

DATE: January 4, 2022

TIME: 2:33 PM

## **COA Board meeting - December 6, 2021 Minutes**

Call to Order

T. Olson

Present: T. Olson, Chair, E. Sullivan Vice Chair, C. Qiang Lai, A. Paschal, M. Wayne, N. Niv-Vogel (Ex-Officio), J. Semuels, J. Shapiro, J. Morrison, M. Scali, K. Donelan & T. Dukas  
Absent: M Paolillo Select Board Liaison, D. Bickelman (Ex-Officio)

Call to order at 7:02 pm by E. Sullivan, Vice-Chr.

### **1. Citizens' Concerns-M. Scali**

Four main areas:

1. Loud conversations and some arguing/yelling, in particular in the computer room, between visitors to the center, for various reasons, including mask wearing. Related in part to safety at center, to be discussed later this meeting.
2. Community service and gathering list of seniors who need assistance in snow removal.
3. Need for some form of police presence at the senior center.
4. Staff at center not visible to visitors (with a few exceptions); would be nice to have more mingling/interaction.

M. Scali stated for the record that the COA board, mistakenly, did not take a vote regarding the amount that of what Friends should pay for the gap in transportation services. Members of the COA were authorized to make an assessment of what amount was needed and determined that \$10,000 would be the appropriate amount.

2. A motion was made then made to ask the Friends for \$10K to fund senior transportation needs; seconded and approved unanimously. Board also approved a correction to the November meeting minutes to reflect that the COA board agreed to approach the Friends on transportation funding.

### **2. Review of Past Meeting Minutes M. Wayne**

The minutes from the November 1, 2021, meeting were unanimously approved as amended.

### **3. Updates and Correspondences**

#### **A. Director's Report**

N. Niv-Vogel

Select Board has Nava on schedule to renew parking permit program at their meeting on 12/20/21.

The meeting on the budget with the Town Administrator took place last week.

The Town Accountant put back in the vacant social worker position into the FY23 budget. It would be a non-salaried, contractual position paid for by ARPA funds. December 16 the budget will be presented to the Select Board, and COA board members are welcome to attend.

There will soon be a social worker at police the police dept. This would also be a contractual position and managed by the mental health organization, Advocates. The social worker will be on duty from noon to 9 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The Board of health reported that senior covid infection rate is high relative to the vaccination rate and compared to other parts of the population.

The Town's Structural Impact Group is reviewing the COA budget with a particular focus on transportation services.

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| B. | Assistant Director | D. Bickleman |
| C. | Friends            | J. Semuels   |

12/2/21 3 p.m. friends board mtg. \$10,000.00 Jan - June rides to medical appointments

Cambridge Savings Bank . Voted to approved \$2,500.00 grant

1/13/22 is next Friends Board meeting.

Craft sale proceeds were \$2,869.00. 360 people attended.

#### 4. **Old Business**

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|----|---|--------------|
| A. | Update on Status of Remote vs.<br>In-Person vs. Hybrid Meetings | N. Niv-Vogel |
|----|---|--------------|

As of 4/1/22 the governor will lift the emergency status of Open Meeting Law so that meeting entirely remotely will no longer be allowed. Meetings will need to be in person or hybrid, that is, combination of in person and remote participation. A quorum is required for in person and online meetings.

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| B. | Relationship with Belmont Housing<br>Authority | T.Olson |
|----|--|---------|

12/16/21 is next meeting.

Tomi currently has no information to share as the meeting has not yet occurred.

#### 5. **New Business**

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|----|---|----------|
| A. | Creating inclusiveness and Making the COA Welcoming to All- | T. Olson |
|----|---|----------|

Nava initially asked to attend the Diversity Task Force meeting because she wanted seniors to be part of the discussion on diversity.

Tomi said that more people need to be included from all groups.  
Apparently, some people feel they're treated rudely in our community.  
People need to feel included and be treated graciously and warmly.

Ellen said that it would be good if members of certain communities play a role.  
Tomi said Kim Haley Jones suggested sending out a one page survey to assess needs.  
A booklet is intimidating.

Judy Morrison said at Wellington was a Cultural Inclusion Program  
for parents and children. Food, dance, music.

Karen Donelan said that Belmont has a lot of ethnic diversity and this  
should be shared and encouraged.

Tomi said to encourage different groups.

Tomi said that it would help if staff people mingle with seniors so that seniors feel welcome.  
The pandemic has put many on edge and people feel polarized.

B. Safety at the Senior Center N. Niv-Vogel

Nava stated that she and the PD are in close communication. Officer Pugliese is holding a special  
coffee at the center to help make seniors comfortable raising concerns they may have. She stated  
that staff is patrolling the building on a regular basis to insure that people are comfortable and  
safe. Nava and Lt. Daley do not believe that police patrols at the center are warranted at this  
time.

C. Strengthening Intergenerational Connections with the School Department- T. Olson

The discussion was tabled for upcoming meetings due to lack of time.

D. Discussion of Belmont Representation on Springwell Board

Nava reported that commitment to being on Springwell board includes a morning meeting, once  
a month. Springwell's decisions might not reflect COA's wishes, which is what makes COA  
presence on board so important. Nava said that as director, her priorities are not necessarily those  
of Springwell's.

Tomi expressed interest in sharing the seat on the Springwell board with someone else. She  
would like to address the quality of the food in the nutrition program.

Jane offered to attend the meetings with Tomi.

Karen asked if it's important that each municipality advocates for its own on the Springwell  
board. Nava answered that the board does not deal distinguish priorities by individual  
communities. Karen stated that the ASAPs like Springwell are changing their model, and in the  
future, may function more like extensions of local health care systems.

The board voted unanimously to recommend Tomi Olson for the Springwell Board with Jane  
Shapiro acting as an alternate.

E. New Agenda Item

Transportation needs to be discussed. \$10,000 grant is available, from the Friends to cover the gap in the taxi program from end of the year to April, but the needs will persist beyond that.

The next meeting is scheduled for 1/10/22.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Shapiro

Minute taker pro tem