

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

**May 12, 2022**

**Present:** Colleen Schaller, Chair; Helen Gregory, Penny Grossman, Sandra Prinn, Carol DeLemos, Ed Cosgrove, Dan Goldberg, Sue Mullaney, Kathy Whitney, Ted Prorok, VFW representative, Michelle Gucciardi SHINE Director

**COA:** Latanya Steele, Director, Jessica Moss, Social Work

SHINE: Michelle Gucciardi, Director; Amy Gomes Assistant Director

**Meeting called to order by Ms. Schaller, Board Chair at 5:09 pm combination of in person and on Zoom**

### **SHINE Report, Ms. Michelle Gucciardi, Director**

Ms. Gucciardi introduced the new Assistant Director who started on April 19, 2022. Her name is Emilihana (Amy) Gomes. She most recently worked at Somerville/Cambridge Elder Services and brings to the Shine table experience with Mass Health. She is now training on Medicare issues and is happy to be with SHINE.

Ms. Gucciardi noted the first in person counselor training in two years took place at the beginning of April. Eleven new trainees attended. Current counselors are in the process of recertifying.

The grant to have Needham host SHINE for another 6-year term was submitted to the State on May 4. This is the reprocurement process mentioned in April with the State Office of Elder Affairs; Ms. Gucciardi should know the outcome for the June Board meeting.

### **Director's Report- Ms. Latanya Steele**

The best news is Ms. Steele has returned to the office!

Ms. Moss prepared the social work report, and the Board had no questions re: the report.

Ms. Steele noted programming both online and in person are extremely busy. Ms. Mullaney asked about the Senior Assessment Study conducted with Ms. Lynn Schoeff, Public Health. Ms. Steele noted an upcoming planning meeting and a quick planned turnaround.

Ms. Schaller requested that for 2022-2023 meeting cycle that assistant directors attend the Board meetings as occurred pre-COVID. She also requested that Ms. Toth, the administrative assistant send the board packet and minutes routinely at a future date.

### **Community Project Submitted by Three Rising Seniors at the High School**

Ms. Steele received an email from the students today. They had met with Ms. Kelley earlier in May. Their senior project proposal is modeled on a similar Natick project. The goal is a cabinet for nonperishable food items, toiletries, and paper goods "grab and go" for the CATH seniors. It is not the same audience as the Needham Community Council food pantry which has income rules. They envision Needham resident donations.

An extensive discussion ensued. The Board agreed they need an updated written proposal before the June meeting to review and encouraged the three seniors to attend the June Board to answer questions.

Most Board members liked the idea as food and other items are routinely left by seniors in the café area. Concerns are: Outdoor cabinet is susceptible to freezing and a rodent problem. By whom and how often would the cabinet be supplied and out of date items disposed of? What is the intended audience and what is the need the students are attempting to address? The Board agreed an outdoor cabinet cannot be secured against weather, rodent, and vandalism issues but they are open to an indoor cabinet location.

### **Transportation Report**

Ms. Steele noted that there is a large driver shortage in general and the COA pays much less than the schools which compounds the shortage. Ms. Schaller will conduct research as to the pay differential between the COA buses and school buses of a comparable size and address Mr. Prorok's concern that it might be a vehicle class issue. She will also meet with Mr. Beard who is driving for the COA but retiring from the schools in June. Ms. Mullaney noted her understanding is the Town hires the small school bus van drivers, but the large buses are operated by an outside contractor.

### **Minutes**

**Ms. Schaller requested a motion to approve minutes of April 14.** Ms. Mullaney made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Cosgrove seconded. The Board approved with one abstention (Ms. Grossman who did not attend the April meeting).

### **Update on Housing Initiative, Helen Gregory**

Ms. Gregory noted the next meeting is May 26. The subgroups have regular meetings, and she remains open to suggestions. Both she and Mr. Cosgrove have been approached by Reg Foster the Chair of the Needham Housing Authority Board and he wants to develop a closer working relationship. The Housing Authority is preparing a major proposal to modernize the housing both for capacity and accessibility. He is collaborating with the new interim executive director.

There is a desire to have a plan for townhouses to replace the one level housing, but the main issue is where residents would live while construction occurs. Ms. Steele noted there has been programming by the COA at Housing and a new request for a conflict resolution class.

Ms. Prinn noted she is the official representative to the Housing Authority Board but has not heard from them recently. Ms. Schaller noted if anyone reaches out, she will attend their meeting and see what is needed to keep the two Boards up to date on ongoing COA activities and programming.

### **Board Appointment Update**

Several Board members may need to be reappointed. There is a new application form that needs to be emailed to Myles Tucker, Kate Fitzpatrick's assistant. Ms. Schaller will forward the email to anyone who needs it at their request.

### **VFW Representative, Ted Prorok**

The transfer station is working toward a flag disposal area. Mr. Prorok met with the transfer station director and has brought his questions to the VFW Board. Mr. Prorok will pass the feedback back after the next VFS Board meeting. He will report to the Board in June on progress towards the disposal box.

Ms. Schaller noted the COA is open to a disposal box at the CATH.

Jason Kravets is the new Town of Needham Care of Graves and Coordinator of Ceremonies and will attend his first Memorial day remembrance in the role on May 30. Mr. Prorok will speak with him on the possible acceptance of new flags that seniors need to dispose of as they downsize.

### **Senior Parking Passes Update**

Ms. Schaller noted that the town does not have a need for senior parking passes as any pay parking is street meters. However, it was noted by Mr. Goldberg that with many fewer people taking the commuter rail this may be the time to ask for some of those spaces to be returned for CATH parking. A discussion also ensued on resigning the Hillside street parking from West Street to the entrance which seems to seasonally disappear.

### **Town Meeting Update**

The article for the \$70,000.00 space study for the Center at the Heights passed. The study will occur in in 2022-2023. Bids to approved State vendors will go out soon.

A needs discussion ensued. One issue is the fitness and gaming room. An expanded fitness area is needed but that means reconfiguring the lesser used gaming space.

Ms. Steele noted the study will include reconfigured office space.

The Board discussed the roof deck. It is too cold in the winter and too hot in the summer in its current configuration, but the Board feels strongly they do not want to lose their one outdoor space. Two ideas for the consultant to include in their study is several types of awnings and reconfiguring to a three-season porch concept.

**Mr. Goldberg made a motion to adjourn; Ms. Gregory seconded this motion. The board unanimously adjourned at 6:10 pm**

Respectfully Submitted,

Faith Crisley

Recording Secretary