

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

Date and Time: June 16, 2021 at 5:10 P.M.

Meeting Location: 401 Bridge Street, Salem, MA 01970

Members Present: Lynda Coffill (LC, Chair), John Russell (JR, Vice-Chair), Patricia Small (PS), Kristin Macek (KM), Abigail Butt (AB), Alice Williams (AW) and Donna Clifford (DC).

Member Absent: George Barbuzzi, Julie Carver

Also Present: Teresa Arnold, (TA, Director of the COA), John Boris, Councillor Domingo Dominguez

Clerk: Kathleen Fitzgerald

Meeting Called to Order

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

This meeting is being scheduled as an in-person meeting as current COVID-19 protocols for remote meeting participation will end on June 15, 2021 unless extended by the Commonwealth. If such protocols are extended, this meeting may be changed to a combination in-person/remote or only remote meeting. Accordingly, you should check the City's website and the Board/Committee's page for any updated information on this meeting and how to access it, and if attendance protocols for it have changed to include or require remote participation.

Roll call was then taken.

A motion was made by JR to approve the May 2021 minutes, seconded by AW, roll call was taken, and passed unanimously.

LC introduced John Boris, Chairman of the Salem Housing Authority, a member of the task force and new member of the Friends of the Council on Aging.

Old Business:

Senior Housing Advocacy - The newest Executive Director, Kathy Hoog, is doing very well and she is very assertive with going for grants. Over \$25,000,000.00 in grants have been received.

LC asked if anything had been received for Lee Fort Terrace. John Boris said he thought so. KM said there were no meetings that she was aware of. She stated that at the last meeting she attended, the plan was for 250 units, but that has been scaled back. She advised that they needed to get back to the drawing board because of utility easements.

Mr. Boris advised that plans were being made for permanent hotel rooms for seniors who must move out.

PS asked where there was senior housing in the City. John Boris said all over. LC advised some of the senior housing units were at Bates, Colonial, Pioneer Terrace, Lee Fort Terrace, Morency and Fairweather. LC further advised that she had received information from the North Shore CDC to renovate 9 Peabody Street which will be all senior housing. John Boris advised he thought it was 30 units. LC advised that they were under the gun and wanted a letter of support which she sent. John Boris advised that he had also sent a letter.

LC said that she had been advised that there was a fellow staying with his mother at Lee Fort Terrace who was picked up for distributing drugs and wondered, is anyone had been asked to leave because of that. John Boris advised every situation was different and reviewed case by case, but he could not discuss it due to confidentiality. LC stated she was concerned about others who lived there.

With reference to Lee Fort Terrace, JR asked if there could be preference for Salem seniors. He advised it was doable and the Board should follow up on this. He stated if it was private funding then yes, but no if Federal funding.

KM said it was a unique situation because it was joint venture with the Salem Housing Authority and Beacon Properties and Salem loses one-half of its ownership. LC said Beverly did that, but it would not be the case with this (privatized).

Friends Update:

JR advised there was a meeting this morning and they spoke about the following:

- Step up fundraising.
- Bring back comedy night and pasta dinner
- Halloween parking at the CLC
- Oven vent (already spoke with the Building Inspector - bigger job than first thought)
- Generator (Joe Candelaria, Facilities Manager, putting something together)

LC advised that she thought the City should be dealing with and paying for the generator since the CLC is a cooling and heating center.

There was a conversation about retooling the Friends Board and of members who have been inactive. They would be spoken with over the summer to tell them they needed to step up or step down. The Board is looking to bring on new members who will be vetted.

JR advised the next event the Friends would be assisting with was the summer picnic. The Mayor would be contributing \$500.00 and the Friends, \$1,600.00. JR advised that the annual mail-in appeal usually nets \$12,000.00-\$13,000.00 and advised that the Friends sponsored the Thanksgiving and Easter meals.

Director's Report:

Social Services

Vaccine calls have ended. Joe Ericksberg's last day was June 9th.

Last month, 261 seniors were serviced 649 times. Last fiscal year, Joe Ericksberg alone serviced 652 seniors 3766 times.

Interviews have started for the vacant Social Services position. We have interviewed two people this past Monday and three candidates will be seen next week.

RUOK currently has seven people participating and they are very thankful for the wellness check calls.

Programs

For the month of June, we continue to offer classes at Winter Island or in the parking lot. Members have enjoyed seeing each other again. All classes are filled to capacity.

Bingo is being brought back into the building in June including this Friday. Mayor Driscoll will be stopping by with the monthly platter of treats from Coffee Time.

Our CDBG funded art class will start back up on June 24th. Linda Abbene is back to guide participants in drawing, sketching and painting. This two-hour class will be held outdoors on the patio.

Activities Coordinator Rosanna Donahue started a Thursday/Friday morning book table out on the patio which has been very popular. Seniors come and choose donated books to take home for their reading pleasure.

We have a drive-thru lunch planned for Friday, June 25th with the Traveling Chef to celebrate Father's Day.

We opened our doors to the public on June 1st. Our fitness room is open daily from 9:00am -12:00pm and is staffed by volunteers. As more volunteers come back, we will add afternoon hours. We have seen pool players up in the pool room enjoying their time. Beginning the first week of July, we will be transitioning most classes back into the building. In August, Heritage Week activities include a CharlieCard event sponsored by Rep. Tucker and Senator Lovely, an Ice-Cream Social the first week in July sponsored by Rep. Tucker and two picnic lunch events (you pick your day) at the Winter Island Pavilion sponsored by the Friends of the COA and Mayor Driscoll. There will be music and dancing.

Congregate meals started back this week.

Transportation

Transportation is seeing an increase in ridership as vaccinations have increased, classes have resumed, and congregare meals have returned. Transportation is running all services and a regular schedule at this time.

We are advertising for a part-time driver, part-time dispatcher/driver and currently have four drivers. One driver is on vacation in the Dominican Republic. We anticipate his return in July.

We intend to provide rides to the Farmer's Market for residents, but given the driver shortage, it may be a few weeks before we can start.

Nutrition

Erica Blumberg started June 10th as the temporary part-time Nutrition Coordinator to help us get Congregate Meals up and running which started this week. TA sent the job description to Human Resources to proof and post the permanent position which will be 35 hours which is full-time.

Rosanna Donahue reached out to those who frequented Congregate Meals to see if they were ready to come back. A fair amount of people came back for meals this week. We have a about a half dozen kitchen volunteers who are returning, but a few volunteers are not ready to return.

Raised Garden Bed Project:

The raised beds have been built, filled and seedlings planted. Teens from the Salem Prep High School and older adult volunteers help out weekly to water, weed and measure the plants.

On June 3rd, we hosted the Back-Yard Growers for a garden training where they taught the volunteers how to care for the raised bed garden as it grows.

The teen volunteers made plant markers as an art project.

Forty grow bags and flowers were donated to older adult residents who do not have a garden.

Kerry Murphy and Kelley Annese will put the cooking video collection together to promote to all, but especially to encourage people who live alone to remember to cook easy, but nutritious meals. This is in response to Pat Small's concern that some people may be malnourished, not because they are food insecure, but because they are not motivated to cook for one.

Other

TA sent an application to the Senior Community Service Employment Program (Operation Able) on behalf of the Community Life Center to see if we can recruit a part-time custodian to assist Antonio Rodriguez.

TA presented the COA budget to the City Council on Thursday, June 3rd and it was approved.

Next Board Meeting: September 15, 2021 at 5:15 P.M.

There being no further business:

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk