

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

Date and Time: September 21, 2022 at 5:17 P.M.

Meeting Location: 401 Bridge Street and Zoom

Members Present: Lynda Coffill (LC), Chair, John Russell (JR), Vice-Chair, Kristin Macek (KM), Patricia Small (PS), Abigail Butt (AB), George Barbuzzi (GB), Michelle Bettencourt (MB) and Eliud Alcalá (EA)

Also Present: Teresa Arnold (TA, Director of the COA)
Leveille McClain (City Council Liaison)

Clerk: Kathleen Fitzgerald

Meeting Called to Order

LC called the meeting to order at 5:17 P.M.

LC stated that this meeting of the Salem Council on Aging Board is being held in person at the Levesque Community Life Center Great Room, 401 Bridge Street, Salem and via remote participation in accordance with Chapter 107 of the Act. All votes taken shall be by roll call.

LC welcomed Michelle Bettencourt to the Board.

Roll call was then taken. A motion was made by JR to accept the June Minutes as amended, seconded by PS, roll call was taken, and passed unanimously.

Old Business: KM stated that there is a tour tomorrow of another Beacon Communities site in Boston. Greg Ford reached out to the Board and the Friends and wanted to be able to give a tour. They have rented a bus or a van. Beacon Properties has asked to reach out to the Lee Fort Terrance Tenants' Association. KM declined going on the tour because of work. No other Board members wish to participate in the tour. KM stated she did not know how many residents or staff would be attending. She also stated that there has not been a Zoning Board of Appeals meeting that she knows of.

KM stated the Board was in full support of affordable housing and multi-generational housing. She further stated that the Board did not feel there was enough forward thinking

which was short-sided. She said there were 5,000 - 7,000 people on the waitlist for subsidized housing.

LC stated that EA has entered the room.

LC stated there was a letter to the editor and it was from a resident who is a veteran. LC said she thought all residents were in favor of the Lee Fort Terrace project, but it is not unanimous.

JR stated they were not adding any seniors and it is something that does not meet our needs and that the Willows neighbors were not in favor.

KM said a lot of people in her neighborhood were part of kitchen table meetings. They were concerned that there was not more funding being made for seniors and what it will do to traffic patterns.

JR stated the biggest concern is that Beacon is a privately owned company. LC said the Salem Housing Authority is not involved.

AB stated that being a private organization, they would keep it for 5-7 years and then sell. LC asked if they are doing a 99-year lease.

KM said resources which we may or may not have in the City if privately owned may be more pressure for property owners to maintain.

Farmers' Market Coupons: LC said she reached out to Senator Lovely and Representative Tucker to increase the Farmers' Market coupon amount.

LC asked AB if she had names and she said yes and that everyone working on this program is very excited. She stated that 15 years ago, \$25.00 was an ok amount but now you would not be able to purchase much of anything. The coupons support local agriculture, gets seniors out of the house and they get to choose their own food. She advised that the budget is presently \$20 million dollars and there a current call to change the funding to \$50 million dollars and there is a push behind it. She stated that there used to be a buffer from the State which allowed "Rebecca" to use more coupons. It has disappeared for no reason. Tara Hammes from MCOA said she would see what she could do. She said there was a meeting with a number of people and it was decided there was a need to advocate for more funding. Tara advised she would see what the most effective way to get this done would be and will be sending out a request to the COA Boards to write their own letters using a template that Lincoln uses. There is a need to pull in the national COAs.

AB advised that the coupons are at \$25.00 and the funding limit is at \$50.00. She said:

Step 1 is to get on board with advocating to get more money and the federal funding bill up from \$20 million dollars to \$50 million dollars.

Step 2 is how to get the rule changed to bring up the amount.

Councilman McClain asked if you say it is only funded at \$20 million but there is a push to get it to \$50 million. He asked if there was a budget proposal about this. AB said her sense was that there is a nudge. Councilman McClain said we could also take the same letter and turn it into a resolution from the Council.

LC stated she was confused about the \$25 and \$50. AB said each booklet is worth \$25 and there is a rule in place that it would never be more than \$50. Once the booklet is funded for more, we are going to find seniors who will use them so more booklets will be used and once that happens, we can push for other things. She also stated that the income levels should be changed.

LC stated this was a three-step process and the Board could begin by writing letters to people. AB stated we should reach out to other COA Boards and advised that the MCOA weekly newsletter by Tara Hammes should do this too.

LC stated we would start with our own letter and asked if the Board was in favor of advocating for an increase in the Farmers' Market coupons. AB made a motion to increase funding of the Farmers' Market coupons from \$25 to \$50, PS seconded. Roll call is taken and it passed unanimously.

AB said she would send a template and video about what the program entails.

New Business:

Friends Update: JR stated the first meeting after a summer hiatus was this morning and he was happy to report there were now 18 members. He said there were attorneys, nurses, community activists, etc. He said they were up to \$65,000 in the treasury. JR stated that they have never turned down anything asked for by TA or Rosanna Donahue. He advised that Rosanna asked for money for Thanksgiving dinners this year. The amount is to be determined. The Friends applied for funding for the Memory Café (See Director's Report).

JR said the July Luau was very well done.

Director's Report:

Dining Services/Nutrition:

- Our "self-cook" meals this summer were tuna niçoise with chicken soup, chicken Caesar salad and last Friday's lasagna. All our meals are served with an ice cream treat which everyone enjoys. As is possible, we run these meals on Fridays and can increase attendance by ten or more.
- We have attendance of 35 to 42 for our monthly "self-cook" brunches.
- Our "What is Your Favorite" Questionnaire is available. Information collected will be used in future menu planning.
- Kitchen operation volunteers are an immense help.

