

The City of Watertown

Dept of Senior Services | Council on Aging

COA Board Meeting Minutes



Date

October 08th, 2025



Time

4:00pm



Location

Virtual Zoom - WCA-TV Broadcast



Roll Call Attendees

9 Person

- Helen Dempsey
Chairperson
- Julie Barnette
Board Member
- Dan Unsworth
Board Member

- Russ Arico
Board Member
- Arlene Smith
Board Member
- Lydia McCoy
Director of Senior Services

- Ryan Nicholson
Board Member
- Gina Brennan
Board Member
- Sheri Melenciano
Program Coordinator

Agenda

Topic

Presenter

Motion to Approve Minutes

- Review of prior Meeting Minutes from September 10, 2025, motion approved by board at 4:04 PM.

Helen Dempsey

COA Programs Report

Program Highlights:

- Flu Vaccine Clinic with the Health Department Tuesday October 14th & 21st
- Talk with City Manager George Proakis Thursday October 16th
- Memory Café Friday October 17th
- Japanese Concert Monday October 20th
- Springwell 101 Thursday October 23rd
- Library Staff Brunch & Chat Wednesday November 5th
- Veterans Luncheon Monday November 10th
- Vision Loss Workshop with the Carroll Center Thursday November 13th

Lydia McCoy

Program Highlights: End of Life Grief Series on Friday October 10th Working Through Grief Workshops in Watertown with Carol Valcourt

Grief Workshop Descriptions:

- October – Introduction, Expectations, and Grief Defined – In our first workshop, we will discuss what grief is, the neurophysiology of grief, as well as the types and stages of grief.
- November – Mourning and Misconceptions – In this workshop we will define mourning and view two videos on myths and misconceptions about grief. We will also discuss ideas for getting through the Holidays.
- December – Caregiving, Companionship, and Compassion Fatigue – In this workshop we will review caregiving, companionship and watch a video on compassion fatigue.

Agenda**Topic****Presenter**

COA
Programs
Report

Program Highlights:

Lydia McCoy

**Program Highlights: End of Life Grief Series on Friday October 10th
Working Through Grief Workshops in Watertown with Carol
Valcourt**

Grief Workshop Descriptions:

- January – Heartbreak – In the workshop we will watch and discuss a video on how to repair a broken heart and another video on practicing emotional hygiene.
- February – What to Say and Not to Say to Someone Grieving – In this workshop we will brainstorm and discuss what we can say and do for people who are grieving.
- March – Our Own Mortality – In our March workshop we will review the poem, Spring and Fall, by Gerard Manley Hopkins. In addition, we will revisit our expectations from Workshop 1 and discuss new workshop ideas.

COA
Programs
Report

Program Overview: Annual Senior Health Fair**Date: Tuesday, November 18th, 2025****Time: 11:00am-2:00pm****Location: Mosesian Center for the Arts at 321 Arsenal Street,
Watertown, MA 02472**

Lydia McCoy

- **Free onsite parking via garage**

This year's Senior Health Fair celebrates "Brain Health & Wellness", highlighting the importance of cognitive care, mental fitness, and healthy aging. The event will offer interactive presentations focused on dementia, memory loss, and Alzheimer's awareness and education, including how to recognize the signs and understand the difference between them.

Participants will also gain access to caregiver support resources, learn best practices for prevention through nutrition, exercise, and lifestyle habits, and enjoy opportunities to connect with health and wellness professionals in a vibrant community setting.

Set in the inspiring Mosesian Center for the Arts, guests can explore art exhibits, enjoy a complimentary lunch, and attend expert-led sessions in the theatre auditorium, which seats up to 130 guests.

Agenda	Topic	Presenter
COA Programs Report	<p>Program Highlights:</p> <p>COA Fee Comparison:</p> <p>Council on Aging fitness class fee comparisons as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watertown COA: \$3 per class for exercise or yoga, \$4 for Tai Chi or Line dancing. • Waltham COA: \$4 per person per class for all fitness classes. • Newton COA: Suggested donation of \$5 per class. • Belmont COA: Varied, per-class fees based on program and length. For example, 10-week aquatic class is \$21 in 2025. 	Lydia McCoy

Agenda	Topic	Presenter
Open Discussion	<p>Open Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arlene suggested increasing the fees but to have a few classes subsidized or accessible for those that have a limited income • Lydia stated that some COAs have higher fees for nonresidents. The board agrees with that option. • Sheri mentioned that there will be financial aid/support provided for those that have limited income and can't afford the class or program fees. No seniors will be turned away due to limited income. • Gina agrees with the new price imitative and encourages financial aid for those that need extra support. • Lydia announces that we will be launching a pilot program with Heart to Home that provides premade frozen meals at \$6 per meal, and we will be provided with a freezer to have the meals on site. • Lydia announces the changes to our Emergency Assistance program application. There will be income limit guidelines for seniors to qualify for financial assistance. Marshall Home Fund is still available for those looking for assistance over \$100. • Russ suggests that the guidelines and program Emergency Assistance application be added on the city website to make it easier for people to know if they would qualify in advance. • Lydia stated that these applications are available to all our Social Services community partners. Once the new Case Worker and all materials have been updated, we will ensure that these applications and guidelines will be available on the city website. 	<p>Lydia McCoy</p> <p>Arlene Smith</p> <p>Sheri Melenciano</p> <p>Gina Brennan</p> <p>Russ Arico</p> <p>Helen Dempsey</p>

Agenda	Topic	Presenter
Open Discussion	<p>Open Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lydia announced our new Case Worker David Blake starting on Monday October 27th. • Helen announces that the RIDE launched a new ruling stating that the drivers are no longer able to assist riders with their bags. Individuals will now need to be physically able to carry their own bags in and out of the transport vehicles. • Arlene suggested that the Friends member names be mentioned or highlighted on the newsletter or on the city website so people can know where fundraising comes from. 	<p>Lydia McCoy</p> <p>Arlene Smith</p> <p>Sheri Melenciano</p> <p>Gina Brennan</p> <p>Russ Arico</p> <p>Helen Dempsey</p>
Motion to Adjourn Meeting	<p>Motion to adjourn the meeting, all in favor the board approves. Meeting adjourned at 4:54 PM.</p>	<p>Helen Dempsey</p>
Minutes	<p>COA Board Meeting Minutes respectfully created and submitted by Sheri C. Melenciano, Program Coordinator of Senior Services</p>	<p>Sheri Melenciano</p>