

Needham Council on Aging Board Meeting

March 13, 2025

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

COA Staff: LaTanya Steele, Director Jessica Moss Assistant Director of Counseling & Volunteer

Friends of the CATH: Beverly Pavasaris

SHINE: Amy Gomes

1. Call to Order The meeting was called to order by Ms. Schaller at 5:01 pm combination in person and on Zoom

2. Aging Services Division

a. Social Work, Ms. Jessica Moss

Ms. Moss noted there was a new grant just under \$10,000 for medical transport which will be a continuation Go Go Grandparent program; an evaluation will follow.

She thanked Ms. Mullaney for her assistance with the tablets program and distribution. So far 72 are distributed.

Ms. Moss met with a library staff member to see if there could be more support around dementia. We are thinking of bringing services once a month to the library and co-sponsoring talks on dementia. It might also allow us to reach a younger demographic of caregivers.

Ms. Moss also noted she has applied for a Metrowest Foundation grant to help support food deliver in the future. Earlier she looked into schools and private vendors; with cutbacks on the federal level Springwell may not be an option in the future.

3. SHINE, Ms. Amy Gomes

Ms. Gomes noted that February involved counselor meetings. Regional meetings with directors occurred on February 12 and 25th. There are 70 counselors right now and the training is recommended for continuing counselors; required for new counselors.

The plan is to visit all 22 COA's in the region this year.

Right now, there funding is in place; not sure what is going to happen on the federal level.

4. Director's Report and Activities Report, Ms. Latanya Steele

Ms. Steele noted she is only providing highlights as the Board report outlines the full month.

Ms. Steele noted that for the first time since COVID the programming staff have been asking for payment up front for the 8 week classes. In general, there has been a lot of push back. They are working on a vacation policy.

In answer to Board questions Ms. Steele noted that the discussion of credit card payments goes back to September with the Treasurer's office. Ms. Steele noted that the chain of command is the treasurer's office then accounting and then Dave Davison, the Director of finance. The Board felt they should discuss it with Select Board members and also have a Select Board member possibly Heidi Frail attend a board meeting.

Ms. Steele noted the ongoing issue is that my senior center is not compatible with my rec the Park and Recreation payment system and there would be upgrades required to accept credit cards. The general issue of the mechanism for collecting credit card payments has not been satisfactorily answered.

Ms. Steele also noted that they now have one van leaving later than 1 pm. She feels strongly this is a good start toward evening programming.

The DTA Advisory Board Director's met to discuss a plan if cuts happen.

The community dinner is on March 20 and Kate Robey, Sue Mullaney and Ann DerMarderosian registered to serve.

5. Chairperson's Report, Ms. Colleen Schaller

Ms. Schaller noted that Myles Tucker would like a board member to join the Committee to Study future use of Stephen Palmer. The 50 year lease expires in 2028 and the rules state it has to be delivered to the town vacant. Ms. Mullaney agreed to serve. Other members of the committee will include a member of the planning board, a member of the Select Board, a member from the Park & Recreation Board and a member of the Board of Health.

6. Review of February 13, 2025 Minutes

A few changes will be made and a revised copy will be reviewed and voted on at the April meeting.

7. Update on Veteran's Affairs, Mr. Prorok

Mr. Prorok noted that the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial will take place March 29th at 11 am at Cefalo Circle.

Mr. Prorok has passed on to two Select Board members Kevin Keane and Josh Levy the information on the veterans' tax relief programs.

A new VSO starts March 17th named Dan O'Neill, he is a Gulf War veteran and Needham resident; Mr. Prorok looks forward to collaborating with him.

8. Old Business

The COA renovations be discussed at the Finance Committee meeting so Ms. Schaller asked for volunteers once they are scheduled.

It is worth keeping in mind that when advocating for the kitchen renovation proposed funding cuts to Springwell may mean that the food can no longer be sourced there making a viable working commercial kitchen a necessity.

9. Friends of the CATH

Ms. Pavasaris noted the Staff Appreciation Lunch catered by Panera's on March 7 went well.

The volunteer lunch is upcoming on April 14 at 12:30 catered by Conrad's and all Board members are invited.

Ms. Pavasaris noted the bread run to Panera's with Helen Gregory continues.

10. New Business

Board members suggested a sign on the tables where the Panera is distributed to let visitors and patrons know about the donation.

Also noted that President Biden signed the social security fairness act shortly before leaving office which does away with the government employees offset for public employees who have government pensions and also paid into the system. Several Board members noted they have received checks retroactive to January 2024.

It was also noted that this does not affect SHINE eligibility.

11. Motion to Adjourn

Mr. Cosgrove made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Grossman seconded the motion. **The Board meeting was adjourned by unanimous voice vote at 6:00 pm**

Respectfully Submitted,
Faith Crisley
Recording Secretary