

Needham Council on Aging Board Meeting

March 14, 2019

5:00-6:00 pm

Center at the Heights, 500 Hillside Ave., Needham, MA 02494

Present: Penny Grossman, Dan Goldberg, Helen Gregory, Sandra Prinn, Ed Cosgrove, Carol deLemos, Gary Crossen

COA: Ms. Latanya Steele, Director; Aicha Kelley, Program Coordinator; Jessica Moss, Social Worker; Stephen Grably, Transportation Coordinator, Kathy Worhach, SHINE

Guest: Timothy Muir McDonald, Director of Health and Human Services

5:03 Meeting Called to Order by Penny Grossman, acting chair in Colleen Schaller's absence

Ms. Aicha Kelley, Program Coordinator's Report

Ms. Kelley noted that the new Compass is out with a new font easier for those with low vision. The side bar has been fixed. Mr. Goldberg noted that some seniors have complained about missing the calendar but as Ms. Kelley noted it was a casualty of space and having more advertisements. If possible the calendar may be brought back in the future. Mr. Goldberg also noted that he did not love the cover but Ms. Steele noted again this was to gain more space for all the events. Ms. Kelley also noted that the movie descriptions and rating were important to the senior audience. The events were arranged chronologically for easier reference in the absence of the calendar.

Ms. Kelly also noted the intergenerational dinner went well with ten teenagers and twenty seniors. There was a lot of conversation around the card playing as well as conversation cards.

In May she is partnering with Youth Services on a senior prom with music ranging from oldies to current music with snacks. The dress code does not require everyone to dress up.

In May a bereavement support group will also begin.

The March 13 mindfulness went well. A sponsor picked it up April-June.

Other activities include bridge, pool (the game), a continuation of the clips and chat newspaper/magazine articles club and evening yoga. Pride pizza day for the LGBT community as well but open to all.

On June 25 the annual rotary picnic will take place on the deck. Ms. Kelley asked the Board to add it to their calendars.

Ms. Kelley noted the field trips are going well and that new destinations are being added. So far trips to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and the Commonwealth museum have gone well; upcoming are Perkins School of the Blind and the Decordova Museum.

Minutes

With the late arrival of one member quorum was reached. Minutes from February were reviewed. Ms. Gregory made a motion to accept, Mr. Crossen seconded. **Unanimous approval of the minutes with two abstentions**; Ms. Grossman and Mr. Goldberg.

Mr. Stefan Grably, Transportation Report

He noted rides have been stable February into March. Usually the ridership increases in the spring. Two slightly used vans will be arriving in the spring—a blue 14 seater with sliding doors on the side. This has been recommended as it is easier for seniors to board, tested by seniors and much easier for facilities to maintain.

A grant has paid for High Visibility Safety jackets. Mr. Grably noted they are multi-season, reflective and have the town logo. He also provided a demonstration for the Board on the distances required for a person to be seen clearly. The Board agreed the jackets would help with safe van transportation.

Mr. Grably has been testing new fleet management systems. Verizon for example cannot find the best route and Google Maps has a limit of 10 stops. He noted that the free, routing and optimization software may not identify addresses or the side of the street necessary for the van to park safely and allow the senior to board. Mr. McDonald asked him if there was a professional version that might suit his needs; so far Mr. Grably noted he has not located one as they are designed for large vehicle fleets or provide U-turns in the directions which prevents safe pick-up areas.

Ms. Kathy Worchach, SHINE Report

Ms. Worchach noted that between September and November the SHINE volunteers had seen 4301 clients across the 22 towns and that a large portion were seen in the Needham computer room (609 in the computer room alone). From October 15 to December 7 445 seniors were seen in Framingham which is a 24% increase from last year. The demand is much higher as more boomers are turning 65. SHINE is adding a Wednesday night session to meet demand. There is also a new April training class and hopefully another dozen counselors will be trained.

Ms. Jessica Moss, Social Worker Report

Ms. Moss noted that Ms. Cusack had returned from maternity leave at the end of February. There has generally been a jump in numbers across usage including Ms. Lindley's new wellness programming. Ms. Moss is still doing effective management sessions and I organized protective services training with Springwell along with Ms. Kelley. Both she and Ms. Kelley are receiving more referrals from police and fire reflecting the closer collaboration.

Mr. Timothy Muir McDonald—Overview of Budget Proposal

Mr. McDonald that he and Ms. Steele have been working closely with Human Resources to update the new positions and get them posted. They should be up soon.

