

BELMONT COUNCIL ON AGING  
MEETING MINUTES  
January 6, 2020

**RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: August 23, 2021  
TIME: 9:51 AM

**1. Call to Order: 7:08 pm**

**Attendees:** Chair, Chao-Qiang Lai, J. Singler, E. Hamann, P. Solomon, E. Sullivan, M. Cahalane, T. Dukas, J. Semuels, M. Paolillo, M. Scali, Ex-officios N. Niv-Vogel, Director, D. Leavitt, Assistant Director

**Members not in attendance:** T. Olson

**2. Senior Citizen Concerns:**

- Maryann expressed seniors' concerns regarding their most recent tax bills and the large increases in assessed values and taxes to be paid. She asked Dana to invite Dan Dargon from the Assessor's Office to speak with Seniors at the Beech Street Center regarding the Assessment Process and what may be coming down the road in the fall regarding possible Operating Override for the town.
- Maryann expressed everyone's pleasure with the new kiosk in the lobby that allows more people to check-in for classes/events
- Maryann expressed seniors' concerns regarding the condition of the parking lot at the Beech Street Center during and after snow/ice storms. Many seniors have complained about the safety of the area and the lack of regular plowing/ice removal. Mark volunteered to call Jay Marcotte at the Highway Department to express everyone's concerns in order to draw attention to the problem and hopefully get the town to be more vigilant about snow removal in this area.

**3. Treasurer's Report:**

- Maryann reported a balance of \$150 in the account. Nava mentioned that there will be some expenses for the Awards Plaque that was purchased for the Excellence in Intergenerational Programming. She believed the costs were around \$85.

**4. Review of Past Meeting Minutes:**

- December minutes were reviewed and accepted as amended.

**5. Updates and Correspondence:**

**A. Director's Report:**

- Nava reviewed her December 2019 Director's Report (attached to these minutes) with the Board.
- Nava also mentioned that the Awards Ceremony for the Excellence in Intergenerational Programming will be held on January 30<sup>th</sup> at 9 am at the Belmont High School Small Theater. The recipients of this award did a photographic history of Seniors ("Snapshots in Wisdom" Program).
- Nava reported that a budget meeting with the Town occurred today. The COA was selected to do a "trial run" for a new budget process that is being implemented. Department Heads are being asked to present their wish list of needs for each year for the next 5 years. The COA's wish list include (in order for the next five years): a full time social worker, a full time media specialist, an Administrative Assistant to handle rentals at the Center, a Nutrition Specialist to help expand the breakfast and supper programs, an Adult Education program to collaborate with local Universities.
- Nava reported that the COA will be receiving funds from the Town's Transportation and Safety Fund for this year. This is a fund that is comprised of monies raised from ride shares throughout the year. These funds will cover a number of COA transportation needs including: paying a "co-payment" for a 8 Passenger Van that the COA is receiving from a Mass DOT grant, town-wide mailing to promote the Volunteer Driver Program and recruit volunteers, repairs to the Belder Bus, placards for all volunteer drivers to place in their cars when transporting seniors as part of the Volunteer Driver Program.

#### **B. Assistant Director's Report:**

- Dana reviewed her December 2019 Assistant Director's Report (attached to these minutes) with the Board.

#### **C. Friends:**

- Joel reported that the Crafts Fair (held in November) set a record in funds raised. Over \$6000 was raised. The Friends' next meeting will be held January 9<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. Joel also reported that membership is around 300 (which is about 20 higher than previous years).

#### **D. Springwell:**

- Judy reported that there was no Springwell meeting held last month- therefore, there is nothing to report.

### **E. Police Chief Search Committee**

- Maryann and Mark reported that the new Police Chief (James MacIsaac) is being officially sworn-in on January 8<sup>th</sup>.
- There will be a Retirement Party for Chief McLaughlin on February 1<sup>st</sup> at Oakley Country Club.

### **F. Volunteer Driver Program:**

- Ellen reported that a total of 78 Volunteer Driver Rides took place in December (an increase over the 66 total in November). Considering the bad weather and holidays, Ellen and Marty are extremely pleased with the number of rides given and the success of the program so far. Efforts are continuing to recruit more volunteer drivers- as we are receiving many requests for rides (especially to the Boston Hospitals). Most volunteers are not willing to drive into the city. We are hoping to find volunteers who would be willing to make these sorts of rides.

## **6. Old Business**

### **A. Moving Forward the Age Friendly Belmont Action Plan:**

- Nava reported that appointees are “ready to go”- they just need to be officially appointed and sworn in. Everything is still moving very slowly. She hopes to have the committee up and running very soon so that they can immediately begin working on an action plan.

### **B. Status of Belmont Housing Trust Plan for McLean Property:**

- Judy distributed charts (attached to these minutes) which show the various “AMI- Area Median Income” levels. These AMI levels will help guide how the Affordable portion of this development will be filled.
- Judy reiterated that there will be around 40 Two-Bedroom Townhouses and 104 rental units (of which 25% will be Affordable Housing).
- The Housing Trust, Planning Board, Energy Committee and other are working with the developer (Northland) to come up with an agreeable plan to present to the town. Development will generate about \$1.8 million in annual venue.
- The Town Meeting that will be held in May will hopefully include an agenda item to discuss the Re-Zoning of the McLean Land which is needed in order for the developer to move forward.
- Judy will continue to keep the Board informed about upcoming meetings.

### **C. Discussion on Media Publicity and Responses to Negative Letters to the Editors about Seniors:**

- Nava and Chao co-wrote a “Guest Commentary” in the Belmont Citizen-Herald entitled “Looking Back Over the Past 10 Years at the Beech Street Center”. Its goal was to help educate the Community about the history and role of the Beech Street Center in the town.

#### **7. New Business: Discussion of Producing Report for the Community Marking 10 Year Anniversary**

- The Board reviewed copies of the Foundation for Belmont Education’s 25 Year Anniversary Report to the Community that was mailed to 5000 households recently. Ellen thought it would be an excellent idea for the COA to do a similar report to the Community- in a continued effort to help educate the community about the COA and the Beech Street Center. It would be a more in-depth version of the recent “Guest Commentary” that Nava and Chao penned in the Belmont Citizen Herald. It could be entitled “The Beech Street Center 10 Year Anniversary Report to the Community”.
- A Motion was made for the “COA to produce a 10 Year Anniversary Report to the Community and to mail this report to as many households as possible in the town.” The Board unanimously approved this motion.
- Nava, Dana and Chao will begin drafting the report and will ask the Board to help edit the final product.
- Ellen will ask the Foundation for Belmont Education about costs to produce the report and mail the report- in addition to who did the layout of the report. Judy will also follow-up with Chris Kochem to inquire about layout of the report and how it was done.

#### **8. New Business: Discussion of On-line and Credit Card Payments for Programs**

- Nava has emailed the town accountant and treasurer to inquire about setup up credit card payments. This would help make it easier for Seniors to register and pay for programs. Nava is waiting to hear back from the town.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Next meeting is Monday, February 3, 2020.