

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

**Date and Time:** February 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), Alice Williams (AW), Kristin Macek (KM), Patricia Small (PS), and Julie Carver (JC)

**Absent:** Donna Clifford (DC), 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 JR to approve the January 2021 Minutes, seconded by AW, roll call was taken, and passed unanimously.

**Old Business:**

Senior Vaccines - LC advised that she had contacted the Mayor's office to see what could be done to get more publicity for vaccines and the possibility of having the CLC as a vaccination site. The Mayor informed LC that Salem State University was a site because we had to do a collaborative effort with other cities and towns in order to have enough first responders vaccinated. Salem did not have enough first responders. The Mayor also informed LC that Wednesday and Friday last week, Salem State University opened more

vaccination appointments and this week would have about 1,500 appointments. 500 of those appointments were reserved for Salem residents. She advised that there may be some sort of mobile unit. LC stated that she had spoken with a number of Salem seniors who were very upset with the process, and not computer savvy.

TA said she had been on Zoom meetings with the Mayor and David Greenbaum and they are trying to have mobile clinics going to senior housing. She has spoken with Fairweather and other private housing management to see if they would like to be a mobile site. TA advised that information comes out daily and that more sites will be opening. She advised that the CLC staff have been helping people without computers. TA said that identifying homebound people is difficult and she is looking to Elder Affairs for guidance who said it is a work in progress and that there is no final word on how they will be identified. Dr. Roberts at Salem Hospital is using the definition as bedbound to determined homebound.

Mayor Driscoll asked TA to draft a document to identify homebound persons.

JR asked if any thought had been given to visiting nurses who visit homebound people. TA stated that there are layers to go through regarding transporting vaccines. The State is requiring that any distribution site must commit to 750 vaccinations a day. The State was to drive people to high volume sites. The smaller sites won't be able to continue administering because they will not get vaccines. The State also pulled back on distributing to hospitals.

#### **New Business:**

**Friends Update:** JR said the first week of fundraising on the Facebook page was dismal and that they need to get as many people as possible to share.

Councilman Domingo Dominquez said he would share the link on his personal Facebook page, and would speak about it at the next City Council meeting. JR said he reached out last week to the Mayor and would reach out to Senator Lovely and Rep. Tucker. He said the goal was raised to \$8,000.00 which is very reachable.

JR advised that every three years the Friends does a larger mailing and hopes that this will at least match last year.

The Friends are funding the Easter dinner which will be approximately \$2,250.00. COA staff will be reaching out to people who really don't have anyone to bring a meal. TA stated that the message will be made clear that this will be for those who have no other way to have Easter dinner.

JR said the SATV taping of the annual Friends show went very well. Andy and a couple of people thought they might not have gotten the message out about what the Friends are doing. He said Andy might come to the CLC and weave another taping into the program. JR did LC did very well with her part.

## **Director's Report:**

### **COVID Vaccines for those age 75+**

Staff spent time on 750 calls that came in since January 27th- the first day this age group could register for the vaccine. COA and CLC staff members returned calls as well as Chair Lynda Coffill. Calls were returned to help those who needed help navigating websites for appointments, as well as directing people to vaccine resources and sites. As calls were being returned, we discovered that about 250 people needed real assistance. Some seniors thought we were administering the vaccine.

If it was determined that the caller was a Veteran, they would be referred to Veterans Service for help.

If people didn't/don't have an email, we try to direct them to other sources that just require a phone call (a few medical practices in neighboring communities). We have been successful in booking 100+ appointments for Salem seniors. Many people had family members and friends assist.

Last week, it was announced that we may be a vaccine site, dates to be determined. As part of the five-town collaborative, Beverly and Danvers Councils on Aging are already vaccine sites that Salem seniors can now go to. There is a private link we have access to in order to help our seniors book an appointment. Peabody COA is running an independent vaccine clinic. Chair Lynda Coffill advocated to the Administration for the CLC to be a site.

Gradually, more sites are opening, like CVS stores, that become vaccine site options. TA is part of frequent Zoom meetings with Mayor Driscoll, Health Agent David Greenbaum, Chief of Staff Dominick Pangallo, Salem Housing Authority Director Cathy Hoog and others. TA also participates regularly in special vaccination meetings held by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs and other state organizations via Zoom. TA has been asked by the Mayor to reach out to non-Housing Authority senior housing sites that receive certain government funds - "Privately owned rental properties designated for older adults that are financed in whole or part through resources made available from DHCD, MassHousing, or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and in which the majority of units are restricted to residents earning less than 80% of Area Median Income" - to ascertain if they are interested in having a mobile vaccination clinic at their site. That information is still being compiled by the Health Department.

TA spoke with Tim Burgers, Associate Director of the Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts to inquire about any plans for vaccinating those who are homebound. As the Executive Office of Elder Affairs and Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley and

North Shore have indicated, this is still a work in progress. Conversations suggest that ambulance companies are likely more positioned to serve this function.

Usual Social Service, Programming, Transportation and Nutrition Education and Outreach continues.

We sent a Letter of Inquiry to Mass Council on Aging for a Service Incentive Grant with the intent to build raised vegetable garden beds as part of the Nutrition Education efforts. The application is due on February 26th.

Pat Schultz, co-owner of the garden business called HomeGrown: Urban Abundance Gardening met with TA, Trish O'Brien and Kelley Annese on February 12th to look at potential sites for raised vegetable garden beds at the CLC. He and Matt Buchanan designed and built the Mack Park Farm and they are working with the Salem Public Schools on several of the school gardens. They will give us some ideas once we figure out a budget. Kerry Murphy told us that both gentlemen are on the food policy council. TA is working the FY'22 City Budget that is due on February 26th to Finance.

We will also consult with Back Yard Growers in Gloucester. AW suggested reaching out to Essex Tech who could help build raised beds and teach seniors how to grow. TA said there are a lot of resources for these types of things on the North Shore.

LC asked how the Valentine's Day lunch went and TA advised that the event went well and 85 people participated.

Next Board Meeting: March 17, 2021 via Zoom

There being no further business:

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk