

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Shutesbury Council on Aging
November 12, 2025
Approved at the meeting of January 20, 2026**

1. Meeting called to Order, November 12, 2025 at 5:36 p.m.

2. Members present: Identified in a roll call: MaryJo Johnson (MJJ), Jessica Makepeace (JM), Susan Millinger (SM), Jeannette Stockton (JS) and Rich Strangman (RS). Guests: Town Administrator, Hayley Bolton; Mary Lou Conca also joined us midway through.

3. Welcome to our guest, Hayley Bolton. Discussion with the Town Administrator follows.

a. Digital Equity. Hayley is very supportive of Digital Equity work. JM describes the courses she has set up for the grant Gayle Huntress received. The first session is on Dec 12, on Holiday Spams.

1. The question is asked whether these could/should be hybrid, using the setup in the meeting room on the lower level of Town Hall.

2. JS asks Hayley if there could be instruction on how to use the hybrid setup—say on a Tuesday after Thanksgiving.

b. Saving money on programs: Hayley provides a number of examples of organizations which can provide free programs (for example, the District Attorney's Office) or cover the costs of programs (for example, an officer on Greenfield Savings Bank).

c. Applying for a grant:

1. For example, applying for a local cultural council grant to bring in a performer. Often a performer will have all the information you need for the application, all ready to use.

2. Applying for a MCOA grant. MCOA even runs a short course to give you the information you need to apply.

Grants often include money for paper for publicity...

d. Fund-raising: Hayley has lots of examples; she mentioned several which were popular in other towns:

1. Calendar raffles, in which there is a prize every day of the month. The COA would get the prizes from local businesses. The only expense is the printing of tickets, which one sells. Perhaps the COA could partner with another local organization: the Athletic Club, for example, or the Library. These raffles could be tied in with Community Lunch or a pay lunch: free lunch could be a reward for a prizewinner.

2. Selling accessories. Ask people to donate accessories they no longer use (like jewelry), and have a sale: say on the Common?

e. Making use of free programs: The Smith Vocational and Agricultural School, for example, offers free programs: at their restaurant and their nail salon. Could FRTA provide a bus to transport us over and back if we agreed to fill it? Would such programs be of interest in Shutesbury? Would the nail technicians be willing to come here for a session?

f. General comments about programs:

1. A program for grandparents and children is often popular.

2. Since the pandemic, educational programs have been less popular than they once were, though programs on the climate, on changing weather patterns, may be an exception.

3. Food and music are big draws, as are exercise programs.

4. In Bernardston, a once a month evening program was attractive.

g. Resources: Hayley has lists of resources which she is happy to share with the COA

The COA appreciated Hayley's willingness to give us suggestions and share her resource list with us.

Business:

4. Financials:

A. Financial report as of November 12

Starting Balances:

Grant: \$885

Revolving Account: \$845

Town Budget: \$200

Expenses:

October Foot Clinic: \$240

Decades Birthday Contribution: \$97.28

Accounts Receivables;

Foot Clinic fees paid

For October Footcare: \$195

B. FY26 Grant from Executive Office of Aging and Independence (aka Age)

October allotment received: \$4568.00

Ending Balances:

Grant: \$5115.72

Revolving Account: \$1,040.

Town budget: \$200

All Accounts Total: \$6,355.72

5. Minutes: A Motion to approve the October minutes was made and seconded, and the Minutes of October 8 were unanimously approved in a roll call vote.

6. Annual Report: A Motion to approve the Annual Report for FY25 was made and seconded, and the Annual Report for FY25 was unanimously approved in a roll call vote.

7. Update on Current Programs and reports on committees on which the COA is represented:

1. Current Programs:

a. Community Lunch: brief report. 15 attended; SM started the practice of passing a sign-in sheet around to have information for the AGE annual report of the different individuals participating in a program. Footcare Clinic already keeps a list of clients.

b. Footcare Clinic: 10 clients

c. Neighborhood Dementia Support (NDS).

1. Brief report on our first Memory Café held in Wendell's Senior Center, led by Nancy Spittle. Held from 11-12:30 on Monday, November 10. 4-5 people with dementia and caregivers; also at least three members of the NDS committee. A lot of conversation; a walk around the Common; lunch and background music played by JS. Spittle considered it an excellent beginning.

2. JS praises current acting police chief and the fire department chief for not only attending the Leverett NDS presentation on "The ABCs of Dementia" but also participating actively in the discussion.

2. MJJ reports on the two ad hoc Committees on which she represents the COA:

a. Search for a new police chief: Has held two interviews; more are to come. The process requires that the committee will send two candidates to the Select Board, which will hold final interviews and pick a new chief.

Guest ML Conca asked whether townspeople can know who the candidates are. The answer was that this process needs to be confidential.

b. Reuse of the current Library building: main issues:

1. What might it be used for? A survey was held to get ideas for reuse of the building. The big question is how the vacant Library building can help to answer the Town's unmet needs for space for officials and for storage.

2. In the building itself, what needs to be changed?

8. Update on fall issue of *The Geezette*: Members were given a last chance to review the draft of the newsletter.

9. Discussion of Digital Workshops, cosponsored by the Broadband Committee and the COA.

a. The series of workshops led by Barbara Friedman are to be held on Fridays, from 12:30-2:30. The first is on Dec. 12.

b. Publicity: plans for flyers (which JS can do) and announcements on Nextdoor; on Town Announce; on New Salem News; on Leverett Connects; on the COA's sandwich board.

c. Discussion about seeking to contact Barbara's students in her workshop on using your smartphone more smartly, held last year.

- d. Discussion about whether Barbara might be open to hybrid meetings in the meeting room in Town Hall lower level.
- e. Food and drink: refreshments will be provided. Is there a working coffee pot in the kitchen? What happened to the Keurig pot that used to be in the Senior Lounge?

10. Unanticipated business. None.

11. Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 10 at 5:30 p.m. *Note: this meeting was cancelled.*

12. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn the meeting is made, seconded and passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully,
Susan Millinger
Secretary