The new budget includes a request for more fitness hours and expanded weekend and evenings hours. Two of the three part time positions have been posted one to provide coverage on one evening and the other to cover a weekend day probably Saturday.

The assistant director position has been split into two positions. One position includes volunteer recruitment and supervision as well as counseling; the second is responsible for programming and transportation. Both have come back multiple levels above what we have the budget for so that remains a challenge. Both positions have to be voted on by the Personnel Board. The town employees in general are undergoing reclassification/compensation evaluations and the new positions will have the reclassification system incorporated within them.

Mr. McDonald noted that cameras—12 internal and 9 external cost estimate is much higher than expected but it is one of the few town buildings that currently does not have any cameras. Latanya, Collen and I agreed the best internal spaces are the lobby and the stairwells. So the cost would be less as 12 internal are not needed. The estimate came back at \$84,000.00 dollars. An additional \$13,000.00 will be needed for the server and tape storage capacity.

There is funding in the capital improvement budget for the space utilization study. The deck is not used nearly as much as anticipated so the space utilization study will look at enclosing all or part of it. Also switching the fitness and game room space to accommodate the much higher fitness room usage.

Mr. McDonald also noted the hope to make the café door handicapped accessible. The feasibility study/drawing up the schematics will be \$15000.00 and the full cost is \$150,000.00 including changes to the parking lot, sidewalk around the building and a handicapped door. The front of Center at the Heights faces the street not the parking lots thus the café door change is more complicated and expensive. Both the Emery Grover building and Mitchell School are competing for the COA funding as they have not been updated for many years. The Center at the Heights plan is a 10 year progression, feasibility for the door change followed by the switching of the fitness and game room and adding less heavy bathroom doors.

Ms. LaTanya Steele, Director's Report

Ms. Steele noted that March is National Social Work Month. There will be a luncheon and book discussion to mark the month with Mr. McDonald leading the discussion.

She noted that 12 seniors will be going to a pampering/spa day at Minuteman Technical High school's cosmetology program to have their hair and nails done.

Ms. Steele served on a panel at the Simmons College of Social Work in Boston providing a perspective on what it is like to hire a social worker.

She noted that programming attendance is up and thanked the staff.

She also noted that with my req in the summer there will be more program data collection possible. Ms. Fallon, Ms. Moss, and Ms. Kelley will be assisting Ms. Steele with compiling the survey data.

She noted that Ms. Schaller attended the Friends meeting in March and will provide a fundraising/space issue update at the April board meeting. The Friends would like some designated hours during the week.

Mr. Goldberg noted that under the current system the fitness room use is not accurate and that the \$3000.00 in revenue is not there in spite of the hand counting that Ms. Kelley regularly performs.

Mr. McDonald asked about possible revenue with evening usage. Mr. Goldberg noted that he uses it in the mornings and Ms. Cosgrove at 11:45 am. They do not use in the evenings. Ms. Grossman noted that evening hours could attract working seniors if more publicity was provided; and Saturday hours might work especially in the winter.

Ms. Penny Grossman, Chair's Report

Ms. Grossman noted that Ms. Schaller recommended having members of the Board send donations individually as an idea to show the Friends support.

Ms. Grossman also noted that Mr. Schaller recommended the Board as a group donated to the Friends in memory of Jan Dorsey who was very active in both the COA and the Friends groups.

Ms. Gregory then queried Mr. McDonald on why in a new building such as the Center at the Heights design did not include handicapped entrances next to handicapped parking and cameras. Mr. McDonald noted that new town buildings contain more feasibility studies with users and his feeling is that the Town should move towards a model where more eyes look at the recommendations.

Mr. Goldberg recommended the Board keep a checklist of things that need done covering 2014-2019 period. Ms. Steele also noted that the hand held cameras in my req should allow for more through check-in both to the building and activities.

Formula Grant Update January-June 2019

Mr. McDonald and Ms. Steele noted that that formula grant unexpectedly arrived. The grant has been used to provide phone charging stations in the lobby and in the library, one new camera for social media, a mobile projector for summer deck movies, a sound system improvement with a new microphone, Braille keyboards in the computer lab, mindfulness software, the updates on the smart televisions, and translation services to Chinese and Russian for service materials.

Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Goldberg at 5:54 pm. Mr. Cosgrove seconded. Unanimous approval to adjourn at 5:54.

Respectfully Submitted, Faith Crisley, Recording Secretary