

Minutes of COA Board Meeting – January 8, 2019

Board Members Present: Pat Gold, Carol Airasian, Dorothy-Jean Brown, Esther Keaney, Mary Keenan, Tom Lewis, Janet McCullough, Araxie Poladian and Arlene Smith

Staff Members Present: Anne-Marie Gagnon, Director; Marina Kirsanova, Program Coordinator; Jenya Kruglyansky, Case Worker; and Rae Grassia, Principal Account Clerk

Pat Gold called the meeting to order at 4:10 PM.

Anne-Marie Gagnon introduced the new Senior Center Case Worker, Jenya Kruglyansky, who started on December 3, 2019. Ms. Kruglyansky has over eight years of experience working with elders throughout Metrowest, most recently for BayPath Elder Services. She is fluent in Russian and is very happy to be joining the Senior Center team.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The Board members reviewed the minutes of the December 11, 2019 meeting. Pat Gold made a motion to accept the minutes; all in favor. Passed.

Review of Financial Statements

Anne-Marie Gagnon reviewed the financial statements highlighting that with Jenya now here we will be able to continue with outreach and may see more spending down of the Emergency Assistance line due to winter emergencies.

Updates and Status Report

a. Winter Programs and Events

Marina Kirsanova is working on a RFP for \$300 with Mass Councils on Aging (MCOA) for cultural events. The request is to choose 2-3 cultures within the Watertown population and provide programming that showcases the cultures. Marina consulted the Board on choices. There was a group discussion to possibly include the Armenian and Greek cultures as well as Irish culture. Russian was also mentioned. Anne-Marie explained that the events would be to make more visitors feel welcome. The deadline is January 24th.

b. Overview & Update of the Watertown Food Pantry – Kathy Cunningham, Coordinator

Anne-Marie introduced Kathy Cunningham. Kathy gave an overview of the Food Pantry noting that they service approximately 500 families and included as many as 5000 visits. Kathy explained all are welcome and no one is turned away.

Kathy has expanded her vendors to include the Boston Area Gleaners, which provide produce from July to November with pick up in Waltham; and the Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB) which makes deliveries to the Food Pantry with staff from VHB to helping to stock. Kathy can also go the GBFB anytime and pick up. She also supplements orders from Russo's with some donations from Whole Foods. The American Legion Post 440 in Newton provides food on Friday to anyone in need.

Kathy has a volunteer staff which includes residents, VHB employees, Perkins School for the Blind students and Watertown Boy Scout Troops.

The outreach for food includes the Farmer's Market, a Town Wide Food Drive, the Boy Scouts, the Mason's (since October) and the US Postal Service. This holiday season included a "Holiday Table"

which included free items from infant to adult and was a welcome addition for clients to partake. Anne-Marie and the Board thanked Kathy for her outstanding work and the work of the volunteers.

New Business and Member Items

Tom Lewis asked if there was a way to do a survey to bring more men to the Senior Center. At this time we have men attend some exercise classes including volleyball, yoga and line dancing. We have a chess group meeting on Monday. Marina was approached for a possible dart team and is hoping to get that started. Anne-Marie agreed that we could do an assessment and will follow-up with more details.

There will be a Lunch & Learn Program about Tax Exemptions for Seniors on Wednesday, January 15. The Town Assessor, Treasurer/Collector, and other staff will be presenting.

AARP Tax Preparation will start in February.

Our next Board Meeting will be February 12th which Patrick George, Watertown's Veterans Service Officer will attend.

Adjourn

Dorothy-Jean Brown made a motion to adjourn and Mary Keenan seconded.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Rae Grassia, Principal Account Clerk