

Ayer Council on Aging (COA) Board Monthly Meeting

Held June 12, 2019 at 3:05 p.m. at The Center, 18 Pond Street, Ayer Massachusetts
Minutes compiled by Janine Nichipor

In Attendance:

COA Director Karin Dynice-Swanfeldt
Sister Paula McCrea, Chairperson
Robert Hammond
Janine Nichipor, Acting Secretary
Kathryn Pfaltzgraff
Clark Paige, Public Input



AGENDA distributed and meeting called to order by Chairperson Sister Paula:

- Before and during the meeting, the Board welcomed Karin Dynice-Swanfeldt back from medical leave
- A moment of silence was observed for those who have helped the COA and for those no longer with us.

Public Input: Clark requested help for a senior in Ayer, in advance of the winter season, as his friend has trouble digging out his walkway when it snows. Karin says that calls were made on his behalf, and no one has stepped up to help. She has pursued volunteers, paid help, community service persons, and has not found a person. She thinks teens aren't interested in helping/earning money like they used to even for a former Scout Master. Clark has contacted other offices and will keep trying.

Secretary's Report:

- The Board accepted the Meeting Minutes from May 8, 2019.
- Sister Paula noted that she was unable to update the COA Website as it turned out she wasn't sure how to do it. Karin explained changes are made via Town of Ayer IT person Cindy Knox. It has been updated.

Treasurer's Report:

- The Board accepted the Treasurer's Report.
- Current budget is on point for this fiscal year. We will not need a Reserve Fund Transfer, and will have \$2,000 to go back into the Ayer General Account.
- Karin notes the MART contract is now in place, and there is an account with COMCAST directly with The Center instead of through Ayer Housing.
- Two employees switched jobs and this is reflected in this Report.
- The 2020 Budget was approved and 2021 Budget is in sight.

Correspondence:

- Janine received an invitation from Loaves and Fishes and did attend their CCC event. L&F Open Pantry Hours are now posted on the bulletin board in the Pond Street lunch room, as well as at Pleasant Street Senior Housing.

Director's Report:

- The Board accepted the Director's Report—highlights below.
- COA Director Karin Dynice-Swanfeldt is back from Medical Leave. She worked from home for much of the time she was out, and kept up with bills, reports, met with staff, and was in touch by telephone. Because the Town of Ayer has no "Work at Home" policy, she was not paid her regular pay.
- The personnel change which brought in Jane Morriss from Ayer Board of Health was reviewed. Kevin Johnston from HR, Union rules, and interviews were involved, and Jane is now on the staff at the COA.
- There was a later job switch, with Mike Murphy and Jane switching jobs. It seems to suit them both, since a regulation did away with Mike's home-cooked meals.
- Jane is receiving ServSafe Certification.
- Karin is pursuing how we can get a SHINE Coordinator. Current staff do not have the training and expertise for this important and complex responsibility.

New Business for June 2019:

- Karin kept up on the COA Board Minutes while she was out and appreciated everyone's efforts. She wants to address questions that were in those minutes and other priorities.
- All regular COA Board members need to see (or call) Carly Antonellis at Ayer Town Hall to accept renewal of their COA Board appointments. Current appointments end at the close of this Fiscal Year, June 30, 2019.
- The Feasibility Study for a new Center was done by a group put together by the Ayer Town Manager, and includes DPW Supt. Mark Wetzel. An agency from Cambridge studied what we need: where to locate and how much we need. Seven locations were suggested, though some included known toxic places with "sick" buildings. Some from the Feasibility Study were: the former Ross Associates building, a space next to ICU, one near Tiny's and at Mill Stream.
- Following the Feasibility Study, the Ayer COA will address building or moving to a new Center as a priority going forward.
- Karin's first choice for the new Center location is in the vicinity of Route 2A and Groton-Shirley Road, and includes the building and land formerly used by Ross Associates. This location has much going for it: an existing building with space for programs and offices; 100 parking spaces; natural features, such as the nearby river; and may possibly be a reasonable price. The Conservation Committee has been supportive for choosing this site.
- If/when we are able to fulfill this goal of acquiring and moving to a new Center, it would be a "shell" and would need to be filled and planned.
- New items and new costs would need to be paid for, such as utilities and snow removal, that Ayer Housing took care of at Pond St. New furniture and other interior improvements will be needed.
- Free/reduced source for furnishings, office and janitorial supplies and more is: Devens Eco Efficiency Center, 33 Andrews Parkway in Devens, down a flight of cement stairs. It is only open the 3rd/4th Thursdays of the month. Karin and

Jeanne already picked up good, sturdy, cleanable chairs that are in the current dining area at the Center.

- Karin is exploring new activities for the COA that will not cost us money. She met with the new Ayer Library Director, Tim Silva [tsilva@ayer.ma.us] who was very supportive and has resources and ideas. [♥ our Library!] Please let Karin know any thoughts and ideas for new activities.
- Addressing Grant money, Karin reviewed the Formula Grant which is provided every year from the State of Massachusetts. Using Census information, they multiply the number of seniors in town by ~\$12 (amount can change). This money, now ~\$21,000, is part of our total budget not on *top of* the amount approved by the Town of Ayer. Example: if Town approves \$158,000 annual budget, that already includes the Formula Grant.
- The Cultural Council provides Grants. They approach the COA Director with ideas for arts/music which are then paid for by the Cultural Council.
- Many appeals come in from providers of programs and some are inappropriate.
- We mentioned how the Bemis Corporation is very supportive of seniors and the community. If only other corporations would follow their commitment to giving back!
- One Grant source Janine heard of is the Cummings Foundation. The Westford COA received a grant of \$100,000 a few years ago and are making it last, while providing things for seniors they would not have been able to. [See web page: https://www.cummingsfoundation.org/oneworldboston/grant_recipients.htm]
- Grant money to benefit the new Center could be explored as we go forward: how to apply for Grants, and how to use grant money for expenses per Town rules.
- No one's job at the COA is to write grants, but if we pool our efforts, we might be able to accomplish getting some well-needed funds. Janine is interested to learn and help on this as able.
- To increase community awareness of our goal for a new Center, we talked about the COA Board going to community events to "see and be seen" and make the community aware we're here and we need a new "home." Networking can be a good thing at such things as the open houses for Town departments, "Taste of Nashoba" every March, "Spring Fling," and library events. Kathryn asked Karin to suggest things she might see for us to go to.
- As we adjourn for the summer, things are looking hopeful at the Center and Karin reminded us that if we need to we can call or drop in with questions/concerns.

Adjournment: At 5:20 p.m.

- There will be no meeting through the summer months of July and August. The next COA Board Meeting will be at 3:00 on September 11, 2019 at The Center, 18 Pond Street, Ayer MA.

NOTE: Items in [brackets] were added by the Secretary.

J. Mich 6/20/19

