

Needham Council on Aging Board Meeting

November 14, 2019

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

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

COA: Ms. Latanya Steele, Director, Ms. Jessica Moss, Social Worker; Mr. Stephan Grably, Transportation

Guest: Lee-Anne Keeler from Friends of the CATH

5:00 Meeting Called to Order by Board Chair Ms. Colleen Schaller.

Ms. Keeler is the spokesperson and so far the only member of the Friends of the CATH to serve on planning a **“Spring Fling”** fundraiser to benefit the Center at the Heights scheduled for **March 28, 2020 from 4:00 pm to 7:30 pm**. She will meet with Ms. Steele and Ms. Schaller on November 15 to discuss announcement letter and planning based on their experience with previous fundraisers. Ms. Steele will provide Ms. Keeler with the Advisory Board member list same date so that Ms. Keeler can approach them. She is requesting the Board to provide her with ideas as she moves forward. The Board encouraged her to form a committee as soon as possible; and Ms. Schaller mentioned that the COA Board can't solicit donations but they can assist with logistics on the night of the event (several Board members including Ms. Schaller are Serve Safe certified in addition to COA staff), and are happy to provide suggestions as the Friends plan. Ms. Keeler has reached out to Hearth Pizza who is happy to prepare the appetizers and deliver but not to serve the food. Mr. Goldberg asked what the ticket price was for the Needham Golf Club fundraiser; it was noted that was \$50.00.

A discussion ensued on the fee, and questions to ask. It was agreed that there should be an admission fee charged and that a silent auction with a committee to locate appropriate donations is critical. Costs will include food and licenses to cover police and fire with the goal of breaking even at least. The Board recommended that beer and wine with heavy appetizers would assist with the cost and also provide enough food for the attendees. Ms. Schaller recommended a cash bar with a cashier selling tickets for drinks so that none of the servers need to handle money. The fee could include one drink per admission ticket as other town fundraisers have done. Ms. Grossman recommended a checklist along with separate publicity, silent auction and food committees as the head of the silent auction committee will need to keep donated items in their home. A Friends member who is good with excel should be put in charge of tracking donations and expenses. Ms. Schaller recommended not sending a save the date until January 4 as mail typically gets ignored during the holiday season. Ms. Keeler will start soliciting donations for the both the auction and sponsorships from local businesses during December. Ms. Grossman also mentioned that some popular silence auction items in the past include New England branded merchandise and vacation home rentals. Ms. Gregory recommended an advertisement in the Needham Times soliciting donations and volunteers in addition to the information in the Senior Notes column as recommended by Ms. Kelley. Ms. Schaller mentioned that the Hometown Weekly could run an advertisement for a month. Ms. Moss and Ms. Relich noted that there is a good acapella singing group as well as some other performing arts groups at the high school who could be invited to perform and a similar group of 4th and 5th grade Honors students. Student performances can reduce the entertainment budget and increase attendance by parents whose children perform at the event.

A presentation on the purpose of the fundraiser is critical; the funds will go to offset the contributions from the Town for fitness center operation in fiscal 2020 and 2021 including salaries. In 2023 the entire cost of the fitness center will be supported by the Town. The Friends agreed at their last Board meeting to borrow from the enrichment fund for the 2020 and 2021 years but this event and future fundraising will be used to replenish the fund. It is critical to present the reason for the fundraising and why the money is not completely covered by the town. The Friends also want to make the fundraiser an annual event to cover future programming needs so the current publicity needs to include that the fundraising is both for the fitness center as well as programming both now and beyond 2022.

Several Board members also mentioned that it was important to draw attendees from other than seniors. In addition to parents of possible student group entertainment, the invitation should be modeled on the Exchange Club which mails separate flyers to the business community and residents.

Mr. Goldberg made a motion to approve the October 10 minutes. Ms. Grossman seconded. The October 10 minutes were unanimously approved.

Ms. Latanya Steele Director's Report

Ms. Steele noted

- All of the staff working on the annual report for Mr. McDonald, Director of Health and Human Services
- A pre-budget meeting occurred; the summary included primarily the increased cost of the newsletter
- A second custodian is in the budget. Ms. Steele is meeting with HR to see if the second custodian position could be combined with the building monitor role at a higher pay rate; the monitor role has gone unfilled since it currently pays only \$13.00 an hour.
- Upgrades to IT will occur between January 8 and 12; this will assist greatly with the tax programs. The upgrade will include a switch from Comcast to Verizon.
- Health Insurance/Medicare questions have been very busy over the last month
- Ms. Steele noted that Needham is one of the two busiest COA's in the State of Massachusetts; based on the length of the Compass at 32 pages. The Saturday programming data is being kept very carefully; for example the cooking demonstration ran out of food as 25 attendees came but only 14 signed up.
- Mr. Grably performed CPR on a senior who was choking so he saved a life.

