

Belmont Council on Aging

Board Meeting

February 7, 2011 The Beech Street Center

Present: E.Hamann, N. Hegarty, M. Cahalane , T. Olson, A. Lougee, A. Mullin,P.
Schafer, J. Semuels, Nava Niv-Vogel

1. Call to order:

J. Semuels called the meeting to order at 7: 35 p.m.

2. Review of Past Meeting minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were discussed. It was agreed that "neet" should read "neat". In the next line, "Belmont Elders, Inc." should read "Belmont Elderly Citizens, Inc". The word "Hospice" should read "hospice". Under Updates, the first sentence of this paragraph should read "This is a new program for the consumer whose income is above other low income eligibility requirements". On the last page, under Motion, the first sentence should read "The COA Board of Directors willingly accepts the responsibility to conduct a performance evaluation of the COA director, if requested by the Board of Selectmen". The minutes were unanimously accepted as amended.

3. Senior Citizens Concerns:

A senior called because of ice present near the semicircle outside. The custodian's time does not permit further attention to the snow problem. The Board felt that the grounds were not properly plowed. A message may need to go to Tom Younger.

4. Guest Visit – Belmont Housing Authority

The board welcomed A. Verrilli of the Belmont Housing Authority. The Belmont Housing Authority is responsible to manage Waverly Oaks and Sherman Gardens. Together, these two sites have a total of 154 apartments. The Authority relies on the state for money to make capital improvements, such as at the Sherman Gardens. A retaining wall and entrances needed replacement. At Waverly Oaks they reconfigured parking, which gained spaces, and they upgraded the fire alarm system. The Board of the Belmont Housing Authority needs to decide how to allocate more money from the state next year. The Executive Director of the Belmont Housing Authority is Donna Hamilton. There is also an administrative staff person. The Authority is a non-town body. There are five members of the board. One is appointed by the governor and four are elected by the town. Everyone has a five-year term. The board meets monthly. It has a website: belmontha.org. Applications for housing are on the website. The Belmont Housing Authority is not funded by the federal government. The board oversees

the director. There are three maintenance people. They meet at Town Hall. They are audited and submit monthly reports to the state. What is done is dictated by state regulations. Staff is made up of state employees. Tenants do not attend Authority meetings as they find Town Hall far away. Nava suggested holding meetings here at the Beech Street Center as many residents are already familiar with the center and might be more interested in attending here. Nava stated a concern that there are homeless people who do not meet eligibility requirements for housing. Ms. Verrilli recommended that people who are being denied should contact legal services such as Cambridge/Somerville Legal Services, or Boston College Legal Services. The typical wait for a housing opening is two years or less. In the past five years, 77 units were turned over. Most are available for elderly people (defined as age 60 and above). Residents get priority after emergency cases. The tenant coordinator and Executive Director work closely with the families. There is no organized program to bring people to the senior center, however transportation is available. There is no organized transportation to events other than the Food Pantry. Ms. Verrilli notified the board that her term ends in April and she will not be seeking re-election. The Board of the Council on Aging thanked A. Verrilli for her service and her attendance.

5. General announcements

These were deferred because they could be included in subsequent discussions of this meeting.

6. Updates and Correspondences

A. Springwell report

Neil stated that he had nothing to report as the last meeting was canceled because of snow. Neil discussed the Olmstead Act that was based on a 1999 Supreme Court decision regarding a case in Georgia. The point is the one must have the least restrictions possible. Massachusetts state law chapter 211, "the Equal Choice Act", is the Massachusetts version of this. The trend is to shift from nursing home based care to home care. It has been a struggle to consistently fund this Act. The screener determines with the patient and family as to whether the patient goes home from the hospital. The question of "do you want to go home?" must be asked. Springwell is working with Newton Wellesley Hospital in referral planning before the patient is discharged, indeed before the referral is made. There is a state Olmstead plan. Neil Hegarty typed up an explanatory document. The letter is an appendix to these minutes.

B. Director

The Wellesley Council on Aging has been looking at our center as a model for them. They recently made their second visit to the center. They wish to build a new center. A community center wants to incorporate with their Council on Aging. Their Council on Aging programs are maxed out in terms of what they can offer.

