Milo (EM, City Councilor liaison to the COA), and Donna Clifford (DC)

**Members Absent:** Alison Thibodeau (AT), John Russell (JR) and Alice Williams

**Also Present:** Teresa Arnold, (TA, Director of the COA), Kim Emerling (KE, Salem Veteran's Agent), and Ben Divasta, Journalism student at SSU

**Clerk:** Kathleen Fitzgerald

**Meeting Called to Order**

LC calls the meeting to order at 5:03 P.M.

Motion made by AB to approve the December Minutes with one minor change and seconded by EH and passes unanimously.

**Old Business:**

AB inquired whether anything went out to Mass Council on Aging (MCOA) regarding programs for men that were successful with other Senior Centers. TA said she spoke with some other Centers but had no information available yet.

**New Business:**

Kim Emerling, Salem Veteran's Agent, was present to discuss housing for seniors and vets.

LC stated that the COA was very concerned about housing for seniors on two (2) levels. First, she wanted to know what was available concerning public housing, and secondly was there any capacity in Salem for emergency housing for seniors and vets.

KE informed the Board that there were two (2) housing complexes for vets – Rainbow Terrace and Garden Terrace. He stated that at Rainbow Terrace the housing was set up for veterans, but as time went on, more vets moved out than moved in and since these units cannot remain dormant, they were opened up to other emergency housing situations.

He advised that there are fourteen (14) different criteria defining where you will be on the list and that if there is an emergency situation (i.e. the hurricane in Puerto Rico), those people needing housing trump those already on the list. He advised that those that meet all the criteria, and who also happen to be a vet, then that family moves to the top of the list. He also stated that any vet anywhere in the country, can apply to the vet list in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

LC stated that last month the Mayor came to the COA Board Meeting and mentioned two (2) projects – one of the old Sports Haven and another further up Boston Street near the Peabody line and asked KE if he was working with the Mayor regarding getting vets in there. KE answered no.

KE talked about VASH which is equivalent to a Section 8 housing voucher for vets.

EM asked if there were any challenges with CORI checks and KE advised that there was always a challenge. He said a bad CORI would definitely keep you out of housing.

AB stated that in talking with another vet agent they stated it was difficult to get emergency housing unless you had been homeless for a year. KE advised that in order to be eligible for VASH you did have to be homeless for a year but that there were ways to get around that.

AB asked what happened if a senior/vet loses housing and there was no warning. KE explained that different veteran agents do different things, i.e. Chapter 115. He also advised that he could put someone up for 2-3 days in a hotel and then in that time frame get with VASH for an emergency voucher. They then must go and find an apartment which is sometimes the longer part of the equation. There is also support services for vets and their families which focuses on jobs and housing.

There was discussion about future housing and AB suggested that someone talk with Andrew DeFranzo who is the person who orchestrated the purchase of a building in Beverly for housing and suggest that he be on the housing sub-committee.

A question was asked concerning whether someone in the National Guard is considered a vet. KE advised that they could be but that their status had to be determined.

There was then discussion concerning the social workers at the COA and the need in the future for an additional one and the possibility of a part-time volunteer coordinator. AB suggested that in order to make a case for another social worker we need to figure out the number of cases our social workers have and prove that it is far in excess of what it should be, and give some data to justify another one.

LC inquired whether the budget process has been started. TA stated she had just gotten the folder and that everything was due on February 8<sup>th</sup>. EM asked if after the budget was done if there was a meeting with the Mayor. TA said yes.

TA then gave her report and spoke about rides, tax preparation program, and programs that will attract more people to the center.

There was discussion about the tax work-off program concerning property tax abatements and the possibility of increasing it from \$1,000.00 per year to \$1,500.00 per year. More information will be forthcoming after the City Council meeting on January 25<sup>th</sup>. Last item up for discussion was whether the Board wanted to continue meeting at an earlier time and it was proposed that future meetings would commence at 5:15 P.M. A motion was made by EH to approve, seconded by JC and passes unanimously.

Next Board Meeting: February 21, 2018.

A motion to adjourn is made by LC, seconded by JC, and passes unanimously.

The meeting adjourns at 6:15 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk