

**BELMONT COUNCIL ON AGING  
BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING  
June 7, 2004**

**Present** M. L. Ahearn, J. Brusch, E. Hamann, C.M. Hegarty, J. Horner  
J. Kantor, H. Kazarian, A. Lougee, P. Solomon, Barbara Miranda, Chair  
Nava Niv-Vogel, Director

**Absent** T. Morabito

The meeting was called to order by Barbara Miranda at 7:00 p.m. Barbara noted the end of Mary Lou Ahearn's three year term and thanked her for all of her contributions over the years. Time was allowed at the end of the meeting for hospitality in Mary Lou's honor and all of the members of the Board expressed their gratitude for her contributions.

**Acceptance of the Minutes**

Acceptance of the minutes of the May 10, 2004 meeting was moved, seconded and unanimously approved.

**Report from the Chair**

- \* There has yet to be a response from Shaw's Supermarkets to Barbara's letter concerning the possibility of instituting a Senior Discount Day at Shaw's. Barbara will be following up with a telephone call to the local Manager.
- \* Barbara and Nava presented a report on the fund-raising efforts for the Senior Center. The Fund-Raising Committee is hoping to make a significant progress report to a Town Meeting that is proposed for the Fall. The work from this point is to identify some significant pledges that will be the cornerstone of the fund drive. Board members are asked to make suggestions about possible names and contacts that would be appropriate for this initial stage of the campaign. Board members may also be called upon to help out in approaching some of the donors.

**Report from the Director**

- \* The budget year is smoothly coming to an end. One item that has been resolved is the restoration of funding for the Aerobics program.
- \* There are two staff members who are awaiting the union's negotiations with the town regarding COLA increases for employees. This is not resolved at this time.
- \* An active volunteer has applied for the newly created Administrative Assistant II position.
- \* Nava reported on the very successful Volunteer's Appreciation Luncheon on May 27<sup>th</sup>. The press coverage was very good and there will be several follow-up articles, including one on the volunteer efforts of Grace Taylor and her work with a senior citizen who recently graduated from Umass-Boston.
- \* Along with Barbara, Nava reported on the fund-raising committee's activities. The 'case statement' is being finalized and there is some re-structuring of the committee taking place that will help it to focus on enhancing its strategy for the Town Meeting presentation and the subsequent Debt Exclusion debate.

\* Nava presented two issues for Board consideration and discussion.

\* Transportation: The Title III transportation grant will end in FY05. This has been a ten year Federal grant that has diminished over time since it was never envisioned as a permanent source of funding. The Center has been fortunate that it has been given a “grace period” by the grantor that was occasioned by the financial stress that many cities and towns are experiencing. However, the end of this grant is imminent. Even with the grant funding, the hourly rate is so low (\$7.25) that it has not been easy to recruit staff. An unsuccessful request was made to the Town seeking some financial help for this program. The Board then discussed the possibility of using a new bequest that will be coming to COA to help fund this program but there was no Board support for using this bequest for ongoing program costs. The discussion that followed centered on how to best ‘make the case’ for support. Suggestions were made on how to describe the program in terms of its service to individuals rather than outlining the numbers of rides provided, the costs, hourly rates, etc. The focus should be on the service, i.e., the transportation needed for medical services, the need to support daily living needs, such as food shopping, hair-dressing and other personal needs visits, the need to provide transportation to help seniors avoid isolation.

There were other issues discussed regarding the Transportation Report. It was noted that the number of rides provided has fallen and one of the reasons cited for this was the increased fragility of some seniors who were regular users but are no longer able to participate. There has not yet been an increase in the number of new users. The program has also not been publicized as much as it has been in the past because of the fragility of the funding discussed above. It was also noted that there was a decrease in the number of Meals on Wheels provided. About 1.5 years ago the list was very high and at present it has slipped from that level. In terms of the meal programs, it was noted that there were several recent lunch cancellations by Belmont Manor. Nava felt that this was not an unusual number and that there were good reasons for these missed lunches. She also reported that over the years Belmont Manor has been very cooperative with the Center.

\* A second issue raised by Nava was the status of custodial services. The present custodian has been working on a training grant from the “Senior Aide Program” that will expire at the end of the summer because, now being trained, he is deemed to be able to seek other employment. It does not seem likely that there will be another candidate for training to continue this work. The town will continue to provide some maintenance for the Center. Nava requested consultation from the Board on how to continue to fund the current Senior Aide as he has become invaluable to the functioning of the Center. Several suggestions about grants were offered.

### **Building Committee Report**

The community meeting on June 3, 2004 was very well attended and the description of the Center was very well received. All comments will be taken into account as the design process goes forward. The plan is to have an update meeting with the Board of Selectmen by the end of June, 2004, so that the fund raising efforts can move along rapidly.

### **Springwell Report**

This is a heavy re-contracting period of the year and the Board will be reviewing contracts at its next meeting on June 24, 2004. The agency has also begun an "Outreach Committee" to enhance its image and strengthen community awareness of its availability to provide services to seniors.

### **Meeting Notices**

Barbara outlined the following:

Next Meeting: **Tuesday, July 6, 2004**

At this meeting Barbara will appoint a Nominating Committee that will be charged with reporting a slate of officers to the Board at the regular September, 2004 Board meeting.

At the October, 2004 meeting, the Board will vote on the slate of officers that was presented at the September meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 and a reception for Mary Lou Ahearn followed.

Respectfully submitted,

Cornelius M. Hegarty