

Minutes of COA Board Meeting – October 13, 2021

Board Member Present: Carol Airasian, Dorothy-Jean Brown, Helen Dempsey, Esther Keaney, Tom Lewis, Janet McCullough, 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

In Pat Gold's absence, Arlene Smith 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 September 8, 2021. Dorothy-Jean Brown made a motion to approve the minutes and Esther Keaney seconded. All in favor. Approved.

Discussion of Replacement of Senior Shuttle Bus

Anne-Marie read a memo regarding the shuttle. In the Capital Improvement Plan for FY 22, there is \$150,000 appropriated (included) for the replacement of the 2013 Senior Shuttle Bus.

The Council on Aging/Senior Center operates this bus to take residents primarily to grocery and retail stores on a weekly basis, and monthly to local recreation venues like museums and restaurants. The bus also has been used throughout the year by the Belmont/Watertown SPORT program, a weekend recreation program for youth and young adults with special needs. The current bus can accommodate 22 riders (20 ambulatory, 2 wheelchairs). The bus is used for door-to-door, curbside service, and has undergone extensive maintenance and repair in the last few years to its body shell, lift mechanism and other components. We have been working with the Department of Public Works and the vendor to discuss more manageable and efficient options. The proposed vehicle is smaller in length to accommodate the narrow streets of Watertown and would seat 14 passengers (12-14 ambulatory, 2 wheelchairs). This bus would not require a CDL license to operate. The turnaround time from when the bus is ordered until delivery is approximately 8 months, so it would be beneficial to be able to order this bus as soon as possible to minimize disruption in service for the seniors of Watertown.

The Board discussed the purchase of a new senior shuttle and agreed to move forward with the project. Tom Lewis made a motion to move forward with the project and Dorothy-Jean Brown seconded. All in agreement.

Presentation about the My Active Center component of My Senior Center

Marina gave an overview on My Active Center. My Active Center is the public-facing website of ours and other Senior Center programs, and is another registration access point for users of My Senior Center, other than just checking into the kiosk at the Senior Center. Using My

Active Center, one can access registration for classes online with all members having their own individual account. It can help to simplify the process of registration for many programs, instead of just calling the Senior Center to register. Arlene asked for clarification on “my page”, Marina explained there would be training sessions on using the application. One’s registered activities would appear on each individual user’s page and provide an individual schedule of registered events. Also, in the future, each class or activity could have its own individual ZOOM link which could be sent upon registration. Currently, we are using the My Senior Center kiosk at the Senior Center for all attendees to check in to programs. Using one’s assigned key tag can also allow one the ease of pre-registering for classes from home in the My Active Center component.

Tom Lewis asked what will be solved by using this system. It would eliminate the need for multiple phone calls to the Senior Center to sign up for events and would streamline the process. Anne-Marie explained to the Board that this is a preliminary/overview discussion on using the feature. Dorothy-Jean Brown feels that some people, who have problems with computer use would miss out on events they want to participate in. She would hope that clients would be able to continue to sign up via phone. Anne-Marie assured her that would be the case and encourages calls to us; it is just an additional feature that we can offer to members. Helen Dempsey did sign up for My Active Center. She asked if there you are attached to Watertown. Anne-Marie explained it is exclusive to Watertown, but you can sign up with other senior centers. There will be tutorials to learn how the program will work and we will have training in the future. Arlene feels this was a great introduction and had questions as to how much personal information would be available to others. Anne-Marie explained that the information stays within our system and personal information is not shared. Arlene suggested a motion to discuss My Active Center at the November meeting. Carol Airasian made the motion and Tom Lewis seconded.

Program Advisory Group Update

Carol Airasian reported on two meetings. At the September 22 meeting suggestions were made to reach out the other senior centers and include Dawn Scaltreto and Watertown Art Association when art lectures take place. Helen Dempsey and Susan Fish feel that the Zoom hybrid platform works best for some presentations as people are without masks which makes it easier to hear. Marina is comparing with other senior centers to see which programs work best. Tom Lewis was asking how we can get more participants. Helen felt it may be hard for some to try something new. Helen also reported that kindergarten and 1st grade students from the Lowell School would be coming to the Phillips School which would make parking more difficult.

Anne-Marie reported that late in February there will be some swapping of space but doesn't anticipate anything different as some will be going. The October 6th meeting discussion included visiting the ICA Boston, another Zoom presentation to the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and Stonehurst in Waltham. Carol and Marina are still working with Louise Forrest on a lecture of aboriginal artwork by Rosella Namok. It was suggested Marina reach out to Dale Tamburro to discuss trusts, Power of Attorney and wills. Senior Center shuttle trips were discussed that the bus maximum at this time is 14 people with masks being worn. We are not checking on vaccine status due to HIPAA laws. Dorothy-Jean asked that people be understanding to all. Arlene suggested that as trips are planned we need to know that certain locations may still require masks. Kamilah Sharif and Susan Fish suggested a lecture on Parkinson's Disease. Janine Meyers suggested a lecture on assisted devices for driving. Arlene thanked Carol.

Director's Report

Anne-Marie reported on October 26th there will be a Zoom presentation on Honoring Choices with Mount Auburn Hospital to discuss advanced care planning documents including Health Care Proxy, MOLST and others. We have hosted 2 flu clinics for the Health Department this season. The Watertown Police Department is in need of crossing guards and Anne-Marie asked Janet McCullough to comment on the position. Janet is happy with her job, it is very rewarding and would suggest it to anyone. Anne-Marie thanked Janet and suggested if anyone is interested to contact Sgt. Sampson at the Watertown Police Department.

Board Member Items

Tom Lewis asked about payment for classes or anything that has a fee attached to it. Anne-Marie explained that there is a \$3.00 suggested donation for exercise classes. Anne-Marie also pointed out that another benefit of My Active Center is that you would know how many classes you attend. Arlene asked Esther to speak about the knitting group. Esther reported that the group meets once a month and members knit and crochet and new members are always welcome. Arlene thanked the group and wished all a Happy Halloween.

Adjourn

Dorothy-Jean Brown made a motion to adjourn. Araxie Poladian seconded. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 5:02 PM

Respectfully submitted.

Rae Grassia, Principal Account Clerk