

Council on Aging Minutes for Virtual Meeting of December 9, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m.

Attendance was taken by calling the roll. Present: JoAnn Bernhard, Susan Gomberg, Janis Gray, Susan Millinger, and Linda Avis Scott. Absent, Melissa Makepeace-O’Neil.

Business:

Minutes of the Meeting of October 14, 2020: Motion to approve the minutes was made, seconded, and passed unanimously by roll call vote.

EOEA Grant: Bernhard had familiarized the COA at our last meeting with the new format of the grant application. The worksheet was shown to the Town Administrator, who was pleased that we had filled it out. Her main concern was with the correctness of the answers. It has been submitted to EOEA, where a new person has succeeded the administrator with whom Bernhard had earlier spoken, now retired. The contract itself goes to the Town Administrator and is signed by the Select Board.

Foot Clinic/Foot Care by Nurses: Gomberg raised the question of how long COA should help clients with the cost of at-home visits by the Foot Care nurse, Sue Miller. COA has not spent much of its grant this fiscal year: so far we have spent \$805 for Foot Clinic and \$220 towards a fitness class. We have on hand \$2,179.34 before receiving the new grant.

Cost to COA of Foot Clinic in July-November 2020

Month	July	August	September	October	November
Cost to COA	\$30	\$165	\$120	\$180	\$90

A motion was made that “The COA continue Foot Clinic subsidies as we have been: if an individual contributes \$30, COA contributes \$60; if an individual contributes \$60; COA contributes \$30.” The motion was seconded and unanimously approved by a roll call vote.

Gomberg reported that the resident of Amherst who has been a participant wants to attend the Shutesbury Clinic when Town Hall is again available for the Clinic: she asks to attend one month at Town Hall, and pay for the next month at home. Gomberg is asked to find out what Amherst’s Senior Center is doing about its Foot Clinic. The COA should give priority to Shutesbury residents; the COA would like to transition the Amherst resident to her local Foot Clinic.

Gomberg also asked what to do about a new participant, since to this point the home visits which COA has been subsidizing have been open only to clients participating before the pandemic. This matter is to be discussed at the next COA meeting.

Financial Update:

In the grant: a balance of \$2,179.34

Money provided by the Town: \$200

Village Neighbors matters: COA received a letter from Donald Stone, the Treasurer of Village Neighbors (VN) thanking us for the money sent by COA: the money remaining of a grant from the Shutesbury Education Foundation for the Aging in Place Task Force. The COA was also asked (again) for an additional, annual grant. There was discussion of making such a grant, but Scott expressed the concern that it might be against Town regulations for the COA to make a donation. The motion on the floor to give VN \$500 was withdrawn. Scott will consult the Accountant and the Town Administrator to see if such a donation is possible. Bernhard will consult Spittle to see how Wendell manages this.

Other business:

Annual Report: Gray, who kindly volunteered to compose it, had a few questions.

Reports on outside meetings or workshops:

Millinger gave a brief report on the latest meeting on Age-Friendly Communities, finding it provided little information of how it might contribute to Shutesbury. She noted that it required a commitment to involvement by Town government. There is an emphasis on towns working together on common projects. How this program would be related to the work of Village Neighbors was unclear.

Bernhard reported on the most recent Dementia-Friendly Workshop, finding it personally informative.

Scott reported on the session on Senior Housing session at FRCOG's Massachusetts Housing Partnership event which she and Bernhard attended. They found it informative, with a good amount of depth: definitely worthwhile. Existing projects as well as projects now in process were discussed. Particularly emphasized by Scott: what to look for in a site.

In organization there is a need for a core group of local champions and volunteers, but wide and diverse representation from the community is also important. A successful project has both a viable scale and a realistic timeline. In community surveys, the goal is to differentiate between those who support senior housing and those who are ready to move into it. Renters can move more easily than home owners. The children of aging parents who want their parents settled in senior housing are important supporters. Most senior housing is independent living. Services provided vary with individual needs.

The presentations have been archived for future reference.

Village Neighbors Request: VN requested a letter of support from Shutesbury COA for a Cultural Council grant for an on-line mental health-boosting writing workshop to be given by Ruth Flohr. The original deadline for an application was December 15, but this has been extended. The discussion favored the project. A motion was made "that Shutesbury COA write a letter of support for VN's application for a Cultural Council grant for a mental-health boosting online writing workshop, and that JoAnn Bernhard will draft the letter." The motion was seconded and approved by a roll call vote.

Newsletter: To be discussed at the next meeting. Scott and Gray have been discussing creating a digest of information that might be helpful to seniors to send out as a Town Announcement.

Motion to adjourn was made, seconded and carried unanimously in a roll call vote. The Meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m. **Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 13 at 5:30 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted, Susan Millinger, secretary

