

Minutes of COA Board Meeting – January 19, 2022

Board Member Present: Carol Airasian, Helen Dempsey, Esther Keaney, Tom Lewis, Araxie Poladian and Arlene Smith

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

Absent: Pat Gold, Dorothy-Jean Brown 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 December 8, 2021.

Araxie Poladian made a motion to approve the minutes and Tom Lewis seconded. All in favor. Minutes approved.

Review of Financial Statements & FY 23 Budget Process

Anne-Marie reviewed the financial statement for the 1st half of the year. We have 6 months remaining in the fiscal year.

Anne-Marie submitted a preliminary FY '23 budget to the City Manager last Friday and will meet with him next week to review. A series of goals and objectives is included. Anne-Marie will report back to the Board after the meeting. Covid has stalled a lot of what we want to do. Our big item was the purchase of a new senior shuttle which we are looking forward to.

Tom Lewis asked if there are any items because of Covid that planning cannot take place or there are any issues with facility updates that the Board could support. Anne-Marie did explain that we have replaced lobby furniture and that it has been requested that we replace or add more chairs with arms which would be more comfortable and safer. Tom also asked if delays took place with any work needed to be done. Automatic doors were installed in the restrooms and Anne-Marie explained that capital funds are available if any repairs needed to take place.

Helen Dempsey asked if there could be additional Zoom capability for Marina's programs similar to the library. Anne-Marie reported that we are looking to update our ability for better presentations which may increase attendance, and our goal is to have more in-person events.

Arlene asked if the Friends would be interested in any fund raising with a possible on-line auction. Anne-Marie suggested Arlene contact Mary Keenan as the Friends are the fundraising group for the Senior Center. The Friends are planning to sponsor another Grab & Go event as well as an electronic keyboard for the Center.

Tom Lewis asked if the Food Pantry has had any exceptions due to Covid and has the need increased. Anne-Marie reported that Kathy Cunningham has a staff of volunteers and that the number of clients has been steady with well over 100 families per week. Kathy works closely with a number of groups including Wayside and our Case Worker, Jenya. Carol Airasian said that Kathy would be willing to have volunteers on Tuesday if anyone would like to visit. Arlene has been sending craft kits to the Food Pantry for the families with children and they enjoy them. Arlene asked if anyone would like to help to her, that she would appreciate it. Anne-Marie asked if anyone had questions about the statistics. Helen asked about the volunteer count at the Center. Rae reported that Margie has additional volunteers that pick up and deliver newsletters around town. Tom Lewis asked if the statistics would be available in Margie's absence. Anne-Marie explained that all the information is available in My Senior Center. When reviewing the Case Worker statistics, Jenya took 583 phone calls in February alone. Jenya is extremely busy with office visits, brief home visits and delivering Grab & Go meals to her clients. Helen commented that February calls also included vaccine calls which Anne-Marie agreed.

Program Updates- Marina Kirsanova

Marina reported that we will continue with some programs that we had in January. The MSCPA Zoom lecture scheduled for January was moved to February 1st and again on the 15th. On February 2nd Debra Block will present on the "Many Faces of Meryl Streep". Nancy Lombardo will present on "Memory Preservation Nutrition" again in February. Flowers with Ernie will be held on February 14th. The LGBTQ Roundtable will focus on Loving Relationships on February 16th. Betsy Simmons, a grief counselor will present again on February 18th to discuss "Self-Care though Loss and Change". We will have a Grab & Go event with a sweet treat of a slice of limoncello cake and a slice of chocolate cake on February 24th in celebration of Valentine's Day. Representative Steve Owens will have his Q & A session on February 28th.

Looking forward to March, Marina is looking to bring in a Drum Circle. Marina is planning on lectures to include End of Life discussions and Memory Loss. Marina is looking to have a photography lecture on how to take photos on one's smart phone. Marina is still looking for bus trip ideas. There will be a trip to King's Chapel on February 4th and a visit to The Concord Museum on February 25th with a cost of \$12.00, both will be guided tours. Marina welcomes any ideas. Marina thanked Carol Airasian for her suggestions and thanked Arlene Smith for her crafts for our Grab & Go events.

Anne-Marie reported that the Rotary Club reached out and they will be doing a Valentine card

making event for the community and will do some for our Grab & Go participants.

Tom Lewis appreciated that there will be an “End of Life” lecture and that it is extremely important that people are aware of the information. Arlene also agreed that it is a difficult topic and maybe we could incorporate something pleasant during the presentation. Anne-Marie also reported that the Assessor’s Office will do a presentation in the future either in-person or via Zoom about tax relief.

Director’s Report

Anne-Marie Gagnon reported that the snow policy was in place. If school is cancelled, Senior Center events are cancelled. The staff is here. If school is delayed the shuttle bus may run on a delayed schedule. We are happy to report that AARP volunteer tax preparation will take place again, starting February 8th and run to April 15th. The program is for low-income clients without any rental property. You do not have to be a member of AARP. They cannot do complicated returns with trusts or rental property. We typically serve about 120 individuals.

Anne-Marie thanked Margie Wayne for all of her work during her time here. We hope to have someone new within the next few weeks. There are free Covid tests via the Federal Government you can order online or call us for the 800 number: (800) 232-0233. Carol Airasian reported it was easy to sign up.

New Business and Board Member Items

Esther Keaney asked if the SHINE counselor is available outside of open enrollment. Anne-Marie reported that we have a SHINE counselor year-round and that Marina and Jenya are both trained SHINE counselors. SHINE stands for Serving Health Insurance Needs of Everyone.

Arlene thanked the knitting group for their donations of knitted goods for her event during December. Everyone was pleased with the items.

Carol will volunteer to distribute the newsletter and Helen will coordinate with her. Marina feels the newsletter would be here by the end of next week. Anne-Marie will continue with the weekly blast for our events and getting our events listed in the Watertown Tab and Watertown News.

Adjourn

Tom Lewis made a motion to adjourn and Esther Keaney seconded. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 4:49 PM

Respectfully submitted. Rae Grassia, Principal Account Clerk