

**MINUTES OF THE BELMONT COA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
February 6, 2006**

Present: N. Hegarty, chair, E. Hamann, J. Kantor, A. Lougee, P. Solomon, B. Miranda, J. Semuels, H. Dvorak

Absent: H. Kazarian, J. Bruschi, J. Horner.

Neil Hegarty (chair) called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Acceptance of Minutes: The minutes of the January meeting were reviewed and unanimously accepted.

Senior Citizens Concerns: None received.

General Announcements: Ms. Solomon and Ms. Lougee, of the Board Education Committee announced that Suzanne Hughes of Springwell would be giving an Elder Protective Service talk at the next Board meeting.

Springwell, Inc. Report: The Governor's FY 07 budget is under discussion on Beacon Hill. COA Directors are discussing strategies to increase the COA formula grants from Elder Affairs. Springwell is supporting efforts of Mass. Home Care Association to support the Equal Choice Bill in the legislature to have the dollars for care follow the patient. This would expand home based elder care. Springwell has a new computer system. It is also planning for long-range challenges and the inclusion of Medicare Part D training.

Director's Report: Ms. Niv-Vogel stated that on Feb. 7, Belmont Cable channel 8's program, "Belmont Focus", will begin filming COA programs, to be shown the second week of March. She asked if the board were interested in hosting a staff appreciation luncheon. The board enthusiastically agreed to what has now become an annual occurrence. It will be held on Friday, March 17 around noon. Planning for the event began for a pot-luck lunch whereby Board members sign up for home prepared or purchased contributions. There was a recent formal complaint made to Springwell and cc'ed to the director about an incident involving Idea Transportation where a senior waited 4 hours before returning home from an appointment. Ms. Niv-Vogel reiterated that Belmont COA drivers go to contiguous towns for elder medical visits only and provide rides in Belmont for non-medical visits. The COA Mardi Gras party in early March will include donations to a senior center afflicted by Hurricane Katrina.

Budget: The COA is preparing its budget request to the Town Capital Budget Committee. Since the COA van has over 100K miles, a new van is needed. The federal grant to the COA has ended and driver costs have had to be absorbed. Suggestions by the Warrant Committee have been made about the possibility of using taxi vouchers instead of owning a COA vehicle. It was noted that Weston had is dissatisfied with their taxi voucher system and is seeking alternatives. Several Board members spoke about the lack of control over the rides, that frail seniors need more time than taxis are comfortable with and the increased cost to the COA's by using taxis. Neil will present a more detailed account of our '07 budget at the March meeting.

The Senior Center Building Committee (Town) has hired John Ciccarello as the Project Manager of the new Senior Center (SC). He is stated to be an architect, an owner of a construction company and a Natick selectman. Town Administrator, Tom Younger, put together a meeting with Town Departments to discuss SC building related issues. Mr.

Caitlin, the architect, has had additional soil borings done at the new SC site. The goal is for construction bids to go out in the Fall of this year.

Friends Fundraising: Ms. Lougee reported that the Friends of the COA met in January. Donations for the SC continue to come in. It is now possible to put donated securities in a Merrill Lynch securities account for the SC. The fund raising drive continued in December and January. The membership and publicity committees will be holding a membership drive for this coming spring. Ms. Lougee has been asked to address the Lions Club at its April meeting. They are making a generous \$20,000 donation to the new SC.

Current Senior Center Lease Issues: Ms. Niv-Vogel noted that the current SC lease expires at the end of May. A new issue under discussion is that the Archdiocese, owners of the current SC, are possibly seeking to rent out to third parties certain parking spaces across the street from the current SC as part of an extension to the lease. Ms. Niv-Vogel also discussed the modular units at the High School where the current SC may have to move. The rooms may be fine for classrooms or offices, but may be difficult for many COA programs. There are discussions regarding use of the high school field house during the day. There remain difficult parking issues at the high school for potential SC use. Ms. Miranda proposed and the Board discussed and then voted upon a motion to the Town and Diocese that expresses the desire of the COA Board stay at the current senior center site with a 60 day renewable lease at the conclusion of the current lease. It is anticipated that the new senior center will not be ready for occupancy until early 2008.

Chronic Disease Self Management: Mr. Semuels presented an up-date regarding possible Belmont participation in the Chronic Disease Self-Management program ,as discussed last year by Dr. Schreiber, chief physician at Hebrew Rehabilitation Center for Aged, in Roslindale. The Chronic Disease Self-Management Program is a workshop given two and a half hours, once a week, for six weeks, in community settings such as senior centers, churches, libraries and hospitals. People with different chronic, health problems attend together. Workshops are facilitated by two trained leaders, one or both of whom are non-health professionals with chronic diseases themselves. Subjects covered include: 1) techniques to deal with problems such as frustration, fatigue, pain and isolation, 2) appropriate exercise for maintaining and improving strength, flexibility, and endurance, 3) appropriate use of medications, 4) communicating effectively with family, friends, and health professionals, 5) nutrition, and, 6) how to evaluate new treatments. Mr. Semuels stated that Elder Services of Merrimac Valley (ESMMV) has arranged for 2 trainers to come to Lawrence, MA at the end of April for the purpose of training 26 people selected from ASAPs and other organizations. The Board again supported this program coming to Belmont. Mr. Semuels is in contact with ESMMV and Springwell (which has 2 allotted slots) about the idea of bringing 2 of the Lawrence trained trainers to Belmont when trained. Mr. Semuels is also looking into possibly becoming one of the trainers who would be trained in Lawrence. The potential costs of attending this training would either need to be made by Mr. Semuels or through funding by non-profits such as the Belmont Elderly Citizens, Inc. Financial support from the BEC will be evaluated.

Next Meeting: The next COA meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 6 at 7:30 p.m. at the Senior Center.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted;

Joel Semuels
Board Alternating Recording Secretary