

**Belmont Council on Aging
Minutes From January 9, 2023 Board Meeting-Zoom**

DATE: February 7, 2023
TIME: 2:59 PM

Meeting Called to order 7:01 PM

Present: Dana Bickelman (Director ex-officio), Pierce Ellenwood (New Assistant Director ex officio), Ted Dukas, Ellen Sullivan, Chao Qiang Lai, Andrea Paschal, Maryann Scali, Jane Shapiro, Margie Wayne, Judy Morrison, Joel Semuels, Tomi Olson, Chair,

Not Present: Karen Donelan & Mark Paolillo (Select Board liaison).

AGENDA:

1. Senior Citizen Concerns - M. Scali
 - Food responses-Thanksgiving food exceptional, Christmas Party Food disappointing;
 - Front Desk- complaint-volunteers don't identify themselves or know what's going on- Aimee the new volunteer coordinator will give daily list of events and room in addition to newsletter;
 - Luncheon donations- voluntary \$3, is voluntary;
 - Newsletter -reaction-newsletter is great;
 - Pickleball- discussion whether \$5 fee should be charged in pickleball open play; town charges for Rec. activities, we charge for fitness room, find out what other towns do and be consistent across the Board;
 - Fitness Room- Joel brought up-Two treadmills and one bike have been out of order for a while, Dana trying to get parts and service from contractor, but they are down technicians and parts are hard to find and expensive. We would have to pay \$75 travel fee and over \$100 to have them come out. Can the treadmills be repaired or should they be replaced? Machines are from 2009 except for one treadmill from 2018. Bike screen does not work, pedals work. We have \$36K in budget for repair in Fitness Room according to Dana. Margie researched the average treadmill lasts 7-12 years with regular maintenance. Treadmills are over due. Motion by Joel, seconded by Ted, expression of support by the Board for two new treadmills to replace broken ones as quickly as possible. Passed unanimously. Dana will contact town officials to see if bid process is needed and what other Departments do, research repair or replace costs;
 - Fitness Room- suggestion to place number of users in monthly reports. Over 100 signed up to use it, 75 to 85 use it per week. Dana will do.
2. Review of Past Meeting Minutes- M. Wayne
Minutes reviewed and approved with edits. (spelling-Semuels instead of Samuels).
3. Updates and Correspondence
 - A. Chair- Committee of Board will compose letter to Selectman Paolillo about traffic/parking on Concord Ave., reconvene next Tuesday;
 - B. Director - Dana Bickelman
 - a. Fitness Room addressed above;
 - b. Anonymous caller objected to Beech Street Center flying Pride Flag/taxpayer dollars. LGBTQ Alliance called, flag is non-threatening. Dana took it down,

would like to put it up for Pride month. Other departments have LGBTQ stickers not flags. Suggestion by Board member to fly it inside. Suggestion by Board member to contact Town Counsel because of other Town disputes over flags. Pierce working on diversity statement. All are welcome. Will not contact Counsel. Chair against it.

C. Assistant Director- Pierce Ellenwood

Started a month ago, background as High School teacher working in boarding school in Connecticut. Taught English, was athletics coach and dorm parent. Career pivot. Wants to maintain sense of community. Bring educator's perspective and administrative experience. Board praised his first newsletter with large print. He is focused on readability.

D. Friends of the Belmont C.O.A. Joel

Annual Membership drive started in October has about 260 responses. 50 short of last year. They are still coming in. Sent out to Belmont residents aged 45 plus. He will send it out to anyone who contacts him who has not gotten it. Pierce has suggested that he include solicitation in C.O.A.'s monthly newsletter. Joel will send electronic letter and response form to him. Both Friends fund raisers of the year were successful (Tom Nutile Big Band Concert and Holiday Craft Fair/bake sale). Newsletter coming in Spring. Volunteer to write an article. Suggestion from Board member about on-line donations to C.O.A. and Friends. Dana will research.

E. Age Friendly Action Committee -J. Morrison

January 23rd, need to do update on accomplishments to Select Board. Three year goal, first year completed.

- Housing-
 - Home Modification companion guide to AARP Home Fit guide being designed by High School class. Publication and presentation to C.O.A. in March;
 - Judy to get Copy of AARP Home Fit Guide in Chinese;
 - ADUs – In January AFAC housing subcommittee to begin working across town organizations to support Policy in allowing ADUs in Belmont with appropriate guidelines;
- Transportation / Walkability –
 - Transportation – see above;
 - Walkability – Belmont's Safe Routes to School liaison (Lucy) is joining the next AFAC meeting to explain the student map process/method and David Coleman may join to provide a brief update on the work that the Transportation Advisory Committee is focused on. Look at map done for schools, sidewalks. She seeks information on those sidewalks re: schools/seniors;
- Outdoor Space –
 - Recreation Director, Brandon Fits provided a summary of the Inventory done by outside consultants assessing Belmont's

Outdoor recreational spaces. We discussed how AFAC and Seniors can partner as our parks and fields are being updated.

- Community Path Committee will come to Center February 17 to provide an open forum for review and comment on design.

F. Springwell- J. Shapiro

No meeting in December.

G. Transportation Working Group -E. Sullivan

Budget Meeting with Select Board. Margie, Marty and Ellen drafted a document to send to Jennifer Hewitt, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director, regarding medical taxi rides program (to and from destinations out of Belmont), re: need, dollars spent, etc.

We are asking for an additional \$7500 from the Town from Uber/Lyft tax money. Last year we were supposed to receive \$5000 from the town. Not received. We are asking to receive the \$5000 that was promised to us for this fiscal year (FY 2023) and will be requesting \$7500 for FY 2024 (request needs to go in now).

There is a great need for drivers for the Volunteer Drivers Program. Ellen and Marty are meeting with Aimee to discuss Volunteer Driver Program and brainstorm ways to recruit potential drivers.

Received another \$100.00 donation for the medical taxi program as well as notes saying how much they appreciate the rides. Since Margie started sending out letters to those who have gotten rides (March of 2022), we have gotten about \$700 in donations. Good work Margie!

4. Old Business – none

5. New Business

Kitchen repairs have been done by Facilities Department.

Clarification should be sent to Mark Paolillo regarding medical transportation taxi program. It should be made clear why seniors will not use technology to access Uber/Lyft services or pay for service on own. Risk to program of slow payment from town (town is down positions). Currently Friends pay quickly under their grant.

January 12th -meet and greet with Pierce 9:30 to 11 a.m. Tomi suggests Board members outreach to friends and neighbors to come to Center. Board should send out Covid risk statement electronically. Discussion of budget -increase in budget must be justified. No change likely this year. Margie wrote individual notes of appreciation to staff for 2022. Board expressed gratitude to Margie for doing that.

6. Next Meeting will be – February 6, 2023 at 7 pm via Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Joel Semuels