

**Minutes of Belmont Council on Aging Meeting**

**Date:** Monday July 12, 2021

**Format:** Meeting Held by Zoom

**Attending:**

Tomi Olson, Chair  
Ellen Sullivan, Vice Chair  
Andrea Paschal  
Marjorie Wayne  
Nava-Niv-Vogel (Ex Officio)  
Dana Bickelman (Ex Officio)  
Chao Qiang Lai  
Maryann Scali  
Joel Semuels  
Ted Dukas

**RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: September 15, 2021  
TIME: 2:06 PM

**Absent:** Mark Paolillo

**1. Call to Order:** T. Olson

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m.

**2. Senior Citizen Concerns:** M. Scali

Question to Nava about policy on using the Senior Center. Nava stated that programs cannot be exclusive – programs must be open to all seniors. The schedule is in the Senior Notes.

There is sheet in front of the center and what is happening in each room.

Tuesday and Friday afternoons are special programs.

Why isn't center open on Monday and Friday? Center doesn't have enough staffing on Mondays and Fridays.

Loud noise coming from center disruptive to outside events.

**3. Review of Past Meeting Minutes:** M. Wayne

May meeting minutes approved; June 1, 2021 meeting minutes approved.

**4. Presentation of Plaque Honoring Mike Cahalane, Past C.O.A. Chair:** N. Niv-Vogel

Mr. Cahalane attended. Nava will arrange getting the plaque to him.

**5. Updates and Correspondence:**

**A. Director's report:** N. Niv Vogel

Report was emailed in advance of meeting.

Reopening has been a challenge. Volunteers are an issue; it is impacting delivery for breakfast. Continued struggle with other issues - for example, retraining on machines.

Susan Barbato did a video for fitness room. Question – how do people get appointments in fitness room? Diane did research, will be limiting by staggering in 45-minute segments. Nava is unsure if it will work, as she doesn't know how many people will sign

up. Fitness rate will be prorated because it is 2 ½ days vs. 5 days. \$35 for 6 months vs. 3 months. People have stated desire to have access as much as they can. Will have at least 2 days per week. Plan for expanding hours: Adding full day Thursday. After Labor Day, will move to 5 days.

Discussion about the vandalization and camera issue: Senior Center Building Committee was not entirely on board with adding cameras due to expense. Question of budget; initially part of funds for building center. If over \$10K will require capital budget expense. Tomi suggested investigation other options – e.g., Ring. Nava will ask the police department.

Other discussion: purchase of new microwave for ease of heating meals. The number of in-person lunches is down, so use of convection oven not practical.

Memorial service: to honor seniors who passed during the pandemic (whether COVID or other causes). Early fall is Nava's intent. Ecumenical service – conversation with head of Belmont religious council. Re: list for memorial. Nava is going to ask for additional names to be submitted.

Ellen suggested having a staff appreciation event, maybe mid-October. Late September/beginning of October is busy. Suggestion to move it to November for a "Thanksgiving" theme.

Age friendly advisory council is being dissolved due to mission accomplished. Nava will be recommending some appointments for a new action plan committee.

B. Assistant Director.                      D. Bickelman

June a better month, still quiet. Weather was an issue. Not a lot of people using the Center as shelter for the heat wave. July is busy. Starting supper club again. Tour of police station at 11am, leaving Beech Street at 10:30. 14 people on the bus, but others can join by driving to police station Fitness center. If filled, another will be planned. Tai chi Wednesdays, resume usual schedule after Labor Day.

C. Friends:                      J. Semuels

Concert, Thursday, Sept 30 from 7-9. Tom Nutile and band. Working on family and corporate sponsors; amounts of \$100, \$250, \$500, \$1000. Joel is contacting banks, real estate, and someone else is also working on sponsors. Interest in working on 9/30 there is a refreshment committee and other committees. Contact Joel if interested. Tomi and Ellen volunteered for refreshments.

Joel brought up topic of requiring masks and physical distancing. The stance is what the state has set – those that are vaccinated are not required to wear a mask. Nava can ask if an exception can be made, but it would be a departure from how the center is currently

operating. Goal is to have 75-125 people; there is a concern that the numbers will not be met. Tomi suggested to have voluntary donation to watch broadcast of concert. There will be a table for sponsors to have publicity.

## **6. Old Business:**

A. Discussion of Application for Open Seats on the Board T. Olson and N. Niv Vogel  
Mark Paolillo, Ethel Hamann and Judy Sigler resigned.

Two current members up for reappointment (Andrea and Chao)

Three open seats on board. A number of people have applied.

Maryann expressed concern we no longer have a town committee member.

Next Monday the select board will take recommendations. Normally reappointments have been supported. Maryann proposed moving to recommend. Joel motioned. It was seconded and voted in favor.

Motion to recommend appointment for Karen Donelan; seconded, all in favor.

Motion to recommend appointment of Jane Shapiro; seconded, all in favor.

Motion to recommend appointment of Judith Morrison; seconded, all in favor.

Nava will bring these to Mark Paolillo, as he is the liaison.

Tomi suggested publicizing getting younger members on board. There is one opening on the Friends' board. Nava mentioned that Arlington COA has an auxiliary board member position. Joel said as a 501c(3) it might be a problem to change the charter. Anyone interested can attend the Friends' meetings.

## **7. New Business:**

A. Discussion of Resuming In-Person Meetings. N. Niv-Vogel

Nava's stated that the policies are guided by state and public health experts, and right now there are no limits.

B. Discussion of Options for Senior Tax Relief. T. Olson

There should be something on the form sent by town for the ability to defer taxes. Tomi suggested she and Nava write a letter to Floyd, town treasurer. Must get approval from MA DOR for what is put on the communication. Is there another way to communicate? Maryann said that several years ago Floyd was instructed to seek approval to do this. Do more research and report back at the next meeting.

### Other discussion:

Chao, Michael Gao, Dana and Nava met on concerns for welcoming Chinese seniors back to center. ESL teacher retired. Question: What will programming look like for Chinese seniors? Chao and Michael are looking into a replacement ESL teacher. Concern about how comfortable they would feel. Meeting with Belmont Chinese-American association. Michael Gao is planning a Chinese American festival August 1<sup>st</sup>. It will be outdoors.

Advising seniors about lint in dryers and the need to be cleaned out; if not, it can cause a fire. Tomi will reach out to fire department on what can be done, put something in the senior notes.

The August meeting will be skipped, as has been practice in prior years. Committee will resume in-person in September. As the first Monday in September is a holiday, the meeting would be held the following Monday, September 13<sup>th</sup>.

Adjourn    The meeting was adjourned at 9 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:  
Andrea Paschal, Board Member