

DATE: October 4, 2023
TIME: 2:37 PM

Draft- Belmont Council on Aging
Board Meeting Minutes Jul 10, 2023

Meeting called to order at 7:03 p.m.

Present: Tomi Olson (Chair), Dana Bickelman (Director ex-officio), Ted Dukas, Andrea Paschal, Maryann Scali, Jane Shapiro, Joel Semuels, Judy Morrison, Chao Qiang Lai.

Not Present: Mark Paollilo, Pierce Ellinwood (Assistant Director ex-officio), Ellen Sullivan, Karen Donelan.

Agenda

1. Senior Citizen Concerns - M. Scali

Seniors want a better understanding of what is happening this fall at Beech Street Center usage for the Library and the Historical Society. Parking, what will happen in each room, etc. Maryann requested that people, including members of the Board, email her with concerns and she will compile and send to Dana. Tomi would like to have a posting on an electronic display. Historical Society season starts in September. They will offer a tour. Dana suggested the Library do something similar.

Is exercise room being cleaned properly? Dana has put in a request to clean; there was an issue with the floor. Not having a regular custodian may be a problem, but there is money in the budget to pay overtime.

Recent scam involving stamps; Maryann reported to the police, and spread the word. AARP of MA does a Fraud Talk Tuesdays. Andrea will send Dana the information.

Sidewalk in front of the Beech Street Center needs some repair.

2. Review/approval of past meeting minutes:

June 6, 2023 – approved with correction of minor typos.

3. Updates and Correspondence

Discussion of updating how to communicate what resources are available to seniors, especially in light of the turnover of the social worker position. There is a list that was created in 2014 by some social work interns. Tomi proposed doing a subcommittee.

a. Director - Dana Bickelman – report review:

Carpets cleaned this past weekend. Custodian search is still on. Trying to get more volunteers, especially to check people in (the tablets are not being used 100%). It's important to capture usage numbers.

Farmers Market coupons available this Wednesday. Value has increased to \$50 (based on income eligibility) for seniors only. Limited number available.

Dana said the \$29K from ride-share receipts has been received. Doesn't have to be just medical rides. Dana wants to be mindful of overusing the taxi. Possible expansion to bring veterans to the VA Center. Need to make sure we know how to get this money allocated on a regular basis. Dana will connect with Ellen Sullivan and connect either town manager or assistant town manager.

Bridge group – After finding out that the bridge group has been operating at a loss (with what is being paid for the organizer), Dana made clear that the senior center will not continue to operate the group at a loss. Dana arranged to continue for three (3) more months (June, July and August) on a trial basis, after which issue will be revisited. Refreshments will no longer be paid for by senior center. Any future discussion with the group should involve other members of the board.

b. Assistant Director - P. Ellinwood report review.

July will be slow. Ice cream socials have started on Friday afternoons. There will be a Charlie Card event with Senator Brownsberger's office.

c. Friends - J. Semuels.

September 28 is the next concert; won't be Tom Nutile, as he is retired. Fundraising is starting. After Joel steps down, Jon Stearns will be the president and Andy Levin will be the treasurer. Nominating committee is still working on open positions (there are at least two). Craft Fair will be held again the Saturday before Thanksgiving. Fundraising letter has gone out.

There are COA board positions that are up (Tomi and Ted; both want to re-up). Margie's position needs to be filled.

d. Springwell - J. Shapiro

Jane sent around an article about elder abuse/awareness. Springwell can assist with Mass Health application renewals. Contract for nutrition program/farmers market coupons and boxes will be scheduled.

e. Transportation Working Group - E. Sullivan (report submitted, summary provided by Dana)

FY23 summary of total rides. At end of June, the funding remaining totaled \$43,202.50. Expanding transportation to VA centers in West Roxbury and Bedford. Watertown COA has Uber/Lyft gift cards. Dana will reach out to find out how they work that program.

f. Age Friendly Action Committee - Judy Morrison:

Housing – home modification event done this past spring, there is money left over, possibly to use for other activities. ADUs (Auxiliary Dwelling Units) for Belmont – researching neighboring towns to see what they do. Housing Trust Group would need to sponsor. Judy and Tomi were at the Housing Trust meeting a few weeks ago; request was made to create a partner group. Waiting to hear back. Must be voted in by the town before anything can be done in Belmont. Winchester and Arlington just voted it in.

Outdoor Spaces – Set of guidelines on age-friendly modifications for any projects going forward. Recreation committee has report on all outdoor spaces in the town, and since all

outdoor projects need to go through this committee, intent is to have them review the guidelines. Once approved, Recreation committee will have those guidelines to provide on those projects. Judy will arrange to have the guidelines presented to, reviewed, and approved by COA board.

Communication – Belmont Voice will be starting in the fall. All Belmont households, for free, but looking for donations. Is a non-profit.

4. Old Business

A. Uber/Lyft money received.

5. New Business

A. MOA needs to be signed by Tomi and Dana.

B. Draft of letter to thank Select Board for addressing Concord Ave concerns approved by the COA.

Meeting adjourned 8:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Paschal