

Westwood Council on Aging Minutes of Meeting on September 8, 2021 at 3:00pm

Present:

Lina Arena-DeRosa
Marge Eramo
Bob Folsom
Josepha Jowdy

Hillary Kohler
Mary Masiello
Stephanie Ramalas
Lou Rizoli

Not Present:

Bob Murray

Jessie Turbayne

The meeting began at 3:05pm

MEETING MINUTES

Council unanimously approved the June 2021 meeting minutes.

WELCOME

Lina welcomed (in person) Lou Rizoli to the Board. A long-time Westwood resident, Lou is an attorney and has served the Town on multiple boards and commissions.

FINANCES

2022 Budget – The Center is operating within budget guidelines. Van driver hours are up over last year's Covid levels now that seniors are starting to use this service again for medical appointments, groceries and errands.

2023 Budget – Lina is framing out the 2023 budget, which covers July 2022 – June 2023. Lina is requesting modest increases in some areas which include training, transportation, printing, and professional membership dues.

Lina made note of an upcoming capital request in the spring for a new van, per 5-year replacement guidelines. Discussions regarding Center expansion are still in the pipeline with funds earmarked for a study and long term funding placeholder.

After discussion of these items and the budget in general, the Board unanimously approved the 2023 budget.

Formula Grant – The State has determined the formula grant for the coming year will be \$12/ senior. Given the 2020 census numbers will soon be available, Lina is anticipating an increase in funding given the rise in our senior population. Historically, the formula grant has yielded roughly \$40k per year, which is generally allocated to instructor fees. (A reminder - once the formula grant money is depleted March, Friends pays for the remaining fees for the fiscal year.)

Annual Report – The Office of Elder Affairs is not requiring centers to prepare their traditional annual report given pandemic closures and limited services. Nevertheless, Lina has the data available if needed.

American Rescue Plan – In response to a recent inquiry, Lina clarified that ARP funds were used for construction and essential worker (WPD, WFD, DPW, etc.) pay. COA did not receive any of these funds.

Friends of COA – Friends is financially secure. Grants and fundraising have continued successfully throughout the pandemic. Lina reminded the Board that Friends funds will be used for the Grand Reopening celebration the week of September 13th.

Fundraising and Grants – Lina has continued with her fundraising efforts throughout the pandemic. Foundation for Westwood Education, Foundation for MetroWest and Beacon Communities have all recently donated money. The annual basket fundraiser raffle will begin ticket sales mid-September. Lina anticipates the roughly 8 baskets will raise \$3-5k.

TRANSPORTATION

Van – Van use is steadily increasing and drivers are following all state health protocols. The new van delivery, while ordered, has been delayed until the spring. The old van may possibly be re-purposed as a mobile library.

PROGRAMMING

Regular Programming – Attendance at the Center has been very light compared to pre-pandemic levels. Lina hopes that will change as residents learn the Center has a new HVAC system as well as air purifiers in each room. With a few exceptions, Lina plans to discontinue the Zoom option for most programs later in the month. Should the need arise to return to virtual programming, that switch can be made within a week.

Day Trips – Trips to Lake Winnepesaukee, Martha's Vineyard and the Turkey Train (arranged through Fox Travel) are sold out. A day trip arranged by Trish to USS Constitution is also sold out. A trip to Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum is in the works.

SPECIAL PROGRAMMING

Grab and Go Meals – This program continues to be funded by the CARES Act rather than Friends for the time being.

Legal Clinic – Monthly calls organized with MetroWest Legal Services continue to be well-attended and helpful to seniors.

Cooking Classes – A very popular program, all September classes are sold out.

Parties – The Halloween party and luncheon, sponsored by Fox Hill Village, is scheduled for October 28th. The Thanksgiving celebration luncheon, sponsored by Bridges of Epoch, is scheduled for November 17th. The Holiday celebration, sponsored and hosted by Norfolk Golf Club, is scheduled for December 15th.

Clubs – The Womens Club and Community Spotlight are both scheduled to start in October. The creation of a Mens Club is in the works.

Lunch and Learn – This program will return in September and is already sold out.

GRAND REOPENING

Monday 9/13 11am–3pm - This is a rain-or-shine (mostly) outdoor event with food and ice cream trucks, cooking demonstrations, WPD K-9 demonstration, photo booth, WFD info booth, swag gifts, etc. The Rotary Club has made arrangements for Hero Flags to be placed around the gazebo and along the building. Roughly 125 seniors have already purchased tickets.

Tuesday 9/14 10am-1pm – The Assistant District Attorney is sponsoring a shredding truck at the Center to offer paper shredding services to all Westwood residents.

Wednesday 9/15 10am-1pm – Mass General Brigham and Women is sponsoring a Cancer Screening Day. This event is already sold out.

OTHER SERVICES

Tax Work Off – There are currently 46 participants in this program that Lorraine manages.

SHINE – This program will soon be entering its busy season given the open enrollment period is October – December.

OUTREACH

Fuel Assistance – This program will resume in the fall.

Elders at Risk – Protective Services requests are up at an alarming rate – roughly 75% over last year. Given current volume, response rates may not be within normal timeframes.

Aid to Elderly and Disabled – There are 40 seniors currently participating in this program.

HESSCO

A nutritionist visits the Center monthly. Meals on Wheels has reverted to its pre-pandemic level of 40-45 meals per day. Hessco continues to seek a Westwood representative for their Board.

BUILDING UPDATES

Solar panels are on hold for now. The front entrance has been replaced and the rear entrance has been repaired. Trish is gathering information for replacement windows and insulation upgrades

OTHER

Newsletter – September/October newsletter went out in late August.

WW Police Dept – Paul Sicard is handling elder issues at WPD.

Veterans Services – The Center has seen a significant increase in veteran attendance recently which Lina attributes to the new VA representatives visiting on Mondays.

BOH Nurse – the new nurse is working out well. She is at the Center on Tuesday mornings and Wednesday afternoons.

PERSONNEL

July annual reviews have been completed. Lorraine has taken on the role of union representative for the Town.

NEXT MEETINGS

December 1, 2021 at 3pm

June 8, 2022 at 1pm (with lunch at noon)

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was unanimously accepted at 4:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Hillary Kohler
Secretary