

Needham Council on Aging Board Meeting

May 9, 2019

5:00-6:15 pm

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

Present: Colleen Schaller, Penny Grossman, Sandra Prinn, Ed Cosgrove, Carol deLemos, Helen Gregory, Lianne Relich, and Tom Keating

COA: Ms. Aicha Kelley, Program Coordinator; Ms. Jessica Moss, Social Worker; Mr. Stephen Grably, Transportation

5:05 Meeting Called to Order by Board Chair Colleen Schaller. She noted Ms. Steele is on vacation.

Ms. Schaller also noted that Mr. Timothy Muir McDonald, Director of Health and Human Services, took a medical leave of absence on May 8. She mentioned that the staff is as usual doing a great job in covering all the work in both his and Ms. Steele's absences.

Ms. Prinn made a motion to accept the April 11th minutes. Ms. Grossman seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously accepted.

Ms. Jessica Moss, Social Services Report

Ms. Moss noted the numbers remain steady.

The Safety at Home program continues to receive more referrals because of the water bill notice.

The pen pal program with Mitchell School has the spring fling next week and it has been a great success; the students and seniors want to continue.

Ms. Kristin Lindley offered a mental health first aide youth class in April in conjunction with Ms. Sara Shine, the Director of Youth. She also attended a Substance Abuse/Alzheimer's group at BC.

Ms. Moss will also be attending a mental health workshop with Ms. Kerrie Cusack that includes substance abuse.

She noted she will be on maternity leave at the end of June. She is working with Ms. Lindley and Ms. Cusack on the coverage plan.

Mr. Stephan Grably, Transportation Report

The transportation numbers remain good but there has been a small increase in the number of last minute cancellations to 8%.

The shopping at the Heights advertising includes CVS, Trader Joes and Webster Bank.

They will be trying the new Stop and Shop on Needham Street in Newton as the Board agreed to a trial to see if it helps with the grocery costs.

Mr. Grably noted that the access to medical/doctor appointment rides have spread by word of mouth and demand was up 150% from February to March and another 30% March to April.

He noted the radius for medical rides is anywhere in Needham, Newton/Wellesley Hospital and Dedham Medical as it is just over the town line.

Mr. Grably is very excited about the new vans one seating 7 with a lift the other 6 which will be arriving soon. The details were presented at the April meeting. He also added reflective tape on the stairs and wheelchair lift. Four way flashers and hazard lights are used whenever the van is stopped.

Mr. Grably attended a 2 day training in Worcester on ADA and safety compliance issues. He mentioned it was the best training he has attended. Transportation issues are a challenge and complicated and he left the conference with many questions. He updated the Board on the compliance issues that could affect the proposed transportation policy changes. The main issue is around the efficiency versus service discussion. Ms. Schaller mentioned that we would like the service to be in the middle between maximum efficiency and maximum service. As Ms. Grossman mentioned it is a public service but operating within limitations and this is the opportunity for some client payment. She noted that the vans are operating as well as they can right now but the Board needs to consider revisions to the policies. Mr. Grably provided the example that if he adds 3 minutes to every stop (boarding and waiting time) first thing in the morning he is then 30 minutes behind with other pickups for the rest of the day. The Board will be presented at their June meeting with the proposed transportation policy changes— Mr. McDonald and Ms. Steele will be assisting him with the rewrite.

The Board had a long discussion and made editing suggestions to the above noted policy document change. The discussion included referring some clients to the MBTA Ride, utilizing Uber and Lyft, limiting the number of rides per client per month, and referring to social services when there are more questions about transportation. Adding a fee for some rides may lessen demand but once the new policy and fees are in place it will take several months to determine what the needs and results are. Mr. Grably outlined the following issues that were raised at the Worcester conference including assistance, mobility devices, and rights versus privileges, driver's behavior, service animals, and personal care assistants (PCA's). Mr. Grably noted that with Springwell's sponsored Busy Bee transportation service going out of business the only two services in town that remain open to every senior is the Community Council and the Council on Aging.

Ms. Aicha Kelley, Program Coordinator's Report

- Ms. Kelley updated the Board on the Greater Boston Project with the seniors at Needham High School where the goal was to combat senior isolation. This intergenerational program included a website, volunteering, integration with the elementary schools, a singing group, the wrestling team involvement and pool games. There will be ongoing facilitation in June and there is interest in continuing with the rising senior class in fall 2019.
- Ms. Kelley attended a lunch and learn on the Safety at Home program
- The matter of balance training continues; Ms. Tiffney Zike, one of public health nurses, and Pearl from Newton/Wellesley hospital are also involved with this training.
- The mindfulness series leader is great but with 19 registrations and only 7 in attendance it had to be cancelled because the instructor requires a minimum attendance of 15; two other area COA's already use his program so Ms. Kelley would like input in how to maintain the required attendance so the program can be rescheduled.

- Ms. Kelley has a busy summer planned; COA would like to get more attendance from the 65 to 75 year olds.
- The lineup includes movies, entertainment, technology, field trips, evening roof deck concerts, and a program on the history Boston's combat zone.
- Ms. Kelley is looking forward to my req as the attendance statistics remain inaccurate.
- The fitness center has been utilized by new people.
- Open Studio is going well sponsored by Webster Bank

Ms. Colleen Schaller Question

Ms. Schaller had a few questions on the movie *The Favorite* as she received a complaint. Ms. Kelley noted that movie programming is one of the hardest aspects of her job striking a balance between old and new movies and striking the right balance content. Dark war related movies remain taboo as do certain kinds of sex. The tone and subject matter was not described well in *The Favorite* reviews.

Mr. Keating made a motion to adjourn at 6:10 pm. Ms. Prinn seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Board adjourned at 6:10 pm.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted,

Faith Crisley