

Minutes of COA Board Meeting- March 10, 2021

Board Members Present: 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; Rae Grassia, Principal Account Clerk; Margie Wayne, Program Services Assistant

Absent: Pat Gold

In Pat's absence, Anne-Marie called the meeting to order at 4:00. This meeting was held via Zoom.

Examination of Past Meeting Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes of the meetings from January 13th and February 10th. Dorothy-Jean Brown made a motion to approve the January minutes and Arlene Smith seconded.

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

Minutes approved.

Membership: Nominations for Vice Chairperson

Anne-Marie discussed with the Board the nomination of a Vice Chairperson who would run the meetings in the absence of our Chairperson, Patricia Gold, who has been unable to attend recent meetings. Arlene Smith asked if it would be a member of the current Board. Arlene feels a nomination should be presented first to be sure someone would be agreeable to holding the position. It was agreed that if anyone were interested in holding the position to contact Anne-Marie. Anne-Marie will share this with Patricia Gold, who is in favor of a Vice Chair position. Arlene suggested a draft of responsibilities be presented as well. Carol Airasian, Araxie Poladian and Janet McCullough agreed. Anne-Marie did note that those regulations are in the by-laws as well. Carol Airasian noted that Patricia Gold has been running our meetings for years and in the past Mary Keenan did service as Vice Chair. Mary Keenan briefly spoke on the Vice Chair position, that Carol Fox, prior COA Director, would ask her to cover meetings in Patricia Gold's absence due to seniority and not actually serving as the Vice Chair. Mary also announced that after 20 years of serving on the Board she is going to retire when her term expires in May, stating that, "It has been a pleasure." Mary will continue to serve on The Friends of the Watertown Council on Aging. Anne-

Marie thanked Mary for her service.

Updates and Status Reports

a. Program Advisory Committee Report

Carol Airasian reported on two meetings that were held on February 17th and March 3rd. Questions were asked regarding COVID vaccine protocol and future events at the Senior Center. We have no answers for those questions at this time. Plans for the new High School building and parking were discussed as well. Parking spaces were full at the Senior Center by 8:30 AM most mornings. Carol Berney suggested a program on Kingian Non-Violence practices as well as a program on the subject of birds along the Charles River.

The virtual Isabella Stewart Gardner museum programs have been a great success. Marina will look at the calendar and work on planning future virtual presentations. Tom Lewis suggested highlighting the walking trails throughout Watertown and along the Charles River. Carol said there is a map available. The new time for Program Advisory Committee meetings will be Wednesdays at 11:00 AM. Marina suggested an agenda for future meetings as well. Carol feels the meetings are lively and productive.

Janet McCullough asked about COVID vaccinations run by the Health Department. Janet has been trying to find a vaccine. Dorothy-Jean spoke regarding the Health Department clinic that had a huge response and was handled very efficiently. Anne-Marie explained that the list was for residents that needed information, did not have anyone to help them or did not have a computer. The list was for information and resources to obtain appointments. Arlene mentioned that new guidelines for upcoming clinics for educators and people working with children will be in place soon according to the State.

b. Future Grab-n-Go Meal Events

The March event for St. Patrick's Day will be catered by Donohue's serving corned beef and cabbage with Irish soda bread and we expect about 125 guests. Our April Earth Day event will be catered by Maria's Catering with a choice decided soon. The Grab & Go is popular, people like it and it gives us a chance to see people as they drive by to pick up. We have only received 2 negative responses with all the meals we have served in the past.

Marina reported that Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum was a hit with 15 in attendance today. We had a presentation from the Davis Museum at Wellesley College. In April, at the suggestion of Carol Berney, we will have a presentation from the Mass Audubon Society on Friday, April 9th. A trip to Ireland on March 16th and a trip to Italy on March 25th are

planned with Ron Rosenstock. We will have the Gardner Museum in May. We hope to continue with the Davis Museum as well, their program is run by students. We were very happy with our presenter from the Davis Museum.

For the month of April we will begin to record some of our Zoom meetings and events and they will be shown on WCA-TV. We have been offered 2 time slots which will enable some of our seniors who do not use the Zoom platform to view our programs. It will be nice see what we are doing here at the Senior Center while we have been closed due to COVID.

COVID-19 Vaccine Update & Discussion

The Watertown Health Department has had 3 vaccine clinics. The Senior Center staff assisted patients get registered. If you received a 1st vaccine from the Watertown Health Department you will get a 2nd vaccine from a Health Department clinic.

Update on New High School Building Project

Anne-Marie reported that the scope of the building project has changed. Many plans and meetings still need to take place. As information becomes available we will share. It is an exciting time for Watertown.

New Business & Member Items

Anne-Marie thanked Arlene and Carol for their craft projects provided for the Grab & Go.

Arlene heard from Kathy Cunningham regarding craft kits for the Food Pantry. Arlene asked for help filling eggs for Easter baskets provided for the Food Pantry. Arlene would like to do a monthly kit for the families and wanted to know if anyone would be interested. Anne-Marie suggested a group Zoom to discuss details of the project.

Arlene wanted to revisit an intergenerational pet project, as well as a post vaccine “Happy Hour” possibly at the Senior Center once the weather gets warmer.

Anne-Marie suggested any ideas be brought to the Program Advisory Committee.

Dorothy-Jean commented that a neighbor had trouble finding a new dog. Tom Lewis commented that the pandemic emptied the shelters. Esther Keaney feels the shelters are

overwhelmed.

Janet McCullough asked how the Recreation Project was working out. Anne-Marie reported that it has gone smoothly.

Araxie asked about substitution of exercise instructor Joanna. Anne-Marie explained that Joanna has moved to Ecuador and a substitution was necessary because with her move it is not possible to continue with her classes and payments from the Town. We will miss Joanna and it has been a pleasure working with her.

Adjourn

Dorothy-Jean Brown made a motion to adjourn and Esther Keaney seconded.

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 PM

Respectfully submitted

Rae Grassia, Principal Account Clerk