

COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD MEETING
Minutes of the Council on Aging Board Meeting held on
October 12, 2023

at the Community Center and via Zoom

Members Present: Jeanne Genereux, William Byron, Ruth Delmonico, Al Arthur, Kathy O'Brien; Associate members: Brian Burke and June Thall

Absent: Members: Charlie Aaronson and George Nisotel; Associate member: Kate Hogan

The Director of the COA, Alyson Toole, was present.

Both Brian O'Sullivan and Kathleen Surdan will give their reports in person.

The Minutes of September 14th were accepted with one clarification.

Under Brian O'Sullivan's report, the words, **at Plantation** were added to the 3rd bullet: Renovations will be taking place over four to six weeks at Plantation even if residents don't want them.

Liaison Reports:

Community Preservation Committee: Representative, George Nisotel, was absent, no report.

Minuteman Senior Services, Representative, Charlie Aaronson, was absent, no report. Alyson mentioned there will be a Ribbon Cutting at Minuteman's new facility on October 26.

Community Services Coordinator, Brian O'Sullivan:

- Brian's schedule continues to be busy.
- Housing continues to be a critical problem.
- People living in Plantation (Elizabeth Brook) who are behind on their rent must give a good reason why their rent is in arrears. The rent that is behind cannot exceed \$7000.
- More Stow residents are planning to leave due to the high assessments. In November, along with "Discussions with Denise" the Assessor will be available to answer questions.
- One of the areas of assistance is Notary Services; Brian Burke wanted us to know he is available on short notice.
- People may apply for low income housing anywhere in Massachusetts; but there is nothing available at this time.

Outreach, Kathleen Surdan:

- Kathleen continues to wait for the fuel assistance applications. Twelve people have been notified they have been recertified.

- Many seniors are concerned about the tax increase. As mentioned, the Assessor will be here with Denise in November. Brian Burke suggested contacting the Assessor's Office asking the Assessor to prepare an article for the Independent explaining how residences are assessed. Alyson will contact the Assessors.
- Things are getting busier. Some people still drop in without an appointment. They need reminders to call first and arrange a time.
- The Shine counselor is willing to do extra appointments during "Open Enrollment."
- A new drop-in Grief Group is starting through a grant received by the Associated Boards of Nashoba Health. Stow is part of the 17 member towns. Hospice care has closed.
- More complaints from Plantation residents to the COA staff.
- Some Pilot Grove residences have failed inspection. The property management company is responsible for fixing the problems. The maintenance man quit.
- The trip to the assisted living facility was cancelled due to lack of interest. Perhaps, it was scheduled at the wrong time. Maybe the winter is a better time.
- "Friendsgiving" will be a catered lunch on November 15.
- The name, Rock City Boxing, has been changed to Functional Fitness. It is on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:30 - 10:30 AM. The fee is \$5 per class.

Vice Chair, Bill Byron, contacted the Town Clerk He was told the Board can appoint officers and committee representatives.

Director's Report, Alyson Toole:

- Alyson's emails were hacked, and thousands of emails were sent to the many accounts she has an affiliation. An alert went out to delete the email.
- Van Shelter - The concrete pad has been poured. Alyson was told it would be finished before the snow flies.
- Van Repair -
 1. The highway department mechanic is overwhelmed. He found the brake caliper was in need of repair. He didn't have time to fix it, but he made arrangements to have it repaired.
 2. There was a problem changing gears on the 20 passenger. It is still at Highway, but the mechanic hasn't had time to check it out. Alyson remembered a time when there was

a similar problem which turned out that the wheelchair door that was not completely closed. Hopefully, it will be an easy fix.

- The Recreation Department is planning an extended day program for children in grades K - 8 at the Community Center. They want to start small with two days a week. It would be fully staffed, 2:30 - 6:00 PM.
- Bridges Together is a huge success, getting a lot of positive feedback.
- The Massachusetts Conference of COA's was not attended by the staff; they were too busy and there was nothing new and exciting on the program.
- The real estate taxes are very high. Alyson plans to ask Kate Hogan to investigate what other states are doing to help seniors.
- Statistics:
Total People Served - 2179 (duplicated) 383 - unduplicated
% Female - 71.0 Male - 29.0
Average # People signing in daily - 53
Telephone calls - 692
Most popular activities - food & exercise
Interactions/Services provided by COA - 281 (duplicated)
Most Provided Service - transportation, general help, donations, fitness
Transportation - Rides - 296 Riders - 46
Volunteers and Tax Work Off hours - 251
- The Police are arranging CPR classes. They have two instructors. Van drivers need to take the course.
- Library - Next Monday, at the Community Center will receive 900 crates of books. The Town Administrator and Library Director will check out the space today.
- The Blood Pressure Clinic will be changed from appointments to a drop-in clinic.

There was no further business. The meeting adjourned at 11:47 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth A. Delmonico, Secretary