A discussion ensued on the best method/protocol for future registrations because there were 2400 people on the first day. The Board will discuss and then vote at a future meeting on prioritizing Needham residents. The Board recommended surveying current participants to determine if different days and times will effect current registrants or might open slots to new people. Ms. Gregory also noted that the Board needs data on sign up numbers and how many registrants are from out of town to inform the sign up discussion especially on behalf of Needham tax payers. Ms. Steele noted that some classes are simply popular such as yoga and registrants would come no matter when it was offered. Mr. Cosgrove recommended looking at class numbers specifically for popular classes.

There was a meeting November 13 to discuss snow removal at Avery for participant use. It will be trialed. It was noted that the original building plans included use of Avery parking to handle the

anticipated overflow at the CATH. Mr. McDonald, Director of Health and Human Services, is examining signage for the Avery lot. Ms. Schaller mentioned that the Board and/or the Division of Health and Human Services might have to eventually bring the letter of intent re: Avery parking use to the planning board but that discussion can occur at a later date.

Ms. Steele noted that Ms. Kelley had to leave early as well as the two SHINE counselors but both areas are going well. Ms. Steele noted that Ms. Kelley's estate planning workshop was specifically noted as not being endorsed by the Council on Aging; Ms. Schaller is concerned about business solicitation. Ms. Steele and Ms. Moss noted they do keep lists of at least three financial planners. Mr. Cosgrove recommended having these lists available at any future financial planning or estate planning workshops to avoid any sense that the COA is recommending a particular firm or individual.

Accessory Dwelling Units

Ms. Schaller and Ms. Gregory attended the meeting. The measure passed Town Meeting by a large majority.

Mr. Stephan Grably, Transportation Report

Mr. Grably distributed the new shuttle schedule which began November 6. He noted that the shuttle van carries 8 and the small car 2 to 3. So far 4 seniors have used but in the spring he expects an uptick in usage. He provided a vehicle cost overview including \$6000.00 to \$7000.00 per year for fuel. He will update these figures for future Board meetings. Mr. Grably distributed a copy of the shuttle brochure.

There are signs in the van noting a dashcam is in use; so far no clients have complained about either the camera or the sound. Mr. Grably noted he would be concerned if the drivers were concerned about using this technology.

Ms. Jessica Moss, Social Worker, Volunteer and Programming Update

Ms. Moss noted her new position involves being in charge of volunteers. She has conducted two volunteer meetings so far with a goal of matching what the COA/CATH needs are against the volunteers' skills and interests. Five new volunteers have started.

SOAR was well attended and she may try to have the meetings either quarterly or twice a year. Ms. Moss is thinking of breaking the group into smaller subsections as the needs of the gift shop for example are very different from the front desk.

Ms. Moss also provided a brief update on programming in Ms. Kelley's absence; this included the Lunch and Learn on bullying which will involve a follow up with Jewish Family Services. A new program will start with a grant from the Massachusetts Council on Aging Association that will be an 8 week program on teaching resiliency in older adults during the spring.

Ms. Moss noted that the entire social work staff has noticed that Housing Authority residents are hesitant to come to the Center at the Heights for various reasons. So the staff will bring four programs to them in January and February. The hope is to entice Housing Authority representatives to come to the CATH. This may lead to more educational programming at the Housing Authority in the spring -- for example mental health workshops-- if the first lighter programming draws a good response.

November 21 Thanksgiving Luncheon

This is the date for the Thanksgiving luncheon. The staff and the Exchange Club and Board volunteers may be asked to park at Avery and the van will also park there to assist with ferrying guests back and forth; there will be temporary signage for this event. One hundred and twenty five people are signed up and there is a wait list of ten. The maximum number that the CATH can accommodate is one hundred and twenty five.

Ms. Steele asked for Board volunteers to ride the van and especially the shuttle to provide insight into the operations.

A reminder that the remaining meeting dates for 2019-2020 are December 12, January 9, February 13, March 12, April 9, May 14, and June 11.

Mr. Cosgrove made a motion to adjourn at 6:20 pm. Ms. Relich seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Board adjourned at 6:20 pm.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted,

Faith Crisley

Recording Secretary