

FINAL MINUTES OF THE BELMONT C.O.A. BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING February 4, 2013

Present: P. Schafer, Chair, A. Mullin, M. Cahalane, T. Dukas, E. Hamann, A. Morgan, J. Semuels, Nava. Niv-Vogel, Executive Director.

Absent: T. Olson, C. Qiang-Lai, S. Hammerlind, M. Scali.

P. Schafer (chair) called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

1. Senior Citizens' Concerns: 1. Ms. Niv-Vogel stated the concerns of several seniors regarding loose insulation escaping into the Center multi-purpose room during the Town Building and Grounds repairs of a burst ceiling pipe. The area had been sealed off with plastic. Town employees quickly cleaned up the loose fiberglass insulation and the concerns were met. 2. Chair Schafer commented on an e-mail from Ms. Olson who was not able to be at the Board meeting regarding C.O.A. transportation, Mr. B, former Town Engineer and Belmont Manor nursing home. The e-mail stated that Mr. B~is currently at the Belmont Manor and was especially excited to hear about the offerings at the C.O.A.. She would like transportation to be available to him and others like him so that they can be part of C.O.A. special programs. ~At the meeting, Ms. Niv-Vogel stated that we must make sure our transportation services are adequate enough. She raised the issue as to whether frail Belmont Manor residents need more assistance than our transportation services can provide. Discussion yielded the point that Ms. Niv-Vogel should review the matter and we should do better outreach of our available transportation services to Belmont Manor.

2. Acceptance of Minutes: The minutes of the January 7, 2013 meeting were reviewed. The minutes were approved upon motion and second with the following amendments: The sixth line of the Transportation Working Group section was amended to delete the words "or not." The next sentence was amended to state "P. Schafer will submit the Working Group Report." The second sentence of the Springwell section on page 2 was amended to read "The C.O.A.'s board representative to Springwell's Board of Directors will be S. Hammerlind." The Budget Working Group section was amended to correct the spelling of "Semuels" from Samuels.

3. General Announcements: Chair Schafer announced that three of eight Belmont Cultural grants went to events taking place at the C.O.A. and our staff. One went to our own Janet Amdur who painted a mural located on Trapelo Road, Belmont.

4. Director's Report: Ms. Niv-Vogel reported that at the Annual Town Meeting, the Assessors may add an article requesting an increase for the senior tax credit program from Belmont's current rate of \$750 to \$1000. The Senior Property Tax Work-Off Program is a program that allows seniors to do volunteer work for their local governments in exchange for a reduction in their property taxes. Local programs set their own rules for the program using state guidelines.

To be eligible, you must:

- be age 60 or older
- own a home in the city or town where you apply and pay property taxes on that home
- meet local program requirements, such as income limits or years of residency

- offer a skill that your city or town can use

If you take part in a property tax work-off program, you will:

- work as a volunteer for your city or town at an assigned public service job. The program will try to find you a job that matches your skills and interests.
- be paid no less than the state minimum wage in the form of a voucher or credit
- receive a property tax abatement for your work. The maximum abatement ranges from \$500 to \$1000 depending on where you live.
- Note: You do not have to pay state income tax on your abatement, but you may have to pay federal tax.

Ms. Hamann questioned if the Assessors would place the Warrant Article in the Town Meeting Warrant. Discussion ensued and a "Sense of the Board" resolution was proposed, seconded, discussed and voted unanimously as follows: "If the Chair determines that the Assessors are not going to draft a Warrant Article for the Spring Town Meeting to increase the Senior Tax credit from \$750 to \$1000, the Board will draft and submit such an Article, if necessary through a Working Group created by the Chair." Attorney Joel Semuels volunteered to constitute such a working group. The Chair will call the Assessors (who meet weekly) to make such a determination. Ms. Niv-Vogel reported that the C.O.A. Arthritis Class is doing well. Ms. Niv-Vogel also reported that the M.B.T.A. has implemented new eligibility criteria for "The Ride" transportation. They require an M.D. or LICSW sign-off on disability/mobility issues and an in-person interview in downtown Boston. This is difficult for seniors and disabled persons. The M.B.T.A. provides transportation to the interview. Ms. Niv-Vogel also reported that the "My Senior Center" system used by us and many C.O.A.'s (including Arlington) is reporting that a ride to pick up a senior is counted as one ride. The transport of the senior to their destination is counted as a second ride. Board members expressed concern about this method of counting. Ms. Niv-Vogel also reported that she has been informed that the Recreation Department is now administratively under the D.P.W. Department. She stated that until 1999, the Recreation Department had been under the D.P.W. This is of interest to the C.O.A. as in the last several years, the Town's Warrant Committee has explored possible administrative combination of the Recreation Department, C.O.A. and Health Department. She also announced that we are partnering with McLean Hospital on a C.H.N.A. grant for an evidence based program on cognition skills. The grant funds the instructor costs. The C.O.A. provides the space and coordination. We are also exploring serving an evening meal at the C.O.A.. The Indian Dinner is February 12th. We are trying to do a Chinese dance and dinner. Chinese New Year is February 12th.

