

Needham Council on Aging Board Meeting

June 9, 2022

Present: Colleen Schaller, Chair; Helen Gregory, Penny Grossman, Sandra Prinn, Lianne Relich, Dan Goldberg, Kathy Whitney, Ted Prorok, VFW representative

COA: Latanya Steele, Director, Jessica Moss, Social Work

SHINE: Michelle Gucciardi, Director MetroWest region

Guest: John Kalin, Needham resident

Volunteer Guest: Kalpana Shaw

Meeting called to order by Ms. Schaller, Board Chair at 5:15 pm combination of in person and on Zoom

Ms. Schaller raised the issue of the Selectboard Goals which Tim McDonald, Director of Health and Human Services, has asked the COA Board to examine and add to as needed. The Selectboard has new members and thus a lot of goals. The Board noted this.

Town meeting passed the Center at the Heights feasibility study which will be conducted by a professional consultant. The Board, staff and residents will all be consulted in the process and Ms. Steele noted it will cover the entire building not just specific areas.

SHINE Report, Ms. Michelle Gucciardi, Director

Ms. Gucciardi noted May was busy with all current counselors recertifying. 11 new SHINE counselors will join over the summer bringing the total for the MetroWest region to 60. Open enrollment fall planning has started.

Social Work Report, Ms. Jessica Moss

Ms. Moss noted that both she and Kerrie Cusack are expecting babies, so they are planning social work coverage. (Kerrie will be out in July and Jess at the end of October.)

She noted two part time clinicians have been hired to help cover including Frannie McBrien and Jessica Rice both former interns.

The team has been focusing on mental health care. Providing a “therapy 8-week bridge” so that clients can locate a long-term therapist. The goal is to not cut people off.

Ms. Moss noted that they have been sharing jointly with Youth Services Rhona Kerans who is a clinical consultant to discuss high risk cases.

The Needham Senior Assessment survey will begin at the end of June spearheaded by Public Health. This assists with the Public Health Departments recertification effort but also grant applications for the COA. Many outreach methods are being used including regular mail, email and focus groups. The survey will cover the long-term impacts of COVID including lifestyle changes, access, and kinds of access to the Center at the Heights, demographic questions, and issue with aging in place.

The new monthly in person bereavement group has been a remarkable success.

Meditation will start in late fall when Kerrie returns from maternity leave.

Jill McGovern is now certified by SHINE.

Two volunteers onboarded in May.

The search for volunteer drivers continues with a driver shortage.

The part-time van driver position is still open. Again, it is hard for everyone to find drivers.

Ms. Schaller noted that she and Carol are Serv Safe certified as backups. Jen Tuttleman from the School Department will be including CATH staff and any interested Board members in their fall Serv Safe training.

Ms. Moss noted that 2/3 of food deliveries are to a new audience; seniors who did not use the CATH prior to COVID. Our meal delivery policy is looser than Public Health's Traveling Meals, so we are meeting a different community need.

Shopping route continues.

The goal remains to have more in person activities summer into fall.

Ms. Latanya Steele, Programming and Transportation Report

The Center is developing more partnerships with the Needham Police, Youth, Housing Authority and Public Health.

Attendance is up but seniors are still COVID cautious.

Nature programs returned in person.

Transportation remains at capacity without the hire of the part time driver.

The surrounding COA's pay the same to their drivers and are having similar issues so it is a supply problem.

Ms. Schaller will follow up with the schools to see what their drivers are paid.

Ms. Steele noted that the survey on CATH programming had 175 respondents and she will ask Annie Toth to send it to the Board.

Ms. Steele noted that Ms. Kelley got over 1000 personal care item donations and a distribution plan will be designed later this month.

May Minutes

Ms. Schaller requested a motion to discuss the minutes of May 12. Ms. Grossman made a motion to discuss the minutes and Mr. Goldberg seconded.

Ted Prorok had two corrections. On page 3 of the Minutes the VFW director information was edited to read— "Jason Kravets is the new Town of Needham Care of Graves and Coordinator of Ceremonies and

will attend his first Memorial day remembrance in the role on May 30. Mr. Prorok will speak with him on the possible acceptance of new flags that seniors need to dispose of as they downsize.”

The last sentence was deleted.

The Board unanimously approved the amended minutes.

Ms. Colleen Schaller, Board Chair Update

Ms. Schaller noted she was finishing the LGBT training and found it be an eye-opening experience. Ms. Steele noted that the COA is creating a welcoming environment for all. She noted a rainbow flag at the front desk, partnering with the high school’s LGBT Alliance and an Out to Dinner program each Thursday 5:30-6:30 pm. More programming will continue to be developed.

Ms. Gregory and Ms. Schaller noted they found it to be good training but since it is statewide more geared to care giving facilities.

Ms. Steele noted that questions related to including the LGBTQ community are in the senior survey.

Ms. Helen Gregory, Housing Update Report

The Housing plan group will be meeting later tonight.

The agenda includes Reg Foster, Needham Housing Authority Board Chair and the cochair of the Housing Planning Working group Jean McKnight. They will present on the current preservation and redevelopment initiative.

The subgroups will also be reporting out.

The Board briefly discussed Avery plans as Mr. Goldberg mentioned a new plan had been presented the evening before. The revised plan included assisted living and memory care—this developer also planned Traditions in Dedham and Boylston Place in Chestnut Hill Mr. Goldberg noted he was sorry to see it did not include independent senior living.

Ms. Schaller noted the Board needs to be aware of the new proposal. Ms. Kelley will get more copies of the brochure to Annie Toth who will scan and send to the Board.

Mr. Ted Prorok, VFW Representative Report

Mr. Prorok is gathering information on the flag disposal issues from VFW colleagues before reaching out to Greg Smith at the transfer station.

Mr. Prorok is also planning on meeting with the Veteran’s representative soon on Brave Act 1 and 2.

He will update the Board at the September meeting on working Veteran’s ability to take certain holidays off from work.

He noted the Memorial Day event was a great success.

Ms. Schaller Meeting Preference for 2022-2023

The Board agreed that the meeting time can remain the same—2nd Thursdays of each month at 5 pm.

Her preference is to have them in person as often as possible.

Executive Committee Appointed for any Summer issues

Ms. Grossman, Ms. Schaller, and Mr. Goldberg agreed to serve.

Questions

Ms. Gregory inquired as to when the Assessment results would be available and if the Board could receive copies of the survey via email. Ms. Moss will check with Public Health on the timeline as they want to interview Board members over the summer and then she will make sure all Board members receive the final report via email. Ms. Grossman, Ms. Gregory, and Ms. Schaller all noted they were available for summer interviews.

Ms. Prinn made a motion to adjourn; Ms. Grossman seconded this motion. The board unanimously adjourned at 6:00 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Faith Crisley

Recording Secretary