

## **Ayer Council on Aging Board Monthly Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, September 14, 2022 at 2:00 PM

Meeting in Person at Senior Center, 18R Pond Street, Ayer and via Phone

Minutes compiled by Janine Nichipor, Secretary

### **In Attendance:**

COA Director Katie Petrossi

Dennis Curran, COA Board Chairperson

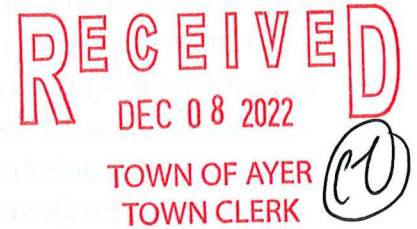
Janine Nichipor, COA Board Secretary (attended via Phone)

Carole Tillis, COA Board Member

Sister Paula McCrea, COA Board Member

Marge Withee, COA Board Member

Barbara Gibbons, Visitor



### **Agenda for September Meeting**

1. Call to Order
2. Welcome to new Board member—Marge Withee
3. Public input
4. Staffing update
5. Approve Minutes
6. Senior Center Scholarships
7. Director's monthly town report
8. Recognition of local business donations to Senior Center
9. Director's report
10. Update from building committee
11. Door repair
12. Old business
13. New Business
14. Adjourn

#### **1. Call to Order**

Meeting called to order by Dennis Curran at 2:12 PM.

#### **2. Welcome new COA Board member, Marge Withee**

--Marge is now sworn in and her town email is up and running.

--The COA Board is now a complete five-member board again.

#### **3. Public input**

--Barbara Gibbons commended the interior improvements on the current Senior Center and wanted to talk about the new Senior Center. She thought the meeting we had at the High School was good. She remembered that in the past a site at the former "Rotor Club" across from the Devens Airfield was on the table, but we have since missed out on that.

--Sister Paula said that was one of the first places that was looked at and wetlands were the problem with that site.

--Katie said she only knows of the ones from the Feasibility Study and on. We need 1.5 acres or more that an owner wants to sell, is not wetlands, and not contaminated. The "Gun Shop" toward Littleton was mentioned. Katie said the property was not big enough.

--Dennis reviewed the process of looking for sites included an RFP (Request for Proposal) to real estate agents and businesses was not successful.

--Janine mentioned that we have tried to divide and conquer. Alan Manoian has been looking at the center of town, Dennis has been talking with Parks and Rec, Janine has seen 10 properties on Devens, and Katie and others have driven around and looked at maps.

--Barbara was concerned about the cost so far. Katie explained that to complete the due diligence on properties is "a process." Katie showed Barbara the Feasibility Study done by Abacus Architects, including the floor plans. This process has spent money on the Study and Plans, and now money will go toward researching properties.

--Dennis and Katie reviewed that we will need to purchase the land and may need to tweak the plans, do due diligence regarding environmental, and final cost of materials.

--Katie showed Barbara how the floor plans could lend to improved programs. Much thought went into the design to accommodate the programs and needs of our seniors.

--Barbara asked if there could be rental spaces for private things such as showers, etc.?

--Katie said the policy is not in place yet. Perhaps it will be town functions, or perhaps rental. "Not there yet" for deciding on this policy.

--Dennis said that as the process goes forward, we will take input on what we all want to happen.

--Barbara is impatient to get it done before she dies! It has been three years since the meeting at the High School.

--Katie said that we are actively moving forward now. Non-essential projects were put on hold for a while.

#### **4. Staffing update**

Katie reports:

--Denise has the kitchen clean and in good order. She is very warm and welcoming.

--Outreach Coordinator position is soon to be posted—maybe this week. With more people coming, we need the additional staff. This position may be a catch-all position and may be updated with the union reviews next year to include more things.

--Van Driver Per Diem position will be posted and we have an interim person already.