A new Belmont Patch reporter, whose name is Celeste Andrade, wanted to do a story on COA response to senior needs in times of emergency such as snow storms. She thought that she might like to revive the video project of making a virtual tour of the center.

The director of Waverly Place, a private organization and center for psychiatric patients in treatment", wanted to know more about the Beech Street center programs. Many of their clients are seniors. Nava discussed with them what is available here. We have several volunteers who are members of programs for psychiatric patients in treatment and they have a very good experience here. It is thought that this is because the Beech Street Center is a supportive environment. They do well here. All volunteers are CORI checked.

C. Senior Center Building Committee

A check was received from Holyoke for the generator. Holyoke paid for a checkup by the company who installed it here.

At the January meeting, Jeff Rizzo an architect hired by the committee, came to the last meeting to present options for putting screening around the flat roof area of the center so that one cannot see the various kitchen related vents. Price estimates are being obtained. The town hired a firm to do maintenance on the geothermal and HVAC systems. The committee hopes to go out of business soon. A concern was raised regarding the flat roof and snow clearing.

The Belmont Elderly Citizens, Inc did purchase chairs, umbrellas and a bench. The cost was \$21,000. The board of the Council on Aging thanked Belmont Elderly Citizens Inc. A concern was raised regarding how to prevent theft of the furniture. It was suggested that a cable can be threaded through the furniture. It was felt that we should raise this issue again at the April meeting of the Council on Aging.

D. Friends of the Council on Aging

The Friends of the Council on Aging met in January. They are planning a spring newsletter to go to the membership and Town Meeting members, committee members etc. They have scheduled another Al Natale concert for Thursday, September 15 .

E. Fitness Working Group

The MOU came back from the YMCA having been reworked by them. They misunderstood the role of the BEC. They changed almost everything. This is very discouraging. As a result of the apparent misunderstanding by the YMCA of the role of the BEC, the BEC decided that it does not want to be part of the MOU. The BEC is simply the guarantor. A meeting may be needed between representatives of the Waltham YMCA, the Boston office of the YMCA and the Council on Aging. Joel will attempt to set up such a meeting. We should also be thinking about alternatives to YMCA involvement.

F. Rentals/Events Team

The rentals/events team met and the application forms for rentals were revised. The packet of documents is comprised of two pages of information followed by a single page application form and various approvals follow. A timeline is being worked on currently. Some suggestions were given by board members to make the documents clearer.

7. Old Business

A. Discussion of Board Strategy for Fiscal Year 2012 Budget

Joel will attend the Warrant Subcommittee meeting on Wednesday, February 9. Anne will attend on March 2. Angela will attend on March 9 and Neil will attend on March 16. We will continue to look at the budget as well as the state and federal budgets.

B. Policy Regarding Security Cameras at Center

Joel talked to Tom Younger. The cameras are linked to the basement of the town hall. There is a 30 day loop. The images are only looked at if there is an incident.

C. Oversight of the Director Position

This was discussed with Tom Younger. He discussed it with Ralph Jones and Mr. Jones will get back to Joel Semuels. A copy of Joel's letter is appended to these minutes.

8. New Business

- The Council on Aging Involvement with the SPORT Program

The SPORT program is an adult recreation program for adults with special needs. Twice a year this program pays for the Belderbus to transport them to different places. Now, many of their programs are housed here. Nava thinks that the social worker (LICSW) here may benefit the SPORT program. The SPORT program is part of the recreation department. Nava will have a conversation with the recreation department about developing closer ties with s SPORT program..

B. Windsor House

A request was made from the director of the Windsor House, Denise Thorud to speak to the COA. The Winsor House sponsors an adult day health program. The director would like an opportunity to explain what they do to the Board of the Council on Aging. The Board agreed to ask representatives of Windsor House to the next meeting, which will be held on March 7. They will be asked to speak for 15 minutes.

At 8:47 PM, the board of the Council on Aging took an individual vote to enter into executive session to discuss the minutes from the previous executive session of

December 6, 2010. After a unanimous vote in favor the board entered into executive session.

At 10 PM, after leaving executive session and returning to open session the meeting of the Board of the Council on Aging was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted:

Michael J Cahalane