5. Transportation Working Group: Ms. Schafer has submitted the Transportation Working Group Report to the Selectmen and has not yet received a response. There have been no reports of it on Belmont Patch or the Belmont Citizen. The Town Meeting calendar has scheduled public meetings on March 1st and April 1st. The Selectmen may want to meet with the C.O.A. Director and Board. Ms. Niv-Vogel stated that with small Departments like the C.O.A., there may be no meetings unless there are particular questions. Ms. Niv-Vogel suggested that we decide if we wait for recommendations of the Selectmen or, if none, decide if we will be proactive on Transportation. Mr. Morgan suggested that we should not wait and expand our outreach. We are already expanding our destinations. There were questions on the latest transportation statistics. Criticism was expressed. The chart is hard to read and the numbers are

not consistent and may not add up. Mr. Morgan suggested that Brian (Transportation Coordinator) be invited to a Transportation Working Group meeting for clarification. There was a discussion on the legal requirements for Home Delivered Meals, Congregate Meals and how it negatively impacted our Transportation numbers. Ms. Niv-Vogel recently met with Springwell officials on Home Delivered Meals issues. Issues regarding Springwell's Home Delivered Meals program were discussed (an incident regarding an alleged theft from a client by a Springwell contract employee and an alleged improper meal driver check-in issue with a client).

6. Friends, Inc.: The Friends, Inc. met on January 10th, 2013. Friends' Board members are working on the Newsletter which will come out in the Spring. It will highlight Friends sponsored activities such as the Tai Chi, the Wall of Honor, the Bocce Court, new memberships, Crafts Fair and Al Natale Concerts. There will be an Al Natale concert at the Beech Street Center in September, 2013. After five years, Jim Staton will be stepping down as President of the Friends in October, 2013.

7. Springwell, Inc.: Though the Board appointed Tracy Hammerlind as our M.G.L. c. 19A s. 4 representative to the Springwell, Inc. Board of Directors last month, she has not yet been voted in by Springwell's Board. Nava has been told that the appointment is imminent. Chair Schafer will call Rachael Steiner, Springwell's new Executive Director, to inquire regarding the delay. Judy Singler and Walter Guerton are Belmont residents who are at-large members of the Springwell Board.

8. Budget Working Group: Ms. Hamann went to the January 30, 2013 Warrant Committee Meeting. She reported no mention of the C.O.A. budget being made. Evidently, there is \$2.2 million dollars in free cash and more state money for the schools. Chair Schafer will attend the February 6th meeting. Mr. Semuels volunteered to attend on February 13th. Ms. Mullin agreed to attend on February 20th. Ms. Olson had volunteered for the 28th, but will be contacted by the Chair to attend on February 27th.

9. Community Education Working Group: Ms. Mullin reported for the group (also including Ms. Hamann, Ms. Scali, and Chair Schafer). She handed out a draft "Did You Know" flyer which described activities at the Beech Street Center which will go in the April Newsletter to all Belmont 50 plus residents. Additionally, it will be posted on the Web Site and could be distributed to Town Meeting Members electronically or by flyer. The Chair stated it should be done in time for a big mailing on April 13th. Suggestions from the Board included adding information on transportation services and going to legal size to add more information. The Working Group will meet and decide on any changes.

Next Meeting: The next C.O.A. Board Meeting will be at the Beech Street Center Conference Room on Monday March 4th, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Joel Semuels, Revolving Recording Secretary