--Licensed Clinical Social Worker position: the Job Description is being revised in meetings with the departments. The person will be a "Department of One," not part of any other department. The person will be housed at the COA and give 50% of time for COA work. This required some rotation of work spaces at the current Senior Center to accommodate everyone. Katie appreciates that Sam has been very flexible on office space.

--Dennis asked how can we be supportive to get this person hired? The funding has been there since July 1, 2022. Katie said it is okay to ask at Town Hall. Dennis said he will contact Carly on it.

**5. Approve Minutes** [Note this was addressed out of order, before number 4.]

--Janine had emailed last meeting minutes to all and print to Sister Paula.

--Dennis owes one set of minutes to town. He needs to go to Town Hall to sign off.

--Minutes approved. None opposed.

**6. Senior Center Scholarships**

--This was skipped.

**7. Director's monthly town report AND 9. Director's Report**

--70 people were in for a total of 400 visits to the Senior Center last month.

--There were several popular events.

--Katie noted that the van is okay to use for social reasons, not just for medical appointments.

--The "Store" is up and running now. Katie would like to start to purchase in bulk such things as batteries, and snacks which are popular. It is not a fundraiser, but a convenience.

--Volunteer hours are coming in at a value of \$1,300 so far to the COA.

--An Ayer resident needed acute medical care. This gave an opportunity to start planning on a "Transportation Symposium."

--Dennis asked if we keep van records. Katie said that yes, they are very detailed, very tedious as we are still scheduling on paper. The MART Pilot Program on automated records was foiled and back to the drawing board. They are still working on it. Our van comes from MART for free, but require papers to be filled out.

--Massachusetts COA Conference is October 19-21 in Falmouth. COA Board can call organization if want to help out and attend for free.

--Katie reminds COA Board and all to sign in for hours. Our meetings are volunteer hours. All should check-in on My Senior Center to provide statistics on Senior Center use.

--Folk Festival October 1, COA Booth: Katie will be there and we can drop in and help her out. She will have Newsletters, jar openers, hot/cold pads, maybe pens to give out.

--If there is anything else that we think should be on her Director's Report, we should let Katie know. This becomes her Departmental Report to the Town Managers and Select Board, and then a public document: "Director's Monthly Town Report."

**8. Recognition of local business donations to Senior Center**

--Dennis noted the receipt of local business donations to the Senior Center.

--Do we have, should we keep, a list of donations?

--Barbara and Janine liked the Wish List that used to be in the Newsletter.

--Katie said that two weeks ago Marty's Corner Café donated a meal for a group at the Center.

--This Monday, Shop & Save may start the bread donations again.

--Sister Paula said it is important to send an official thank you to those who donate. Katie has a volunteer, Candy Campbell who will write cards for the COA.

--Janine asked if donations are only things, or can they be money as well? The Director's Report has statistics and Building Committee, maybe something on donations?

--Katie will add donations into Director's Report.

--Dennis asked about use of Town website. Barbara said she uses the COA Newsletter for information.

--BG, DC, KP: Maybe add Newsletter Distribution to Newsletter?

--Katie said the Newsletter is usually out the last week of the month. Barbara asked regarding the Supper Clubs, and Katie said that there are usually two per month. One in Ayer and one out of town. If traffic/dark is a problem, participants can take the MART van.

#### **10. Update from building committee**

--This was covered in the Public Input area above.

#### **--COA Board Adjourned Public Meeting and went into closed Executive Session—**

--Our visitor, Barbara Gibbons left and we all thanked her for her interest and input.

#### **--COA Board Adjourned Executive Session and returned to Public Session—**

#### **11. Door repair**

--This will be further addressed when Ayer Housing Authority comes back from vacation.

#### **12. Old Business**

--Any items left from this meeting that anyone feels need to be addressed next time can be done under Old Business.

#### **13. New Business**

--None stated.

#### **14. Adjourned at 3:40 PM.**

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is on the left and the second is on the right. They appear to be cursive or stylized names.