

Needham Council on Aging Board Meeting

May 9, 2024

Present: Colleen Schaller, Chair, Penny Grossman Vice Chair, Carol De Lemos, Helen Gregory, Ed Cosgrove, Kate Robey, Liane Relich, Ann Cosgrove, Ann DerMarderosian, Dan Goldberg, Ted Prorok, VFW Representative

COA: Latanya Steele, Director; Jessica Moss, Assistant Director of Counseling

SHINE: Amy Gomes

1. **Call to Order** The meeting was called to order by Ms. Schaller at 5:06 pm combination in person and on Zoom.

2. Aging Services Division

Social Work, Ms. Jessica Moss

Ms. Moss noted it has been a busy month. The numbers have been up again in April. The COA continues to have a short term counseling waiting list. Jess Rice one of the staff is training with SHINE two days a week which means she is only in the office once a week. Kerri just finished her “Circle Around: A Women’s Empowerment Group” which will be repeated in the fall. The staff is considering an expansion to Nehoiden Glen based on interest. Needham as a FY 25 SNAP outreach site grant was submitted. Ms. Moss is working on a second medical transport grant with MCOA with a ride share service. The taxi grant money is still there but getting a ride scheduled with limited services has been a continuing issue. It may be “Parrot” a concierge that book the ride share service for those without cell phones. The statistics and sustainability course at Olin College taught by an adjunct professor is moving forward to research social isolation; the hold up in the research is that the Amazon fire tablets cannot be ordered through state procurement.. The tablets will need to be switched to Ipads which will cost more so less to distribute. The state approval for the grant purchase is pending. In answer to a Board question Ms. Moss noted that the grant came through the Town of Needham so money from Friends for example could not assist with purchasing the Amazon Fire tablets. The procurement process has to be met as written. The Homelessness Prevention Council continues to meet and Ms. Moss hopes an Olin College student will assist. A new tracking system is in place. Ms. Moss also noted that Isabelle Dick’s weekly meetings at the Needham Community Council have further assisted with spreading the word about CATH’s services. She has 24 volunteers with a boutique meeting last week. Hopefully, the online application that went live in April will help recruit additional lunch volunteers.

2. SHINE, Ms. Amy Gomes

Ms. Gomes noted that SHINE is busy with new counselor training that started in April and will be complete in June. There is a large class of 5 that are volunteers and 5 that are professionals. It is great to have professional SHINE staff on board. They also had an all counselor meeting to explain the changes to Medicare savings plans. Assets will no longer be screened so this will increase the number of eligible seniors on the savings plans. Outreach at the Waltham COA, Needham Housing and Newton Community Adult Education was completed in April. SHINE received the Community Partner award from the Brookline COA. The regional directors meeting occurred in Burlington.

3. Mr. Ted Prorok, VFW Representative

Mr. Prorok noted the Poppy Sales will be May 18 and 19 at Sudbury and Roche Brothers.

The flag replacement will occur at the Needham and St. Mary's cemeteries the week before Memorial Day.

The Memorial Day event will be multi-location—Needham Cemetery, then St. Mary's Cemetery then the Needham Police Station, the Town Common and finally Memorial Park.

New Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen contest's themes have been chosen and the contest is open. The theme for the Voice of America "Is America our Forefather's Vision" and for Patriot's Pen "My Voice in America's Democracy." Applications are available on the VFW website.

Mr. Prorok did some investigation into Dough Nation from Panera based on April meeting discussion. Ms. Schaller noted that Ms. Pavasaris from the Friends had submitted the application for both the Dedham and Needham locations. She is waiting to hear back.

4. Directors Report, Ms. Latanya Steele, Programming

The music continues to be a highlight. The informational sessions at the coffee hour are going well. The Red Sox opener was a big hit. The walking pedometers were donated by SHINE and are now in use. The fitness center is open this month Tuesday/Thursdays 5-8 pm to track the hours. Ms. Kelley added participation numbers to the Board report and noted she is always happy to answer questions.

Mr. Goldberg noted that this past Monday at 9:10 there were 14 people in the fitness room. Is it possible to open at 8:30 am rather than 9 am to accommodate all the early morning users? Lisa and Steven surveyed the users and they thought the evening hour change was in response to users' input. Ms. Steele noted that the 8:30 start would need to be reviewed to see if it met the fitness center staff contract. She will investigate if Monday/Wednesday/Friday are possibilities.

Ms. Schaller noted that she and Ms. DerMarderosian are working with a professional fundraiser and the Friends so that the Friends can raise \$200,000 for the fitness room move and renovation. The professional feels \$200,000 is entirely within reach. The Board agreed that since the Town cannot fund it in the budget this is an important next step for the CATH.

Ms. Schaller inquired about volunteers needed for Dinner Bells on the 30th (sponsored by Denise Garlick State Representative) and Ms. Steele noted more were needed. Ms. Schaller and Ms. DerMarderosian volunteered.

The Needham Housing Authority renovation plans were circulated to the Board for Linden/Chambers.

The MCOA training on May 29th is designed for Friends member to learn more about their role in supporting senior centers. Ms. Steele noted she has arranged for a Zoom link to be available in the conference room. Ms. Steele will send the Zoom link to Board members in case others are interested.

5. Approval of Minutes

Ms. DerMarderosian made a motion to approve the April 11, 2024, minutes. Mr. Cosgrove seconded the motion. One correction was made to attendance Mr. Goldberg did not attend and his name

incorrectly spelled as Dave Goldberg was removed. The amended minutes were approved by voice vote with three abstentions (Ms. Mullaney, Mr. Goldberg and Ms. Grossman).

6. Chairpersons Report, Ms. Colleen Schaller

Ms. Schaller noted she has met with the Friends board twice about the fund raising initiative for fitness room renovations and they are now on board with the importance of fundraising as part of their job. The Board will assist but Friends members are required (4 will work with the COA Board volunteers).

They also authorized money to reupholster the library chairs and the chairs in the upstairs hall. They are very well made chairs and so reupholstering is better than a new purchase. It will cost just under \$10,000 for the nine chairs. The chairs are easy to get in and out of, very comfortable and fit the space.

In answer to questions the Friends have \$200,000 in their account. This is kept as a reserve and so this means the fundraiser is necessary.

10. Old Business

None

11. New Business

Ms. Schaller noted that she will speak to Mr. McDonald about surplus funds at the next Town meeting to see if any could be made available to the COA. The Board discussed advocating with individual Selectboard members. The Board agreed that the heavy fitness room use and the staff constantly applying for grants to assist with many areas of the Center should be emphasized at the meetings. Ms. Schaller will speak with the Chair of the Selectboard Kevin Keane.

12 Motion to Adjourn

Mr. Goldberg made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Mullaney seconded the motion. **The Board meeting was adjourned by unanimous voice vote at 5:47 pm**

Respectfully Submitted,

Faith Crisley

Recording Secretary