

## **Council on Aging Minutes for Virtual Meeting on August 11, 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m. Attendance was taken by calling the roll. Present: Susan Gomberg, Janis Gray, Susan Millinger, and Linda Avis Scott. Absent: JoAnn Bernhard and Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil.

**Minutes of the Meeting of July 14, 2021:** Motion to approve the minutes as presented was made, seconded, and passed unanimously by roll call vote.

### **Business**

#### **Financial Update:**

The more accurate accounting of FY 2021 expenditures promised at the meeting of July 14 has been completed, with reviews by Scott including one with the Accountant. An error was discovered: an invoice had not been sent to the Accountant. With items not included as of June 30:

**Remaining from the grant as of 8/11/21: \$2,376.61**

#### **Breakdown of fiscal year 2021 expenses as of August 11, 2021:**

- \$1,735 for Foot Clinic
- \$670 for museum passes
- \$3,700 for fitness classes
- \$500 donated to Village Neighbors

Invoices received from Massachusetts COA and Village Neighbors were briefly discussed.

Mass COA dues were covered last year by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. In the past this COA has been doubtful that it received much for dues (\$230 for the current year.) MA COA advocates at the state level on senior issues and holds meetings. It provides a lot of support for larger COAs. A decision about dues was tabled until the September meeting.

Village Neighbors sent a letter requesting a donation of \$1,000 dollars, and included an invoice. The organization is hoping for a regular annual donation. In FY 2021 this COA gave it \$500 and returned to it \$900 from the program line, which it was agreed should go to them as the realization of work towards an organization to enable senior citizens to remain in their homes and communities. A decision about a donation to Village Neighbors was also tabled.

**Foot Clinic News:** Scott and Gomberg provided a written report on their meeting with the Board of Health on July 21, and also gave a brief oral summary of the Board's response to their questions about restarting the Foot Clinic in the Senior Lounge. The Board responded that there was no requirement for mask-wearing or special cleaning: the COA could decide whether to require either or both. However, Gomberg pointed out that this meeting took place before the Delta variant started to cause an increase in cases; she suggested that we wait to see what would happen before making a decision about restarting the Clinic in the Senior Lounge. The clients seem content with home visits; she has received no complaints. There have also been no requests to join the program, despite notifications in *Our Town* and on Town Announce. The COA's consensus was that we should wait to see how the variant develops.

Since the COA had only extended its support for the program through August, after discussion, it was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved by roll call vote "That the COA continue the Foot Care

home visit program in its current state for the foreseeable future. The program will be reviewed in October.”

**Senior Housing Survey Update:** Discussion on mailing possibilities continues from the July 14 discussion. Gray had proposed the format of a self-mailer to save money; what the printer (Adams Direct Mail Services) proposed would probably not do that. Gray suggested a hybrid mailing, with each COA member stuffing envelopes with a portion of the surveys and a SASE. Scott told the COA that based on her experience, a professional mailing was likely to save money.

It was pointed out that the Open Space survey was done online, but there was an option to call or email to have a printed copy sent. After Bernhard returns, the information she has been collecting on an online survey will be available.

**Community Resources:** A report on LifePath’s celebration of the acceptance of Franklin County and the North Quabbin as one of AARP’s Age-Friendly Communities, was given by Millinger who had attended it. Massachusetts was the first state to join the program; thirty towns in our region have joined, including our neighbors: New Salem, Wendell, Montague, Greenfield, Athol, Orange, Sunderland, and Whately, as well as a number of other towns in western Franklin County. Leverett is in the process of joining.

Millinger suggested that the COA rethink its decision not to join yet. She suggests that if Shutesbury joins soon, our own senior housing project may be able to benefit. Participating in the Needs Assessment might well be advantageous. She also suggested that it would be better not to be surrounded by members while not ourselves participating.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously by a roll call vote that “The COA recommends that the Select Board consider that Shutesbury join the Franklin County and North Quabbin Aging- and Dementia-Friendly Community and that Susan Millinger will be the spokesperson.”

Millinger is to draft an email to the Select Board requesting ten minutes on a near future agenda in which the COA will present its recommendation, with Millinger briefly presenting the benefits of such an action and the procedure to be followed. The sample letter of commitment of the Select Board will be attached. Millinger is to ask Scott for suggestions on the draft.

**Other Community Resources:** Valuable resources for our community are available, but COA lacks a good method of disseminating the information. Scott has sent email to COA members which could be helpful to seniors in our Community. The COA needs to discuss this challenge and seek one or more solutions.

***This topic was tabled***

**Annual Report:** Due by the end of December. Gray volunteered to write it.

**Petersham Inquiry:** Scott has received an inquiry from Petersham COA asking what we do.

**Unanticipated Topics:**

-Scott requested that one of us **check the COA phone line** in the week she is on vacation to discover whether any calls need to be answered. Scott will add a vacation notice to the line. Gomberg volunteered to check the phone line.

-**Website content** continues to need discussion.

-**Member time estimates** are needed by Bernhard.

-**Requests for money**: the COA will wait for Bernhard's return to decide on these.

**Motion to adjourn** was made, seconded and carried unanimously by a roll call vote. The meeting was adjourned at 6:41

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 8 at 5:30 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted, Susan Millinger, secretary