

Minutes of COA Board Meeting – November 10, 2021

Board Members Present: Carol Airasian, Dorothy-Jean Brown, Helen Dempsey, Esther Keaney, Tom Lewis, Araxie Poladian and Arlene Smith

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

Absent: Pat Gold and Janet McCullough

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

Examination of Past Meeting Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes of the meeting from October 13, 2021.

Carol Airasian noted that Carole Berney's 1st name was misspelled missing an "e" at the end. Minutes amended.

Araxie Poladian & Tom Lewis made a motion to approve the minutes and Dorothy-Jean Brown seconded. All in favor. Minutes approved.

Program Advisory Group Update

Helen Dempsey gave a report on the Program Advisory Group. It was discussed to possibly consider moving some morning programs back to the Senior Center and setting up the shuttle bus to pick seniors up in CVS parking lot for those with Senior Parking Passes. Marina has many programs set up for December. It was suggested that some programs be saved for January. It was also discussed that the Book Club will move back to the Senior Center for December. Anne-Marie agreed that it is a great idea to move some programs back to the Senior Center with the shuttle bus from CVS parking lot as we can. Anyone parking in the lot will need a Senior Parking Pass as well. Anne-Marie feels that the Book Group may be a good test group for the idea. Tom Lewis feels it is a great idea. Arlene thinks it is a great idea as well noting that all should have a parking pass. Margie is looking at the shopping schedule to see when and if this might work without disrupting the regular shopping schedule. There will be further discussion to see what makes sense with shuttle driver input. Tom Lewis was concerned with people waiting in the cold weather which would also need to be discussed.

Carol Airasian noted it was discussed at the October 6th meeting the possibility of someone from Department of Public Works presenting on recycling and how it has changed within the city and a possible presentation from the Tree Warden with planting strip discussion.

Old Business: Continued Discussion of My Active Center

Anne-Marie did a recap on My Active Center which is an additional application to the program that is used at the Senior Center where one can view Senior Center Programs on-line as well as sign up for programs from the comfort of their own home. Marina explained the advantages of using the application: that you can register or unregister for a class and the activity calendar is easily accessed and will include the Zoom link. Marina has scheduled an introductory Zoom presentation on Thursday, December 9th and Wednesday, December 15th both @ 3:00 PM.

Araxie has concerns that signing up and not being able to attend may be difficult for her to use. Anne-Marie reassured Araxie that people can continue to attend classes exactly the way they are now. Marina explained it is similar to the option one has to use a service like on-line banking, you have the new option of accessing on-line services or the former option of walking into the bank.

Director's Report

Anne-Marie reported that one of our seniors, Rose Carabello, celebrated her 100th Birthday and was presented with a proclamation from the City Council wishing her a Happy 100th Birthday. Rose was a strong advocate for getting the Senior Center built. Rose, over the years has donated over 100 afghans to various parties in addition to crocheting projects with proceeds going to the Senior Center. Rose attended the 1st Line Dancing class and continues to attend activities here at the Senior Center. Governor's Councillor Marilyn M. Petitto Devaney also visited the Senior Center and presented Rose with a proclamation naming November 8th as Angela Rose Carabello Day in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Anne-Marie was present at the City Council meeting on November 9, 2021 where it was approved that the Senior Center will purchase a new senior shuttle to replace the current one. Anne-Marie thanked the Honorable City Council and the Town Manager for supporting the purchase. It will take approximately 8 months to receive the bus with COVID and supply chain issues as well as the nature of the building of any new bus. The bus will be 7' shorter than the current shuttle which will make it easier to navigate the streets of Watertown, it will also have a reduced number of seats with 13 ambulatory and 2 wheelchair seats and will not require a CDL to operate. Arlene asked if we would receive any trade in on the bus, Anne-Marie will know once the order is in place. Helen Dempsey was happy to hear that the shuttle is also used for the Belmont Watertown SPORT special needs recreation program on weekends during the year.

The Recreation Department has released the application for the Snow Program for the 2021-2022 season. In the past MHF provided support for this program which provided students with

community service and or a stipend and a pizza party in exchange for shoveling snow for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Helen Dempsey felt it wasn't as reliable as some students didn't follow through with the commitment. Arlene felt the students should pledge to commit. Tom Lewis felt that seniors could be an asset to the students with wisdom on good working relationships. Seniors can be a responsible part of training as well. Anne-Marie will bring the comments to the Recreation Department.

The City has launched a new website. If in the past you received notifications from the City you may receive numerous e-mails as the new site gets up and running. Any input would be appreciated. Helen Dempsey received her first notification, and it went smoothly.

Anne-Marie thanked the staff and the Board for all their work and wished all a Happy Thanksgiving. Helen thanked all for all their hard work.

Anne-Marie thanked Arlene Smith, Carol Airasian and Araxie Poladian for their handicrafts for our Grab & Go lunches and Arlene for her crafts classes here at the Senior Center. Anne-Marie also reported that Arlene has a Craft Class here at the Senior Center November 23rd. We have another Grab & Go on Friday, November 19th with Table Talk pies and we will have another Grab & Go with Maria's Catering in December.

Board member Items

Arlene asked if the knitting group had any items for donation to the Church of the Good Shepard collection box. Esther explained that the group has not been collecting items during COVID, but they will see if she has anything available.

Anne-Marie also commented that Marina is holding her walks along the Charles River on Tuesdays at 10:00 AM, weather permitting. Marina is looking into indoor options for continuing the walks. A Scabble board is now available in the lobby for anyone who would like to stop in for a game.

Adjourn

Tom Lewis made a motion to adjourn Dorothy Jean Brown and Araxie Poladian seconded. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 4:41 PM

Respectfully submitted.

Rae Grassia, Principal Account Clerk