

Minutes of COA Board Meeting - April 14, 2021

Board Member Present: Carol Airasian, Dorothy-Jean Brown, Esther Keaney, Mary Keenan, Tom Lewis, Araxie Poladian and Arlene Smith

Staff Members Present: Anne-Marie Gagnon, Director; Marina Kirsanova, Program Coordinator; Rae Grassia, Principal Account Clerk; Margie Wayne, Program Services Assistant

Absent: Pat Gold, Janet McCullough

In Pat Gold's absence, Tom Lewis called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. This meeting was held via Zoom. Resident Helen Dempsey was also in attendance.

Examination of Past Meeting Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes of the meeting from March 10, 2021.

Carol Airasian made a motion to approve the minutes and Dorothy-Jean Brown seconded.

Minutes approved.

Subcommittee Reports

Program Advisory Committee Report

Carol Airasian reported that meetings were held on March 17th and April 7th. There was discussion on Ron Rosenstock's presentation on Ireland and it was agreed that future programs would be previewed. She reported that the Pet Lovers Group discussed pet food donations. The Watertown Food Pantry and the Catholic Collaborative at Sacred Heart will accept unopened/unexpired pet food donations. The Angell Memorial West Center does accept opened food donations as well. The group will also continue to learn about Kingian Principals of Non-Violence and Conflict Resolution in regard to a controversial video shown at the Watertown Middle School. A Zoom was conducted for participants to share their Zoom experiences. In the video, Anne-Marie opened with a brief discussion on using ZOOM and the group thanked the Senior Center staff in supporting people who were new to using the programs. Resident, Helen Dempsey, a member of the advisory committee was also present and felt the recording was a success. Tom Lewis asked when we will be able to view the meeting. Marina shared that the video will be edited and will be available soon. Tom Lewis asked for Marina's input on the meetings. Marina feels the committee's work is very important. The feedback from our users is extremely important and helpful.

Grab & Go event

Anne-Marie thanked the staff and volunteers for another successful Grab & Go in celebration of

Earth Day. We served 130 meals catered by Maria's Catering. A special thank you to Arlene Smith, Carol Airasian and Araxie Poladian for making the seed planting giveaway.

Senior Shuttle Bus Discussion

Anne-Marie asked Margie to assist in reporting. With COVID restrictions being lifted we have been able to increase our riders from 4 to 6 passengers and we will be reaching out to riders regarding interest in using the shuttle and preferred shopping destinations. Margie reported the guidelines need to include safe usage of the bus with mask wearing, respect for fellow riders, promptness of pickup and drop off times. The guidelines will also be shared with riders of the emergency taxi services. Anne-Marie added that companion riders are allowed. Arlene Smith feels the rules and regulations are important and should be posted. Esther Keaney suggested adding that masks are required. Carol asked about grooming. Anne-Marie suggested any comments be sent to Margie. It was agreed to have all comments into Margie by April 21st for discussion for the May meeting.

Tom Lewis spoke of the reverence of our dedicated bus drivers. Anne-Marie reported that our former bus driver Mr. Joseph Cavallaro passed away this week. Joe was a longstanding bus driver and DPW employee and friend to many seniors in town. Joe went above and beyond for the seniors in our community. Visiting hours will be on April 15th from 5:00-8:00 at Giragosian Funeral Home and services from St. James Armenian Church. Our condolences to Joe's family. A moment of silence was observed in honor our friend Joe. Joe will be greatly missed.

Director's Report

a. WCA-TV

Anne-Marie reported that the Senior Center has two slots on WCA-TV on Tuesday and Thursday @ 10:30 AM. We are very excited about this. Some of our presentations will be recorded. One of our Art classes with Dawn Scaltreto was recorded and will be aired. The focus group on ZOOM will be shared as well. Marina is also recording other programs.

b. Notify Me

We are encouraging people to sign up for Notify Me via the Town website www.watertown-ma.gov Once you sign up you will receive an e-mail confirmation and receive weekly and monthly blasts. At this time, we have 577 people signed up and hope to have more.

Old Business

a. Membership: Vice Chair Role

Tom Lewis discussed with the Board, the bylaws, and the role of the Vice Chair in the absence of the Chair. Arlene Smith questioned the rotation of a Vice Chair stating according to the charter this would be against the charter. Anne-Marie explained that this is not the case. Margie Wayne suggested rotating would give everyone an opportunity to try the position. Anne-Marie and Tom Lewis agreed with the suggestion, Arlene Smith feels some people may not feel comfortable with the position. Mary Keenan feels an addition to the bylaws be made. It was agreed to add the change. Margie asked if the goal was to have a permanent Vice Chair vs. on a rotating basis. Arlene asked if Pat Gold was continuing as Chair. Mary Keenan felt now is a good time to look at this as elections are held in June. Tom Lewis asked if anyone would be willing to volunteer to act as a one person nominating committee for the upcoming election for Chairperson and the Board will continue to look for a rotating Vice Chair. Esther Keaney accepted the position of nominating committee. Carol Airasian accepted the position of Vice Chair for the May meeting. Mary Keenan suggested that Pat Gold be contacted as well.

Board Concerns

Tom Lewis suggested a re-opening committee once we can open to the public. Anne-Marie feels we should form a subcommittee regarding opening. We have been closed to the public but have been providing services to the community since the beginning of the pandemic. Consideration will need to be taken on all accounts regarding the school building project, gym use and parking lot use. After April vacation Anne-Marie will be meeting with the Superintendent of Schools Dr. Galdston to discuss those concerns. Marina suggested we discuss reopening at the next meeting and send any suggestions or comments to staff. Carol Airasian feels anyone nominated should be made aware. Esther Keaney commented that the nominating committee will consider that. Arlene Smith received a very nice e-mail from Kathy Cunningham regarding the craft kits for food pantry clients. It was much appreciated. Arlene thanked Araxie and Carol for their help with the project. A spring planting kit will be the next.

Adjourn

Arlene Smith made a motion to adjourn Esther Keaney and Dorothy-Jean Brown seconded. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 5:19 PM

Respectfully submitted.

Rae Grassia, Principal Account Clerk