

## **Needham Council on Aging Board Meeting**

**September 23, 2021**

**Present:** Colleen Schaller, Chair; Dan Goldberg, Sue Mullaney,, Helen Gregory, Ed Cosgrove, Lianne Relich, Carol deLemos,

**COA:** Ms. Latanya Steele, Director, Jessica Moss, Social Work, Aicha Kelley, Programming

**Meeting called to order by Ms. Schaller Board Chair at 5:03 pm combination of in person and on Zoom**

### **Jessica Moss, Social Work Report**

There has been a delay in hiring so Kristen Linley has stayed on 19.5 hours per week working from Washington State where she moved to be closer to family. We have a continuing intern Jess Rice and a new intern Franny McBrien both from Boston University who have been great. Lunch room will be reopening October 4; up to now the seniors have been able to grab from the delivery truck. The van drivers have been stretched to do deliveries.

### **Programming Update-Ms. Steele**

Many programs will remain on Zoom due to transportation issues. Also, with the State reopening sooner than originally planned it will take all summer to ramp up programs to be fully operational including lunch on site in September. The survey showed many people wanted hybrid programming and they liked Zoom. We can host more participants for example in current events 65 on Zoom than capacity of the parking will allow. This group may transition to two sessions.

July 6 will be a soft opening with cookies and fruit platters. A grand reopening will be in September when everyone has returned from vacation. Ms. Schaller mentioned to avoid September 17 as that is the Friend's banquet date. Mr. Goldberg mentioned to avoid September 6 Labor Day, and September 7 and 15th which are Jewish holidays.

Meal program will remain off site using the vans to deliver until early or mid-August. Game and Fitness rooms will be open in the summer.

Ms. Steele mentioned that it is a Board decision to restrict or limit registration programming dates to non-residents based on her discussion with other directors at regional meetings.

The transition continues to My Rec for on-line registration.

Ms. Steele mentioned Board meetings will be decided over the summer in conjunction with Ms. Schaller and Ms. Arenda. They will be sent out with the minutes prior to the September meeting.

Ms. Steele mentioned that are not allowed to ask about vaccination history. Mr. McDonald noted that the vaccination history is part of protected health information. He noted that percentage of residents who has been vaccinated in Needham is very high. 69% of town is fully vaccinated; 82% of town have had at least 1 dose. Residents who are 65 or older in Needham have a 95% vaccination rate of at least one dose.

**Needham Against Racism Initiative** Mr. McDonald presented. A man named Mr. Marvin Henry was detained by Needham Police in January 2020; he had not stolen property out of CVS and was held for an

unreasonably long period of time. Select Board assembled a committee to look at the climate, diversity and equity in the Town government and policies. Two Select Board members, several invited participants but no other Boards were involved. The Board of Health addressed at their June 9 meeting, that they were frustrated not to be included previously and wants to be included going forward as health parity is an important part of the equation. One Initiative goal is to be as open and inclusive as possible. Mr. McDonald noted that the goals are ambitious but starting to work towards them is quite doable. He noted the request from the Town was for the COA Board to support or adopt the practices so that their input can be sought as goals more forward. Mr. Cosgrove thinks it is an important initiative and noted it is important to address everything we can in town government to support this issue. There was some concern about the language in the proposal. Health Board had agreed in principle but wished to produce their own version of the statement. The concerns are that to achieve the goals it requires a certain amount of resource commitment that may or may not be available immediately; and Health certainly supports the overall objective. Mr. Cosgrove noted the COA should look at its budget and resources. The Board will examine the resources at hand both budget and operations at the fall meetings. **A motion to support in general the work of the Needham Against Racism Initiative was moved by Ms. Relich. Ms. Mullaney seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve to support in general the Initiative.** Ms. Schaller said the proposal will be examined in more detail at its September meeting.

### **Chairperson's Report**

Ms. Schaller noted that two Board Member positions are open-- Gary Crossen who just noted he would not return for 2021-2022 and the Veteran's position which has been open since spring 2020. Ms. Schaller has passed on the needs to the Select Board. She asked the COA Board to recommend anyone they knew to her. Mr. McDonald noted that the Board job descriptions were still being worked on but should be ready over the summer. Mr. McDonald will pass on the final version to Ms. Steele who will pass onto Ms. Schaller with the goal of a full Board in September.

Ms. Schaller said she would call an emergency Board meeting with 3 members if there were issues around reopening/other summer emergencies. Mr. Goldberg and Ms. Relich volunteered. Ms. Schaller will speak with Ms. Grossman as the third potential member.

Ms. Mullaney mentioned asked if the Board should vote on limiting programming to Needham residents. A discussion ensued. Mr. McDonald noted that Park & Recreation has limited the number of non-residents but not eliminated their participation. The Board seemed to think we should keep it open to nonresidents in the summer and then reexamine. My rec when implemented will be able to sort Needham from non-Needham residents for data collection purposes. Two Board members noted that some visitors are former Needham residents who have sold their homes and now live in apartments in adjoining towns. The goal is to be inclusive and not exclude for example this population. Also, it was noted that the new Dedham Senior Center is opening soon and that may be attractive to people who attend from Dedham. Ms. Mullaney noted that we need to examine our mission and match it against the value statement if we were going to consider changing our procedures. Ms. Steele will check with the regional directors to see how their Boards are handling priority registration for residents and update the Board over the summer as well on the fitness center usage numbers. This discussion can be continued in the early fall meetings.

**Ms. Relich made a motion to adjourn at 6:05 pm. Mr. Goldberg seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Board adjourned at 6:06 pm**

Minutes Respectfully Submitted, Faith Crisley, Recording Secretary