

Minutes of COA Board Meeting – February 8, 2017

Board Members Present: Patricia Gold, Carol Airasian, Bertha Anderson, Dorothy-Jean Brown, Burt Greenberg, Esther Keaney and Linda Moffitt

Excused Absence: Mary Keenan

Staff Members Present: Anne-Marie Gagnon Director and Rae Grassia, Principal Account Clerk.

Pat Gold called the meeting to order at 5:30

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The Board members reviewed the minutes of the January 11, 2017 meeting. Carol Airasian made a motion to approve and Burt Greenberg seconded. Passed.

Pat Gold introduced Esther Keaney who is filling the seat of Genevieve Martin who moved out of state. Esther is a retired bookkeeper and tax preparer, active in her synagogue, plays baroque renaissance flute and has a service dog. She also runs the knitting group here at the Senior Center.

Review of Financial Statements

Esther Keaney asked about the dates of the fiscal year which Anne-Marie reported is from July 1st through June 30th. Pat Gold had questions on the Emergency Assistance line item. \$100.00 per year in emergency assistance can be issued by the Senior Center for any Watertown resident in need of help with a utility bill and is not just for seniors.

Anne-Marie updated the Board on the Watertown Food Pantry Revolving account and explained that Ellen Wineberg volunteers to run the yearly fundraising campaign for the Pantry. The Project Bread Grant will be submitted in February for 2017 and last year it funded the purchase of grocery store gift cards at the holidays for Food Pantry consumers.

Update on My Senior Center Implementation

Seniors have been filling out forms and over 150 people have signed up. One of our Property Tax Work-Off (PTWO) volunteers has been inputting the information and has been giving instruction to seniors as needed. Esther Keaney commented that the My Senior Center database is a wonderful idea and Pat Gold said it is a good program for keeping track of program attendance & emergency contact information. Another of our PTWO volunteers has been riding the senior shuttle bus helping the driver with small tasks including getting riders to sign up for a key tag. There was some hesitation as some of the seniors that ride the shuttle do not necessarily come to the senior center. Anne-Marie discussed the possibility of a My Senior Center hand held “check in” device for the shuttle. Pat Gold asked how many seniors use the shuttle from the East End of Watertown including the Coolidge Apartments, Arsenal Apartments, Boylston Street and streets off of School Street. It was noted that many do use the shuttle from these locations on the afternoon runs.

AARP Income Tax Program

The AARP Income Tax Program started on 2/7/17. We have 4 volunteers, 2 each day, 3 times a week with 4 appointments per day. Debbie Dunn is booking all appointments and is booking into early March

at this time. Dorothy-Jean noted that it is free and Anne-Marie mentioned that some people do give donations to the Friends of the Watertown COA/Senior Center.

Trip Planning for Spring/Summer 2017

Debbie Dunn has been working with Anne-Marie regarding trip planning for the Spring season. Our senior shuttle will be taking a group of 18 to the New England Flower Show on March 23rd. There was discussion about using our shuttle for additional local trips such as local museums or luncheons. Pat Gold asked about the Boston Red Sox. Esther Keaney suggested the Lowell Spinners. Dorothy-Jean mentioned that the Tall Ships will be coming soon with a possible visit to Charlestown Navy Yard or a trip on the Cape Cod Canal. A possible trip to Salem with local historian Marilynne Roach was also discussed. Linda Moffitt would like to see a boat trip, possibly on the Connecticut River or a visit to Nubble Light.

New Business

Alice Wadden feels there needs to be more outreach with residents in housing. Anne-Marie did explain that all housing authority locations receive the newsletter along with the Watertown Public Library, Watertown Savings Bank locations, a few restaurants, laundromats, churches, assisted livings and doctors' offices. Many Watertown residents also have the newsletter mailed directly to them. Anne-Marie met with residents at 100 Warren Street before the holidays to introduce herself and discuss the senior center activities. Carol Airsian said that some housing locations have bingo, classes and other events that may prevent them from coming to the senior center.

Anne-Marie had the Board members introduce themselves to Esther Keaney. Most members knew her from exercise classes. Linda Moffitt shared her swearing in experience at the Town Clerk's Office. Anne-Marie thanked Pat Gold for her service since 1989. She also thanked the Board for coming to the Food Pantry Coordinator, Alfredo Bartolozzi's farewell reception. He retired in January. The coordinator job description is being updated and will be posted by mid-February.

"Caregiving is Love" lecture will take place next week with the Caregiver Specialist from Springwell, the local Aging Services Access Point (ASAP) and professionals from United Cerebral Palsy and Beaverbrook Step who support the Watertown Memory Café held at the Watertown Public Library.

Anne-Marie hosted the Marshall Home Fund (MHF) Board meeting here at the Center on January 26th. Anne-Marie said MHF would like to organize and hold a public forum/seminar on housing and housing choices with Metro West Collaborative Development and other groups in the late Spring. Pat Gold made mention of realtors attending as they had done in the past. Marshall Home Fund will take the lead. Anne-Marie would like to see other seniors involved to share their experiences on "down-sizing" one's home.

The Marshall Home Fund (MHF) Grant proposal is due on March 15th. Anne-Marie attended the MHF planning meeting and will look at collaboration with other groups applying for grant monies. In the past, MHF has funded the taxi transportation service for seniors.

Pat Gold made a motion to adjourn and Dorothy-Jean seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:45.

Respectfully submitted,
Rae Grassia, Principal Account Clerk