

Minutes of COA Board Meeting – December 8, 2021

Board Member Present: Carol Airasian, Helen Dempsey, Esther Keaney, 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 and Margie Wayne, Program Services Assistant

Absent: Pat Gold and Dorothy-Jean Brown

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 November 10, 2021.

Carol Airasian made a motion to approve the minutes and Esther Keaney & Araxie Poladian seconded. All in favor. Minutes approved.

Director's Update on Senior Center Activities

Anne-Marie reported that the request to the Honorable City Council to replace the senior shuttle bus with a new model was approved by the Council. We thank everyone who was involved in the approval. Snow shoveling help will be available again this year. There is an application and waiver that needs to be completed and the Recreation Department will try to pair students with residents. Anyone who needs information can contact the Recreation Department or the Senior Center. Thanks to the students as well as the Marshall Home Fund. We are hoping for a manageable winter. Anne-Marie read the Senior Center Snow Policy and with Zoom in effect asked the opinion of the Board for the upcoming season. Tom Lewis feels if instruction is from home, it would be reasonable to hold the class and have as many as we can. Helen Dempsey feels if we can Zoom from home, we could hold classes as well. Anne-Marie reported when we are closed for holidays and if the City Manager closed buildings, we would not be running Zoom. Tom Lewis also feels we could run Zoom classes depending on conditions. Anne-Marie also reminded the group that we need people to sign up for classes ahead of time, so we know who to contact in the event of cancellation. Helen Dempsey feels the policy should remain status quo. Arlene suggested a volunteer call attendees and a possible "drop in" via Zoom to check on people. Anne-Marie thanked the group for their input. The plan is to reach out to the instructors and see what their ability might be. We will keep the policy "as it is" and we will run classes as possible. We can follow up during the January meeting.

Open Enrollment for Medicare is now complete. Anne-Marie thanked Dan Goldberg, Marina and Jenya for their time spent with clients and Rae & Margie for office support. We served approximately 150 clients.

AARP Tax Preparation should be returning in the Spring. Anne-Marie and Marina met with the regional coordinator, and we hope to have the schedule soon.

Anne-Mare thanked DPW for the hanging lights and decorating the Senior Center which are very festive.

The Senior Center will be closing at noon on December 23rd and closed on Friday, December 24th and closed again on Friday the 31st for New Year.

Margie Wayne, our “first” Program Services Assistant has given notice of her retirement.

Margie has been with us for 3 years. Margie did a wonderful job with My Senior Center data input, shuttle bus and driver scheduling, organizing our volunteer program and newsletter distribution. Margie also initiated our birthday card program. Margie will be visiting and looking forward to participating in Senior Center events. Anne-Marie and the Board thanked Margie for her service. We all wish her a happy retirement.

Program Advisory Group Update- Marina Kirsanova, Program Coordinator

Marina updated the Board on program suggestions from members of the Advisory Group. She is very happy with information and support provided by the group in the last 18 months. Tom Lewis suggested a visit to the Rose Art Museum which will take place in January, Susan Fish suggested the Concord Museum which will be in January as well.

Marina also gave an overview of the program for January which will include a lecture on Self-Care through loss and change led by Betsy Simmons. Betsy has also presented at Cambridge and Newton Senior Centers. Carol Airasian had suggested a lecture with Dr. Emerson Lombardo which will take place in January on Aging and Brain Health. There will be a Zoom lecture from the Kennedy Presidential Library; our regular meeting with Senator Will Brownsberger; A Zoom lecture on Re-Discovering the MBTA on travel training; The LGBTQ Round Table will continue. The Boston ICA (Institute for Contemporary Art) trip was very successful, and the Watertown Seniors were treated to free admission. Anne-Marie asked Tom his opinion of the trip, Tom said it was a good trip, a casual visit with views of the Boston Harbor. The senior shuttle was very much appreciated with the door-to-door service. Flowers with Ernie will take place the end of the month as well

Marina has invited the MSPCA via Zoom in February.

Arlene Smith suggested a visit to the Quilt Museum in Lowell or discussion on The Quilters Connection here in Watertown. Marina will pursue that lead.

Anne-Marie was happy to report that Ernie has been back in person for Flowers with Ernie which is a great class, and we are happy to have him. We also had Susan Wright Regan perform a harp concert here at the Senior Center. Anne-Marie thanked Susan. The Public Safety Coffee is being held at the Watertown Police Station. Helen Dempsey had concerns regarding the layout of the meeting, Anne-Marie will discuss that with the Chief. Tom Lewis asked how many attend. Anne-Marie reported numbers are up from initial attendance. The December Grab & GO will be a ham dinner catered by Maria's Catering; the Friends of the Watertown COA will sponsor. Anne-Marie thanked Arlene, Carol and Araxie for the hand-crafted favors provided. We have a full December calendar. Arlene asked if anyone was interested in a small group to provide favors to those less fortunate. The group will meet at the Senior Center next week.

Helen asked about further discussion on My Active Center. Marina will be holding two informational introductions on December 9th and December 15th via Zoom.

Board Member Items

No member items.

Adjourn

Tom Lewis made a motion to adjourn; Araxie Poladian seconded. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 4:52 PM

Respectfully submitted.

Rae Grassia, Principal Account Clerk