

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

Date and Time: May 19, 2021 at 5:15 P.M.

Meeting Location: Via Zoom

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

Member Absent: Alice Williams (AW), Donna Clifford (DC),

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 April 2021 Minutes, seconded by AB, roll call was taken, and passed unanimously.

LC advised the Board that Mickey Northcutt and John Boris would be at the next Board Meeting. TA advised that John Boris is also a new member of the Friends.

Old Business:

Senior and Homebound Vaccines: TA advised that 1-2 people call daily about vaccines and that some people waited on purpose to receive vaccines closer to home. TA further advised that Cataldo Ambulance is in the process of vaccinating homebound seniors.

New Business:

Friends Update: JR stated that one of the things that the Friends agree on is that when funding for housing comes up, and depending on funding sources, to see where we may be able to get more senior housing. He stated that the Federal Government may be giving more money and that if funding comes from federal infrastructure, funding may come up quite a bit. This is regarding any new senior building coming into the area. Developers and builders are in it to make money and if funding comes from federal sources, this may help senior housing.

JR also informed the Board that John Boris, who will be new to the Friends, is a wealth of knowledge and an extremely nice man.

AB stated that in the past, the Board talked as a group about supporting the goal of getting a volunteer coordinator and asked if the need still existed. She asked TA if she could provide what staffing needs there were at the next meeting so the Board could advocate for them.

TA advised that Kathy McCarthy was the volunteer coordinator and that she would talk with her about needs.

PS asked about meals and trying to grow food offerings. She said that, in particular, she was questioning food insecurity. PS said many of the senior population are probably malnourished, not because they can't afford food, but because of living alone. She asked if any consideration was being made for this.

TA stated there are many food resources in the community and we could work with Kerry Murphy from the Health Department to address this issue. LC advised advertising this in the Senior Power newsletter to address this. PS stated the newsletter went out to any registered seniors and questioned reaching other seniors. LC suggested an article in the newspaper talking about where to get your questions answered. TA mentioned that the newsletter is dropped at housing sites, Steve's Market, the hospital and other community outlets.

KM suggested having a sign-up sheet at the Farmers' Market to receive the newsletter and said she would speak with Kylie Sullivan who oversees the market about that.

Director's Report:

Nutrition: Three raised garden beds were built on-site by the Back Yard Growers. They are providing education to volunteers and staff.

Grow bags with flowers or spinach for front porch gardening were distributed to seniors. The last cooking video with Kerry Murphy was a one-pot spinach and tomato pasta.

AB asked TA if meals were trending up or down before the pandemic. TA advised an upward trend but not significant. AB further stated that it was great that the Mayor wants to get behind nutrition.

Congregate meals will not be resumed for a while. The plan is to fill the Great Room with more of the community. When resumed, congregate meals will be Mondays - Thursdays and Fridays will be a themed luncheon.

Social Services: Joe Ericksberg's last day is June 9. The position has been posted with Mass Council on Aging's Tuesday brief which goes out to all COAs in the state.

There are some concerns about the Greater Boston Food Bank monthly distribution with Joe Ericksberg leaving. Cathy Hoog, Housing Authority Director, has agreed to have their maintenance people come and pick up the food for Charter Street. 126 seniors have received 1424 packages since July 1, 2020.

The next intern for the Kay Walsh social services internship is Dalton Fitzgerald. Dalton is a social work major at Bridgewater State, a Salem resident, and works at the Brookhouse Home.

The Behavioral Health partnership with North Shore Community Health has taken a positive turn. On May 14th clinician Linda Werbner started in-person counseling at the Community Life Center. Since the beginning of the current fiscal year, Social Services has discussed counseling options with 33 individuals, 13 of whom were referred to Linda. We have waiting for Covid restrictions to ease in order to start in-person therapy. Not many people desired the telehealth option.

Programming:

All ongoing classes have moved outdoors beginning the first week of May.

Classes at Winter Island include chair yoga, tap dancing, meditation, balance class and book club.

Classes held in our parking lot include muscle and strength and Bingo (monthly).

Two very successful drive-thru events happened last week - Cinco de Mayo, sponsored by the Salem Rotary, and the Mother's Day breakfast sponsored by the Friends.

Beginning on June 24th a two-hour art class will be resumed. This is funded by CDBG.

On May 21st, the Traveling Chef will be here to offer a drive-thru lunch courtesy of Elder Services of the North Shore and Merrimack Valley.

Transportation:

Transportation continues to see more activity as people get vaccinated and restrictions ease. We are seeing some interest in our newly offered Mall and Trader Joe's runs.

We are working with Sail Salem to transport campers on the scholarship program to Winter Island. Sail Salem will be paying the drivers to use our vans.

Based on ridership requests trends, we need to advertise for 1-2 more drivers.

TA advised that the next meeting would be longer because of presentations by John Boris and Mickey Northcutt. George Barbuzzi advised he would not be present at the next meeting.

Next Board Meeting: June 16, 2021.

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 5:40 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk