

Weston Council on Aging Board Meeting Minutes—May 21, 2020

PRESENT: Mignonne Murray (Director), Gerri Scoll (Chair), Marge Ackerman (Vice-Chair), Carol Ott, Wayne Johnson, Jane Donnelly, Leslye Fligor, Tom Nicholson, Betsey Boyd, Susan Ruskin Friend, Alice Benson, Melissa Galton, Bob Froh, Prather Palmer, Jean MacQuiddy

ABSENT: Vida Goldstein (Associate Member), Teresa Young (Associate Member)

The meeting was called to order by Gerri Scoll at 8:31 am.

Due to the suspension of the public meeting law during the COVID-19 emergency, no in-person attendance was required.

There were no resident concerns or comments presented.

The minutes were reviewed and discussed. The minutes passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Transportation uses a lot of the funds. Office assistant budgeting and foundation grant changes discussed. End of the fiscal year is June 30. The Treasurer's Report passed unanimously.

Director's Report: Mignonne discussed the current functioning of the COA during the COVID-19 epidemic. Sandy Coburn has been managing essential operational services such as delivering all Meals on Wheels. Drivers are working 2 days per week transporting COA community members to essential appointments. Just as with Town Hall, the only people involved in the building are COA staff who need to support these essential services. Guidelines are being developed to allow more access to the building as the restrictions begin to relax during opening phases. At this point all services such as pantry and medication needs are still being delivered.

The Weston town email address is changing to westonma.gov. The town website is being redesigned, re-edited and updated. Weekly COA staff meetings continue via Zoom. Mignonne has organized regional COA meetings (Springwell area) zoom meetings with other COA directors and has been participating in weekly call-in offered by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

There has been no town meeting so there is no approved budget yet. Concerns about the upcoming formula grants were raised due to expected state budget constraints.

With the exception of one class, all fitness classes have continued on-line once per week. These currently free classes are going well with an increase in the number of people participating. The classes are easy to access; Kristen has done a great job as have the fitness class staff. Payment for the instructors is coming from the revolving account in the budget. There is a plan under discussion for the fall to return to a system of payment for the fitness classes.

Other programs: support groups continue on-line, the dementia support group has been increased to twice per month, there has been decreased attendance at the social service educational programs including informational sessions about Springwell services, mental health services and care-giving programming. Meet-ups for COA participants have continued via Zoom and phone and continue to be well-received. 3 times per week frequency will decrease in June. The program about bees was popular and brought in a greater variety of attendees.

Social work: Michelle has given her notice; this is a loss for the COA. Town Hall is supportive of filling the position asap and it will be posted asap. In the meantime, Ireta has increased her hours to help fill the gap. Important issues for social services have not changed—unemployed needing food assistance, need for grocery shopping, care-givers often a problem.

Meals on Wheels via Springwell has moved from fresh to frozen. Specialty meals are more of a problem. There has been a decrease in the number of meals. Currently there are about 10 people participating.

Land's Sake has changed their annual donation of produce vouchers to a bag of produce for 60 residents per week. The COA purchased and distributed boxes of fresh produce, milk, eggs, and bread from a donation to the food pantry which were distributed to 55 people; the program was hugely well-received.

Masks have been delivered to COA members' homes via the van; food pantry and other items are also being delivered. Volunteers that shop for older adults need to be CORI checked. Students have been flooding the Pen Pal program with letters.

Housing Report: Bob and Alice - Housing meetings are planned for later in June. The Christian Science buildings in Town Center are for sale and potentially could be renovated for senior housing. A builder is interested in the property, but we have no information about any proposed plans. The town housing roundtable meeting has been postponed. There has been no recent information about housing issues; 40 B information is still pending. The other land parcels that have been considered include the seminary and the Ogilvie property; seminary plans are unclear and Ogilvies' property will likely be repurposed for industrial small businesses.

Needs Assessment Report: Tom—There will be a subcommittee meeting in late June. Transportation and housing remain important issues. There may be opportunities to partner with Regis.

Transportation: Melissa, Gerri and Jean—There have been 2 meetings of the MBTA Advisory Board. There is pressure on the entire system. The wish list is tied to a statewide solution. Costs increase 4-5% per year. The GoGoGrandparent contract process has moved forward but is not yet signed. Taxi contracts remain up in the air. Our taxi vendor is still running 7am-7 pm but some other local taxi companies have gone out of business. The FISH program is not

currently operating. The van has good capacity. The last MWRTA was held at the end of April. Rides have been free during the COVID pandemic on the MWRTA.

Governance Report: Marge - There are currently 4 applicants for the 2 openings on the COA board. The interviewing process should be completed prior to the next COA board meeting. The 2020-2021 Board slate was voted on and accepted unanimously. Marge Ackerman will be the incoming Chair, Sue Ruskin Friend will be the incoming Vice-Chair, Prather Palmer will be the treasurer and the position of Secretary remains vacant.

Community Connections: Marge—the committee has not met; The planned 2-part program, So, You Thought You Were Covered, is on hold. There will be a medical cannabis on-line forum by Leaf Collaboration to discuss CBD. Adverse effects will also need to be discussed.

FCOA Report: Betsey—Holly Tolley was re-elected; Cathy Konover and Shirley Small-Rougeau are stepping down. FCOA fundraising is approximately \$2000 dollars behind last year's collection; not surprising during this pandemic.

Springwell Report: Jean and Wayne—Not much happening right now. The budget is 42 million dollars with 40 million received from the state. Concern is being raised about which services will be at risk in the future given anticipated budgetary constraints on the part of the state.

Meeting adjourned at 9:31 am.

The next board meeting will be held on Thursday, June 18 at 8:30 am.