

**Belmont Council on Aging
Board Meeting
April 11, 2011**

Present: Chair, J. Semuels, N. Hegarty, E. Hamann, M. Cahalane, T. Olson, P. Schafer, M. Scali, D. Leclerc, A. Mullin, V. DeNovellis, and COA Director, Nava Niv-Vogel

- **Call to order:**
J. Semuels called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

- **Senior Citizen's Concerns:**

T. Olson introduced Ms. Denise Thorud, director of the Windsor House Program at the Sancta Maria Hospital.

Ms. Thorud explained that this is a great program for seniors with dementia and a great source of needed socialization. The adult day health center provides a rich program with the support of physical, life skills, cooking and art therapies. There are no field trips, inasmuch as such trips cause undue anxiety to participants, but they do offer lots of musical entertainment instead. The cost is reasonable (\$11-\$15,000 per year, as opposed to \$90-\$120,000 per year for nursing home care). This program functions as a major source of respite for affected families and puts off the need for costly nursing home care. The program is funded by resources at Springwell, private funds and long term care insurance. (It was explained that programs such as this could be lost as part of an 8 million dollar cut by the state).

A graduate student from Boston College Graduate School of Social Work named Suzanne Alley was introduced, and she was present to observe the meeting as part of her internship.

Also, we were introduced to Sgt. Kristin Daley from the Belmont Police Department, who provided a detailed explanation of the kinds of calls that she responds to from paranoid and confused elders. This testimony highlighted the need for an off-hours social worker who could support the police with professional intervention.

2 Review of Past Meeting Minutes:

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed. Corrections made were: a. spelling “CORI checks” instead of “CORIE checks”; b. P. Schafer reported that screening for the roof vents in the kitchen area will be purchased *at an estimated cost of about \$25,000.*;c. The YMCA is *now* requiring 40 members. d. The Y would like the town to be responsible for *funding any* lack of new memberships. e. A new application *form has been designed.....*f. The Warrant *Sub-committee....*is concerned that too much *staff time* is being taken for events/rentals. (Words in italics are the revisions agreed upon). The minutes were then accepted with these amendments.

3 General Announcements:

- A discussion ensued regarding the oversight of the COA Executive Director. Nava Niv-Vogel informed the board that there is a standard tool used for all management and non-management personnel, and that this role is performed by both the Town Administrator and the Director of Human Resources. N. Hegarty suggested that the chair should think about how the board might have input in the evaluation of the Executive Director. The sense of the board was that we should wait until after Town Meeting before pursuing this issue.**
- Updates and Correspondences:**
 - Springwell:**

A report of Springwell activities was provided by Neil Hegarty. He reviewed the many types of volunteer activities provided by Springwell. They include:

- **Friendly visitors**
- **Shopping assistants**
- **SHINE program**
- **Medical Escorts**
- **Appointment Assistance**
- **Healthy Aging- My Life, My Health Program**

Nava Niv-Vogel reminded the board that the COA has 120 volunteers who provide a wide array of services as well. Examples are as follows:

- **Dispatch activity**
- **Computer tutoring**
- **Curator of art exhibits**
- **Librarian**
- **Student volunteers doing leaf-raking and snow-shoveling**
- **Friendly visitors**
- **Servers for daily and special event meals and events**
- **Board members time and committee work**

6 **Cristo Rey High School volunteers who provide assistance with office tasks, reception functions, custodial functions and help with the lunch program**

d **Director's Report:**

Nava Niv-Vogel reported that Tom Younger informed all department heads of the fact there was \$118,000 available to be shared by all departments due to a decrease in energy costs, some of which probably due to savings in the Beech Street Center. A discussion ensued as to what might be some priorities if the COA asked for a \$4000 allocation from these funds. Tom Younger indicated that it must be a realistic demand for non- recurring expenses. Nava discussed

her recommendation (hereon in Proposal #1, which is to extend hours on Tuesdays until 7 PM with transportation available, to accommodate a variety of programs. This would also possibly attract boomers who work but may still want to get involved in COA programs. There was a recommendation from non COA staff to use funds to conceal unsightly wiring in the multi-purpose room (hereon in referred to as Proposal #3).

Several board members discussed the possibility and need to fund a professional social worker to provide crisis management during the summer in collaboration with the police and health department (hereon in referred to as Proposal #2).

N. Hegarty argued that judgments about how to use the money should be made by Nava Niv-Vogel inasmuch as he feels that the board should drive policy and not micro-manage such decisions as this.

After much discussion, the chair called for a vote of the “sense of the meeting” as to what priority the 3 options for the funding should adopt.

The result was that 9 members voted in support of Proposal #1 and one member in support of Proposal #2 with #2 as fallback should #1 not be feasible.

7 Senior Center Building Committee:

P. Schafer reported the following:

- **Bid documents have been written for screening around the vents and to get cisterns working to improve irrigation of plants and trees.**

- **Submission of documents has been made to allow the building to become a recognized LEED building.**

1 Friends of the COA:

- **The newsletter is in progress**
- **Interviews for articles on transportation are in process**
- **The committee to design a plaque as a manifestation of a “Wall of Honor” has been formed and is meeting**
- **Al Natale and his band have agreed to conduct a concert on Sept. 15**

8 Fitness Room Working Group:

Seventeen pledges have been made to join the Waltham YMCA Gym. Nava indicated that we need to acquire more pledges to make this effort viable. J. Semuels asked Nava if she could write an article for the newspaper to make known the offer made by the Waltham YMCA. The Senior Notes need to be submitted three weeks ahead of time, making it impossible to reach folks in time for the last deadline.

J. Semuels asked for a vote of the “sense of the board” to have an article submitted to the Belmont Citizen Herald on this matter. The vote was unanimous in favor. M. Scali stated she would pursue writing such an article.

9 Rentals/Events Team

During the last evening event dedicated to showcasing the COA as a rental venue, two interested parties showed up. We are getting more bookings and many inquiries. However, there is a liquor licensing

issue that has arisen. One interpretation of the licensing procedure is that renters must, according to state law, purchase the liquor from wholesale distributors. This could become a barrier for renters to get involved with this cumbersome process. After some discussion the board voted unanimously to instruct Nava to consult with Town Counsel on this matter.

g Other concerns:

- A neighbor expressed concern about a notice that suggested that the COA could provide unlimited parking for attendees of events at the COA, and that such a policy could create a negative burden on the surrounding streets. J. Semuels acknowledged the complaint and suggested we maintain an appropriate stance of sensitivity to neighborhood concerns throughout this process.**
- A question was asked by M. Scali regarding cleanup responsibilities after events. Whose responsibility is it to clean up discarded bottles, the kitchen, etc.? Nava said she would consult with Kevin Looney to clear up custodian responsibilities in these matters.**

1 Board Strategy regarding the Budget:

It was agreed that members of the board should continue attending Warrant Committee meetings to make our presence known. E. Hamann stated that she felt that members of the Warrant Committee were very aware and appreciative of our presence.

The April 11 COA board meeting adjourned at 10 p.m. Our next meeting will be held on Monday, May 2, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Leclerc