

**Wellesley Council on Aging
Board Meeting Retreat
July 16, 2015**

Location: Babson College, Luksic Hall, Room 108

In Attendance: Jean Boyle, Sandy Budson, Diane Campbell, Tom Kealy, Gerry Kelley, Miguel Lessing, Sr. Alice McCourt, Bill Murphy, Shirley Quinn, Terri Tsagaris, Dianne Sullivan, Associates Lisa Heyison. Staff: Gayle Thieme and Elizabeth Bradley. Marjorie Freiman served as facilitator.

Miguel Lessing called the meeting to order at 9:02am.

Miguel introduced Selectperson Marjorie Freiman as the retreat facilitator and confirmed that the objective for the retreat is to agree on major action items for FY16.

Mission Statement and the Strategic Plan

Marjorie explained that the COA mission statement would not be discussed at this meeting. She encouraged the board to refer back to the strategic plan to ensure it is on the right path and moving ahead in the correct direction. She described the current mission statement as hefty, encompassing many values while focusing on serving the Wellesley community of seniors. The more specific the values are, the more likely they are to be achieved.

Marjorie described the way to create and execute a strategic plan is to think of it as a pyramid. At the top is the vision with the ultimate aspiration – the ideal goal - the COA has for the whole community. The definition of the mission - values COA will live by - follows. Goals, Objectives Strategies and Tactics complete the pyramid. Marjorie stressed that terminology does matter and encouraged Board members to learn the distinctions between these terms so that the entire team is on the same page. She explained:

- **Goals:** what we would like to accomplish. The Strategic Plan 10 goals have been consolidated into 5 to sharpen the focus.
- **Objectives:** Generally start with an action verb and are set with a baseline from which to make the progress **precise** and **measurable**. Objectives must be **SMART**: 1-specific, 2-measurable, 3-attainable, 4-relevant and 5-timed.
- **Strategies:** Explain the why to do something. Each strategy should identify specific community changes and rate these considering their **importance** to the mission and is their **feasibility**. By grading the strategies, the board should set priorities at the start of the year.
- **Tactics (Action Items):** The specific things that are done to achieve a strategy: they should be sequential in helping you reach the objectives.

After some clarifications in response to questions, the group divided into three groups to identify three major action items for FY16 on the basis of the Strategic Plan and the characterizations described above. Marjorie explained the assignment meant collapsing the pyramid and tease out what specific things we are targeting. Marjorie mentioned the importance of reaching a consensus on 3 impactful action items to align the board's efforts and those of the staff.

Recommendations offered by the three panels:

1. TPC: Organize the campaign for a town vote (key players and partners, talking points, timeline)
2. Data: Collect data through MSC and survey monkey. Simplify registration
3. Transportation: Engage a consultant to identify the best way to utilize our resources and improve the existing services.
4. Marketing: Use marketing tools to encourage more program participation. Test incentives to increase participation.
5. Make more efficient use of MSC software. Collect statistical data to obtain demographic data on participation to guide decision-making. Contact Wellesley IT Department. MSC support group. Identify agencies and funding sources for grant applications. Find a volunteer to assist with grant applications
6. Become amore effective & efficient organization. Train COA staff and board members on MSC to fullest extent. Integration of town depts. And community. Promote staff and professional development. Data collection & analysis. Efficient and more effective board meetings
- 7 Communication and visibility for a better image. Attention to all publications. Newsletter: update, reorganize, articulate a focus for each issue (example: volunteerism)
- 8 Make TPC a reality. Outreach, Visibility, Mount a campaign to make TPC a reality

Marjorie opened the floor for discussion with the goal of narrowing down these action items for the coming year. She indicated that the recommendations offered by the three groups had a lot in common.

Tolles-Parsons Center

Gerry Kelley suggested focusing on PR and marketing. Marjorie explained that using the TPC as an action item would increase awareness for the COA and that this is very much intertwined with PR and marketing within the community.

1. Expertise; someone who knows the constituencies and can pull on the town residents' resources. Marjorie suggested starting with an idea web of who can help and how they can be involved.
2. Identify the components of a campaign.
3. Identify a team.

4. Branding and the COA image within the community (social media and printed publications). Gayle added that this would require constant updating to keep relevance and freshness. Marjorie suggested a relevant time to do this would be when moving into the TPC, to make the biggest “splash”.

Maximizing Resources for Data Collection – My Senior Center

Lisa Heyison mentioned we should be using the software to the fullest extent. Lisa referenced her time working with the Somerville COA and how this system is a phenomenal way to collect data, although it does still require “cleaning up” when a senior forgets his/her card or doesn’t sign in. Gayle explained that we have the capability to use the touch screen and handheld scanners to record participation and attendance, but are not currently doing so. This would also improve accuracy for annual reporting. Diane Campbell inquired about using the software for registration and Gayle pointed out that we would still need to use walk-in and telephone registration to accommodate seniors who do not have the capability to use technology. Gayle suggested a kick-off session to introduce the software and request a MSC staff member be on-site. Marjorie drilled down to action items for maximizing resources in My Senior Center:

1. Speak to other COAs. Communication and roll-out of new program.
2. Training and analysis using tracking and planning.
3. Gayle suggested adding registration. Sr. Alice McCourt suggested adding the payment aspect of registration to the discussion.
4. Sandy Budson advocated the need for an IT consultant who could assist with MSC related issues, pointing out the challenge of the associated costs.

Marjorie noted how critical data collection can be to the 5 SP goals. They are all related and impact each other.

Communications

Diane Campbell brought up the idea of improving print and online items. Gayle noted that there are other outlets we could be unaware of or missing out on.

1. Inventory of existing means of communication
2. Short-term opportunities.
3. Expand tech vehicles
4. Formalize and strengthen relationships with town boards and groups. Gayle suggested operating more collaboratively (i.e., COA, Recreation and Library all offer yoga). Marjorie suggested leveraging these by meeting with both departments/competing programs to create one cooperative opportunity.
5. Review current COA publications. Gayle brought up *Highlights* and the alternatives to using LPI.
6. Focus on staff development for this objective as well as all other. Create a challenging, rewarding and enjoyable environment for the staff’s continuity.

Enrollment

1. Expand target groups: LGBT, Widowed, Younger groups, Men
2. Incentives: Buddy system, Discounts & Rewards

Transportation

Concern over the lack of a holistic strategy to address the options that we offer and others that exist.

1. Assess options controlled by COA
2. Brainstorm other options
3. Find expertise for consult.
4. Issue of having two separate databases.

Results of voting: TPC – 11, Maximizing resources using MSC – 10, Communication – 7, Enrollment – 3, Transportation – 2

Other business:

After Marjorie tallied the votes, Miguel opened the floor to discuss the proposed FY16 board meetings schedule. Moving the meetings to 4:00pm received a favorable reception and was agreed. At that hour, Marjorie would be able to attend as BOS liaison to the COA.

Sr. Alice voiced a concern that she did not know if associate members were welcome or invited to attend today's retreat. She asked that it be clarified before the August 10th meeting. Miguel confirmed that associate members are welcome, as board meeting are open to the public.

Miguel concluded the meeting by thanking Marjorie and presenting her with a gift.

At 12:38pm, the meeting was adjourned.