

**Belmont COA Board Meeting Tuesday, October 11, 2022 via Zoom**

**Meeting started 7:01 p.m.**

DATE: November 10, 2022  
TIME: 10:04 AM

Members Present Tomi Olson (Chair), Dana Bickleman (ex-officio)  
Karen Donelan, Ted Dukas, Judy Morrison, Mark Paolillo (Select Board liaison), Andrea  
Pascal, Chao Qiang-Lai, Maryann Scali, Joel Semuels, Ellen Sullivan & Margie Wayne

**Maryann Scali — senior citizens concerns**

Cleanliness of Beech Street Center after weekend functions. Dana said one of the cleaners went back to Brazil. Evening cleaners haven't been constant. Dana has been receiving a lot of complaints. Town has a contract through Facilities.

The Recreation Dept. uses the Beech St Center on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday nights and Saturday mornings and their cleaners handle the clean-up.

Dana in charge of renting Beech Street Center. Weekend rentals have picked up.

Committee to find assistant director. Dana will ask how it is being put together.

How to handle Covid problems? Foxwood trip spread Covid in August. 16 out of 24 individuals got Covid. COA is following Town mandates. Visitors should feel safe and comfortable. Karen Donelan said to remind people not to go out when they have symptoms of cold, etc.

Pickleball will start in January 2023.

The town process of choosing the new director: It was said that all COA members were on board. The hiring process was changed in 2014 by statute. Under that statute, the town administrator (Patrice Garvin) became the appointing authority in the process. Mark Paolillo expressed support for this. The choice of Dana Bickleman is a good choice. Judy Morrison expressed delight in the choice of Dana as director and said we want this choice to be positive and to move forward. We need to celebrate the choice of Dana and proceed in making Belmont an age-friendly community.

One more senior citizen concern: Tomi said Concord Avenue in front of post office is very dangerous. Data should be collected. Dana received an email from Detective James Siracusa and Sergeant Paul Garabedian about the new traffic pattern and wanting to host a seminar at Beech Street with the traffic committee. Dana will follow up with them about the issue (possibly it will be held in November or December). Jane asked if Detective Siracusa knows if police and fire departments were contacted about the new potentially very dangerous traffic

pattern. Andrea expressed concern about the dangerous traffic pattern and parking safety. It's a question of taking one's life in one's hands. The situation is terrible and untenable.

Margie Wayne said it would be good to demonstrate how Covid tests are done as it can be overwhelming and confusing for some. Dana said she's be happy to demonstrate. Karen Donelan said she'd be happy to find out which school nurses might be able to demonstrate. She also said that now that cold and allergy season is here, people should be cautious going out if they have symptoms. Reminders are good.

### **Dana Bickleman Report**

Cindy Dynan is the new Volunteer Coordinator. She will start on October 24.

Dana said Assistant Director will be worked on and will have input/a voice in the choice. Tomi asked if COA board members might have an input. Does Dana want a committee of COA board members who will provide input? Maryann suggested three board members.

Programs are being worked on. Kim Sliney is helping to plan events.

Podiatrist- Dr. Dan Seligman is starting October 31. 8:30 a.m. - noon.\$35.00 per visit — just the basics. Masks will be worn in a small room.

Meeting tomorrow (October 12) re Budget Summit and Workiva (software) with Jennifer Hewitt (Assistant Town Administrator/Financial Director) and Budget Analyst. Make process of putting budget together more streamlined. This is starting October 28. It was used by Jennifer Hewitt in Lexington.

Relative to the budget, Karen Donelan asked about unfilled positions for last year. Dana said new full time social worker position is underpaid. Nava inquired about this. Tomi Olson said that it's almost criminal that \$400 thousand is amount allocated to COA out of the total town budget, in view of the fact that 30% of Belmont are seniors and deserve more than that amount of money. Dana said that 50% of that amount is for salaries.

Robert McLaughlin acknowledged that seniors deserve self-esteem. Jane was in a meeting with Mr. McLaughlin and Nava in Spring 2022. He was nescient of the fact that seniors are fleeing. Nava assured him that this is the case.

Dana said that Yes rink committee wants to have a coffee and conversation. Tomi said that those who've had children or have them want a decent and safe rink with the caveat that \$35 million is too enormous a price. Features in the proposed rink were supposed to have been paid for in the new High School/Middle School. Important to provide information to seniors about real estate tax increase.

