

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

Date and Time: May 20, 2020 at 5:15 P.M.

Meeting Location: Via Zoom

Members Present: Lynda Coffill (LC, Chairperson), John Russell (JR), Julie Carver (JC), Donna Clifford (DC), Abigail Butt, (AB), Alice Williams (AW), George Barbuzzi (GB), Kristin Macek (KM), and Patricia Small (PS)

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. and called the roll.

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 is then done.

LC introduces new Board Member, Patricia Small and advised that the Mayor forwarded this appointment to the City Council which goes before the Council in June.

By way of background, PS advised the Board that she has lived in Salem for 13 ½ years and her background is in social services. She is on the Board of a brand-new non-profit agency regarding feeding the hungry which connects with all providers of food programs to see how to best help.

LC stated that she is involved in Salem for all Ages and invited PS to become part of that and PS stated she would like to do that. LC said consider it done.

A motion is made by JR to approve the April Minutes, seconded by AW and passes unanimously.

New Business: Elaine Heredeem has resigned from the Board and moving out of State. LC stated that Elaine has been on the Board for a long time and should be recognized for her service in some way. LC asked the Board what they would like to do. AB said she thought the Mayor should write a letter thanking her.

It was decided that the Board would get her a gift certificate and LC would take care of it and the board could settle with her.

LC then stated that since EH was a chairperson, another Vice-Chair needed to be named. JR was nominated and he accepted.

Friends Update: JR advised that the pasta dinner was cancelled and that the Friends did not know what fundraising will look like. He stated that they are doing a Facebook fundraiser and have already raised around \$3,000.00. He then advised that they were trying to get the Mayor to share the page and it was suggested that they reach out to others to share the page. JR said he was going to speak with all the City Councilors to see if they would share the page too.

He then advised that the Friends was asked for \$2,000.00 for a sink in the kitchen, but TA transferred some money and the sink has been ordered and it was hoped it would be in this week. LC thanked JR and the Friends for the valuable and hard work they do.

Director's Report:

Transportation – Continues to operate for medical appointments only. As restrictions are beginning to ease, we are taking the opportunity to set up precautions and guidelines as ridership increases. TA advised that a survey was being prepared for seniors regarding intended use because of their concerns with Covid-19.

Mass DOT has initiated the BlackCat Grant programs for 2021. Transportation will be taking advantage of opportunities available for a new van(s) and other suitable transportation related funds.

Vans are having pre-inspection checks completed in preparation of state inspection stickers due and are having needed repair work done on other vehicles in addition to deep cleaning.

Social Services –

- TA stated that social services was reaching out to people most at risk
- Still assisting with food and prescription needs
- Market Basket gift cards donated by First Baptist Church are being distributed;

- Regular calls still coming in with health insurance needs, fuel assistance, and stimulus payments;
- Three referrals made for behavioral health counseling;
- Durable medical equipment was still being loaned out;
- 435 seniors received 1,534 units of services;
- 58 volunteer shoppers paired with seniors.

Nutrition: Looking at how we can reopen meals with social distancing and may opt for a “lunch to go” or keeping some people on Meals on Wheels. TA advised that Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley and North Shore has offered 10 lb. food boxes for seniors and that she is working with Kerry Murphy to identify those who could use the food.

Activities/Programs:

Muscle, Strength and Balance is being offered via Zoom. Balance/Strong Bones is on SATV on Monday and Friday mornings and Aerobics on Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

Re-Opening: We don’t know when we will reopen, but it will be a soft opening later in the summer and assume there will be many new protocols in place in terms of class offerings, meals, use of the building, transportation, etc.

Old Business:

LC said she wanted to speak about the Work Plan and hoped the Board had looked it over.

The Work Plan is as follows:

- Continue advocacy for increased senior housing;
- Work with Salem Housing Authority to increase subsidized units;
- Work with Salem Housing Authority to apply for CPA emergency funds for seniors;
- Budget advocacy for increased positions and salaries;
- Support Friends of the Council on Aging;
- Continue involvement with Salem for All Ages;
- Continue monitoring of CLC building needs;
- Advocacy with private developers for Residential Service Coordinators.

TA advised that she had gotten an email from the Finance Director that we needed to cut 10-15% of our budget and tht she has a meeting Friday to review the budget. She said she did not know all the answers and was now looking to see where cuts could be made that did not include people.

TA then said she had been on a call last week regarding testing seniors for Covid-19. This group convened by the Mayor are looking at ways to reach out to seniors, particularly in senior housing. They are looking at ways to get the word out to seniors; i.e. robo calls, social media, etc.

Next Board Meeting: June 17th, 2020 in person or via Zoom

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:53 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk