

DATE: November 8, 2023
TIME: 3:01 PM

**Draft- Belmont Council on Aging
Minutes From October 3, 2023**

Meeting Called to order 7:00 PM

Present: Dana Bickelman (ex-officio), Pierce Ellenwood (ex officio), Ted Dukas, Chao Qiang Lai, Maryann Scali, Jane Shapiro, Peg Callanan, Ellen Sullivan (vice-Chair), Andrea Paschal

Not Present: Karen Donelan, Judy Morrison, Joel Semuels, Tomi Olson,

1. Senior Citizen Concerns - M. Scali

- The Newsletter was excellent. Thank Pierce for doing a great job! But the yellow color font could be easier to read.
- There is a concern with signing up for fitness classes –drop-in vs. registering for a session. Dana indicated prorating is not done/possible. After registering, one needs to pay even if they miss the class. That regulation was set earlier, so attendees need to commit to the class.
- Why can't people sign up for classes online yet? Not enough manpower to make it happen. But Dana indicated the office plans to look into it, which may be possible in the future while allowing paying online and registering by phone call for some seniors.
- We will not provide any funds to the duplicated bridge group. The Bridge Group will continue as it does not lose money, and the seniors want the Bridge program to be held at the Center. The instructor is still being paid the same as other instructors. All the instructors and programs should be treated equally at the Center.
- The library will not use any space during the daytime. The programs and activities at the Center have priority to all the areas in the Center.

2. Review of Past Meeting Minutes- Joel Semuels drafted

Reviewed and accepted anonymously with minor corrections.

3. Updates and Correspondence

A. Director - Dana Bickelman

Dana started the budgeting process and met with Jennifer Hewitt this week, and plans to meet Patrice Garvin on October 16 and meet with the Select Board in November. Dana will let the Board know the exact date when she will meet the Select Board. Some of the Board members may want to attend the meeting. The meeting with Patrice Garvin will decide the basics of the budget with or without an override situation. There will not be much room to request additional funds in the coming year's budget. MaryAnn expressed her interest in attending the meeting with the Select Board.

B. Assistant Director- Pierce Ellenwood

September was a good month. Many seniors have returned like spring. This month – October, began with a program on the history of Patriot. We will have a good mix of programs on educational and service providers. We're going to have an attorney come and talk about state

planning and health insurance enrollment, such as Shine enrollment; enrollment season begins October 15. We will have several evening events. Ribotone, a student music group from MIT, will come and perform music. Joining them will be the MIT Alzheimer Animation Hub on October 17 at 5:30 p.m. We are partnering with the library to host a murder mystery party on October 24 at 4pm. Details will be posted in the Newsletter. Hopefully, there will be more events on Tuesday evening, but the main issue is transportation for seniors. The main event in November is the Veterans Breakfast, open to everyone on November 8, and the Friends' Craft Fair on November 18.

C. Friends of the Belmont C.O.A.

Dana, filling in for Joel, reported that the concert raised over \$7,000 in profits, according to a report by John Stern. This event received strong support from sponsors. So proud of such a success! A young and diverse group attended the concert. The concert was recorded and viewed on the Belmont Media Center webpage. Sometimes, it may be played in the Center.

D. Springwell-Jane

The merger of Springwell and BayPath is completed. If there are any issues, please let Springwell know so the issue can be addressed. Belmont remains a hard-served community. Case manager Ken Albert recently passed away. He was a very dedicated manager; a special fund will be named after him. The food service by Springwell is improving and tastes better.

E. Transportation-Ellen

We had a hard time asking Belmont Taxi (due to a lack of staff) to accommodate medical rides for seniors' appointments. We have maximized the utilization of all drivers/employees to accommodate the transportation needs of seniors. Ellen, Maggie, and Martin will meet this Friday morning to discuss a solution to the problem. The meeting will also discuss how to equitably serve all seniors in need. This will be updated at the next meeting. Martin is looking for alternatives. Uber is an alternative, but seniors need to learn how to call an Uber on their smartphones. Training for older adults may help realize this alternative.

F. Age Friendly Action-Judy is not here. No update.

4. Old Business: MaryAnn, Jane, and Joel will come together as the Nominating Committee this month to recommend a new Chair of the COA Board. They will report at the next meeting.

5. New Business: Ellen suggested that in addition to the seniors' concerns, we should get positive feedback from board members at the beginning of the board meeting, and that part should be added to the meeting agenda. All board members can seek feedback from seniors. Post a message in the Newsletter and ask anyone for feedback about the Center. There is a suggestion box in the Center.

All the Board members are reminded to take the ethics training test by September 30, 2023.

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6. Next Meeting

Tuesday, November 7, 2023 on Zoom

7. Adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Chao Qiang Lai