- Erica will be meeting with TA this week to discuss additional equipment needs.

Transportation:

- Annie O’Shea is back this week from a leave of absence, and we are pleased to see her.
- The operation is status quo with seven part-time drivers with robust schedules.
- Staff met today with Amanda Chiancola to review the new CDBG contract which pays the salary of one driver. We receive this funding annually.

Social Services:

- Farmer’s Market Coupons 2022 in accordance with the US Dept. of Agriculture and Agespan: Wednesday, July 13, 2022 was call-in day to request coupons, 100 telephone calls were received from seniors and disabled individuals and put on a list for the \$25.00 allotment of Farmers Market coupons. Wednesday, August 10, 2022 was distribution day and Social Services dispersed the coupons to all 100 individuals.
- We had our planned LUNCH AND LEARN in collaboration with North Shore Community Health Center staff on August 30, 2022. The topic was “Sleep: Why it is so Important and How to Get a Good Night’s Sleep”. 67 seniors attended.
- NSREACT (North Shore Regional Elder Assistance Coordinating Team) has reconvened meeting the first Wednesday of the month and hosted at the CLC or Police Department. The Salem Team consists of social workers from the COA, Salem Police Department, Salem Fire Department, Salem Board of Health, Behavioral Health Specialists and Age Span. The new Salem Police Liaison is Patrolman Ryan Arundel who attended the Sept 7th meeting.
- Former Salem Police Liaison, Officer Jess Rondinelli, recently became a Community Resource dog handler and for 6 months Officer Rondinelli and our Salem Comfort Dog “Derby” were in Walpole training 3 days a week. She will be greatly missed on the Salem NSREACT Team. She has been assigned to Salem Problem Properties. On the same note, we will continue to see Officer Rondinelli and Derby at the CLC as she will continue to work with Rosanna with the “Pizza with the Police”, “Coffee with a Cop” lectures and other programs. Officer Rondinelli and Derby will be frequent visitors at the CLC so she and Derby can socialize and have friendly visits with the seniors.
- Medicare Open Enrollment is October 15-December 7, 2022
- The new Social Service intern for the academic year is SSU senior Lanai Ritchie. Lanai will be with us every Monday and Thursday from September 12, 2022 to April 21, 2023.

Programs/Activities:

- We are pleased to be hosting student nurses from Salem State University for two consecutive rotations each Wednesday through early December. While we are not a clinical site, they are concentrating on the social determinants of health.
- Student nurses from North Shore Community College will be with us two days a week starting in October and into December. We work with NSCC annually.
- TA chairs the Community Life Center Engagement Committee, a committee of Salem for All Ages. Patricia Zaido and Dominick Pangallo, Co-chairs of SFAA have asked the CLC staff to take over the successful speaker series and computer training that were programs of SFAA.
- Rosanna has brought back some small out of the building trips for our seniors. They have visited the Witch Museum last week and have plans to visit the Phillips House in a few weeks.
- The Caregiver Support Group has been extended through December.
- Our “brunch and a movie” days continue to be a huge success. Rosanna was able to find our last movie with sub-titles which helped those that have a hard time hearing.
- We were awarded our CDBG again for the upcoming year. Through this grant, we are able to offer our Muscle and Strength and Art classes at no cost.
- The Flu Clinic through the Salem Board of Health will be here next Wednesday.
- After a 2-year hiatus, we will participate in the Haunted Happenings Parade this year on October 6th.

Other Noteworthy News:

Memory Café:

- The monthly Memory Café is going well and growing with about two dozen attendees; those living with memory loss and their caregivers. Memory Café funds pay expenses associated with the monthly caregiver support group.
- On behalf of the Memory Café program, the Friends of the Council on Aging submitted a letter of inquiry to the Cummings Foundation grant program in hopes of being invited to apply for one of their \$100,000 grants. We will know in early November if the Friends will be invited to submit a full application. You must be designated as a non-profit organization to apply, so the Friends of the COA agreed to sponsor this application and if the funds are awarded, the program.

Enhancing the CLC Kitchen:

- David Rodriguez from the Energy and Sustainability Dept. of the City has set up an account and ready to assist with processing of required finance documents when a CLC Kitchen workgroup is ready to move forward. TA is working with Michael Lutrzykowski from the Building Department.

- An October 4th workgroup meeting has been scheduled by Michael Lutrzykowski.

Membership Update -- Michele McHugh has been put forward by Chief of Staff Dominic Pangallo and she will be going in front of the Council tomorrow. Councilman McClain said she did not have to be there, but it was a good idea if Michele attended. He said she should be encouraged to come to the second meeting.

LC stated that the next meeting of the COA Board would be the Annual Meeting and then we would go into the regular meeting.

AB asked if goal setting for 2022-2023 could be put on the agenda along with budget, food insecurity, and senior housing advocacy.

KM asked if we were doing the Halloween parking lot. JR stated just the Friends and Park & Rec. Last year they made \$13,200.00. KM asked if there was a sign that said "All proceeds go to Seniors". AB agreed with that and suggested also putting something like "would you like to give an additional donation". JR said that the parking lot was usually filled up by 2:00 P.M.

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

Next Board Meeting: October 19, 2022, remote via ZOOM. The meeting adjourned at 6:22 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk