Needham Council on Aging Board Meeting

September 19, 2024

Present: Colleen Schaller, Chair, Penny Grossman Vice Chair, Carol De Lemos, Helen Gregory, Ed Cosgrove, Kate Robey, Kathy Whitney, Ann Cosgrove, Ann DerMarderosian, Dan Goldberg, Sue Mullaney, Leanne Relich, Ted Prorok, VFW Representative
COA: Latanya Steele, Director; Jessica Moss, Assistant Director of Counseling

Friends of the CATH: Beverly Pavasaris

Guest: Timothy McDonald Director of Health and Human Services

SHINE: Michelle Gucciardi

Call to Order The meeting was called to order by Ms. Schaller at 5:08 pm combination in person and on Zoom

1. **SHINE, Ms. Michelle Gucciardi**

Ms. Gucciardi noted that this is their busiest time of year with open enrollment October 15-December 7th. 400 appointments are available down from 600 last year. The appointments are always taken by Thanksgiving so seniors are encouraged to schedule early. The inflation reduction act has had a positive effect on Medicare drug coverage but there are lots of questions with the changes.

2. **Aging Services Division**

a. Social Work, Ms. Jessica Moss

Ms. Moss noted the numbers have been steady. The intern Stephanie is in 3 days a week which has been a great help. There are only 6 seniors on the waiting list for the counseling program. Ms. Cusack has completed internal systems family training which adds another skill to the team.

A new grant came through from MCOA to provide a transportation service as the taxi grant ends September 30th. GoGo Grandparent is the new contractor. They are a concierge service that also works with Uber and Lyft and can also reserve ADA compliant vehicles. They provide more surveillance and background check for their drivers.

Ms. Mullaney inquired about the tablet grant. Ms. Moss noted that the 100 iPad have arrived and the plan is to give them to people to increase attendance in hybrid programs and to help seniors with community connectedness and social isolation.

Ms. Moss also noted that the volunteer program is running smoothly with recent meetings with the front desk staff, the boutique and the kitchen.

b. **Ms. Latanya Steele, Director's Report**

Ms. Steele noted that the meeting with the Treasurer's Office to discuss implementing credit card payments for seniors was cancelled but she is working on rescheduling it.

Ms. Steele also noted that while the Springwell lunch program in house is about 12 the grab and go continues to be popular with more than 100 participants. So, the nutrition issues are being met but in a different format from pre COVID

3.Approval of June 13, 2024 Minutes

Ms. DerMarderosian made a motion to approve the June 13, 2024 minutes. Ms. Grossman seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote

a. Chairperson's Report, Ms. Colleen Schaller

Ms. Schaller noted she and Mr. Cosgrove attended the Planning Board's September 5th meeting around the MBTA zoning issue. There was a feeling of some attendees that the planning board was working with housing groups too closely to accommodate a builder who will develop the Carter building. No vote was taken and there is another meeting on September 24. A zoning change by itself will not necessarily attract a builder given the costs.

4. New Business

A brief discussion occurred around the issue of assembling and purchasing many small plots to allow for larger apartment building at some future point.

Ms. Schaller requested a motion in support of the base zoning plan. Mr. Goldberg made a motion that the Council on Aging Board is in favor of the base plan; Ms. Gregory seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

The Board agreed to table the Neighborhood group zoning plan vote in order to gather more information. Mr. McDonald will send the packet from the Public Health Board to provide more information.

Priorities for CATH Renovations

Mr. McDonald provided a refresher that last year the Board approved requesting the ADA compatible kitchen entrance along with the kitchen renovation followed by the game/fitness room switch then then the deck renovation in the 2026-2029 capital budgeting process. He noted that the usual capital budgeting process for the town is first design, then the budgeted overview with the Permanent Public Building Committee and then construction over a three year period. Mr. McDonald noted that the Board can keep with the priority phases or switch them around or make the request larger.

A lengthy discussion occurred around the crowding of the fitness room and the fact that the hospital is still providing space for the traveling meals program making the kitchen renovation less urgent.

A lengthy discussion occurred around the differences between traveling meals which delivers to homebound and disabled residents and the Springwell program which is currently the hybrid model of grab ad go and in house lunches. The long term goals need to make best use of the limited resources.

The Board also discussed advocating with the Select Board individually and as a group and asking members to attend a Board meeting to advocate for senior needs especially renovations to the fitness center.

Mr. Goldberg made a motion to prioritize funding the design and construction of the ADA compatible kitchen entrance, the fitness room renovation to expand its size in the current gameroom space and the kitchen renovation. Mr. Cosgrove seconded. The Board passed by unanimous voice vote.

Mr. McDonald noted he will inform the Board of the various committee meetings including finance to advocate for the capital budget needs.

Given the capital budget if approved will take three years for construction to be complete, there was also a discussion of short term solutions to the overcrowded and popular fitness room including opening at 8:30 am rather than 9 am, requiring advanced signup and limiting the number of participants at any given time.

6. Friends of the CATH

Beverly Pavasaris noted that she and others are collecting leftover pastries/muffins/bagels at the Needham Panera on Monday and Wednesday nights and they are distributed on Tuesday/Thursday at the CATH. The extra goodies have been popular though it was a long effort by Ms. Pavasaris speaking with multiple levels of Panera management.

5. Mr. Ted Prorok, VFW Representative

Mr. Prorok noted that both the 4th of July parade and September 11 events were well attended.

The Veteran's Affairs Officer has left to accept a job in Reading. He noted Needham may be getting their own officer as of the 5 towns currently in the region Needham has the most retired veterans.

The Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy essay writing contests opens at the end of October.

8. 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 7 pm**

Respectfully Submitted,

Faith Crisley

Recording Secretary