Joel said political advertising is against COA policy and should be followed. This policy was put together two or three years ago. Those who come into the Beech Street Center to persuade voters is not allowed.

**Joel Semuels — President of the Friends of the Council on Aging**

Craft fair on November 19. Bake sale. Pizza for vendors will be upstairs. No food will be served to attendees at tables as before. Each vendor will wear a mask. Will encourage masks for attendees.

Tom Nutile concert. Joel hasn't received final figure from Jon Stearns (Treasurer of the Friends of the COA. Well attended- over 100 people. Eleven corporate sponsors, ten family sponsors. Came close to setting a record of all the concerts. No students attended except one mother with her child.

October 27, 3 p.m. is next Friends meeting via Zoom.

**Jane Shapiro — Springwell report**

Springwell serves over 10k consumers in 22 communities. The 10k+ consumers are enrolled in a variety of programs across the agency.

Workforce remains a challenge for all contracted vendors.

Case managers work with consumers and vendors to prioritize services and think creatively about how to best use hours that are able to be filled.

Springwell merger integration of programs and processes continues to move forward. At this time, there is no change to the referral process or how to reach staff at Springwell. If changes are made, COAs will be provided with the information in advance.

Dana received an email from Joan (part of Springwell nutrition team) saying they want to go back to previous way of serving meals. Warmers for meals will be provided. Barbara is no longer there. She was a Springwell employee. Several volunteers are now in charge of the lunch.

**Ellen Sullivan - Transportation**

Our Volunteer Driver Program is back up and running. Currently, we have 3 volunteer drivers. Before COVID, we had 12 volunteer drivers. As with everything, it is very difficult to get volunteers. Our Medical Taxi Ride program is still going strong and we are in good financial health for the remainder of the year. Margie Wayne said that money was given by the Friends of the COA for medical taxi rides.

We will begin actively publicizing to the Community that the Volunteer Driver Program is back up and running. We are holding a Volunteer Open House on Tuesday, November 1 from 4-5:30

at the Beech Street Center. We are specifically hoping to find volunteers who would be interested in becoming a volunteer driver, front desk greeter, snow shoveler and other volunteer opportunities.

### **Judy Morrison - Age Friendly Action Committee**

1. Personnel – we have a new Housing representative (Betsy Lipson) and expect a new Recreation representative by end of October. All Belmontians are welcome to attend any and all meetings!
2. Housing subcommittee – we have created a companion brochure for Belmont home owners to go with the AARP House Fit Brochure. We are partnering with the High school for design, the Town Development Department, and AARP for funding. Expect completion year end.
3. Transportation/walkability -
  - The COA transportation group is leading the way to meet AFAC goals by relaunching the volunteer driver program.
  - Walkability – Amy Checkoway researched the state’s safe walk to school programs and learned they have recommended walking routes for each town. She will invite someone from that group to attend an upcoming AFAC meeting
4. Outdoor spaces – Seniors should participate in the open forum on the Community Path Design phase 2.
5. Communication – This group will kick off next month with new library representation

Judy, Chao, Ted, Jane and Tomi would like to work on a way to welcome Dana as director. Tomi said we need ideas.

### **New Business**

Joel said the town should cover cameras in the great room during voting for privacy reasons. This applies to upcoming election. Maryann said that cameras should be shut off in all precincts during voting. Maryann will speak with Ellen O’Brien Cushman about cameras in areas where individuals vote.

Jane mentioned a suggestion to Nava about a video about how recycling is done. It would be interesting to see. Several on the board concurred regarding a video. Dana contacted DPW about sand and salt for seniors in the winter. The Lincoln COA came by last week — they’re building a brand-new center which includes composting.

Joel mentioned that notifications for seniors regarding real estate tax increases should be sent out regarding both debt exclusions and the impact on real estate taxes should one or both be approved by Belmont voters. Tomi said that there’s conflicting information about this and is pretty sure that Ellen O’Brien Cushman asked Floyd Carman to put information together. Tomi said it’s contentious and both sides need to be represented. Joel said that those on fixed incomes

need to be informed, especially in view of inflation (10 - 20% increase in food bills). Joel would like to know how much the average tax bill will increase.

Tomi talked about something good: a seamstress. She's a woman in Brighton who doesn't speak much English. Her cost is extremely reasonable. Tomi could sit with her and translate. Dana said the previous woman was there two hours every Tuesday.

Next meeting: Monday, November 7, 2022.

Meeting ended at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Shapiro