

Council on Aging

Meeting minutes November 2, 2021

Attendees:

Carolyn McCreary – Chair

Carole Tillis – Board Member

Sr. Paula A. McCrea—Board Member

Dennis Curran – Board Member

Dr. Katie Petrossi—Executive Director

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1:27 PM
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1. Minutes from meeting of October 6, 2021 approved unanimously.
2. Director's Report:
 - a. Physical space of the senior center has been renovated, new furniture obtained, tile replaced. Center looks great and is prepared to welcome guests as it reopens!
 - b. Request for special one-day permits have been submitted.
 - c. Congregate meals are to start at the Center on November 8, 2021.
 - d. Capital funding request has been submitted for the building of a full-service kitchen.
 - e. Katie will be requesting a reserve fund transfer to purchase software for the Center's use.
 - f. Extended discussion was held regarding the printing of the newsletter. Consensus is that in-house printing and layout done by Katie with some assistance from Town Hall administrative staff and COA volunteers looks now to be the better option.
 - g. The Center opened on November 1st. There were a small number of attendees on the first day.
 - h. There was an extended discussion regarding the preferred business model for the Center:
 - i. Whether all or most activities should be free to Seniors with the cost being paid for from the Center budget.
 - ii. Whether each activity or event should be paid for, at least in part, by the participating individual.
 - iii. Whether a flat membership fee each month or year should be charged.
 - iv. Given the number of unknowns regarding number of attendees, preferred activities, and available funding sources it is difficult at this time to know which is the preferred model.
 - i. There was an extended conversation regarding MART transportation and the desirability of regionalizing in whole or in part the transportation and dispatch services being provided to Ayer seniors. No clear consensus has emerged at this time.
 - j. The COA budget will be funded for level service for FY 22-23. There was an extended discussion regarding budget priorities. The Center is currently short-staffed and at a minimum Katie would like to hire a person for nutrition services. Deb would continue with outreach and Sam as the driver. The use of volunteers for receptionist and some administrative task may be possible. More precise budget numbers are difficult this far in advance of the budget process.

- k. Katie has reached a verbal agreement with Economic and Community Development for a Covid grant that would go for congregate meal expenses.
- l. The use of Town email and Dropbox software were discussed.

End Director's report

- 1) It was noted that Rep. Sheila Harrington would like to sponsor a luncheon. This will most likely happen after the New Year.
- 2) The Board approved Dennis Curran as the Board's representative on the building committee for the new senior center.
- 3) Signage to announce the re-opening of the Center will be put up in Town.
- 4) A broad discussion regarding the sources of funding for the COA was held. The vast majority of the funding comes from the Town. Some of the money comes from the state and some from federal sources which have been funneled through the state Executive Office of Elder Affairs.
- 5) Funding priorities for FY22-23 were discussed. It was agreed that funding for increased activities and programming at the center, for the restoration of the currently vacant staff position, and for increased nutrition services and the build-out of the kitchen are the most important at this time.
- 6) It was mentioned that PACE would like to offer a seminar to our Seniors regarding PFAS concerns in Ayer's water supply. Katie will discuss with PACE.
- 7) Discussion regarding Facebook and the Center's website/social media presence was tabled until December 7, 2021.
- 8) Next meeting will be on December 7, 2021 at 2:00 PM. It was agreed that going forward the regular start-time for the meetings will be 2:00 PM.
- 9) Adjourn

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Carolyn McCreary". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned in the lower center of the page.