

**Council on Aging Minutes of May 20, 2021
Online Remote Board Meeting**

This meeting will be aired live on Comcast 8 and Verizon 40, and will be available on demand the following morning. When two meetings are being held simultaneously, the second meeting will be live on Channel 9 or Verizon 39. Also, meeting agendas are posted on wellesley.ma.gov at least 48 hours prior to the meeting, and protocol for participating in Citizen's Speak is at the bottom of that agenda.

Members Present: Marlene Allen, Chair; Tony Parker, Vice Chair; Susan Rosefsky, Secretary; Liz Becker (joined at 4:08); Tory DeFazio; Lori Ferrante; Bob Ferrell; Gerry Hume; Tom Kealy; Dianne Sullivan; and Kathleen Vogel

Absent: None

Also Present: Heather Munroe, Director of Senior Services; Gregory Wilson, Assistant Director of Senior Services; Tom Harrington (joined at 4:45pm), Town Counsel; and Maurica Miller (joined at 4:48pm), Counsel

Meeting Documents:

- Agenda
- Minutes of April 15, 2021
- Director's Report including:
 - Plexiglass Quote
 - FY21 Operating Checkbook
 - FY22 Estimated Impact Amounts
 - Survey Results
 - Reopening Plan – Revised May 2021
 - Fitness Class Guidelines
 - Lunch Policy
 - Revolving Funds & Pilot Policy
 - Fitness Class Feedback March/April – Survey Results
 - Fitness Class Feedback March/April – Series Evaluations
- Fitness Instructor Compensation Matrix

I. Call to Order:

Ms. Allen, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm. There was a Roll Call for attendance.

Ms. Allen reminded listeners that they can bring feedback and ideas to the Board through the Community Sessions and the Citizen Speak portion at Board meetings. Ms. Allen asked that speakers voice feedback and ideas with civility and honorable motivation reiterating that patron comments on specific agenda items may be limited to a total of 15 minutes, unless in a public hearing. Additionally, Ms. Allen explained that the Board would discuss but not vote on the reopening plan and the revolving fund policy this evening. In the future, all policy first read policy drafts will be identified as separate agenda items to alert the public and allow for proper reflection of discussion in the minutes.

II. Citizen Speak:

The Board heard from Judith O'Connor, Karen Melican, Barbara Offenhartz, Liza Schaeffer, Rise Shepsle, and Gloria Zalosh, members of the public, relative to the Mixed Yoga class.

Judith O'Connor, 11 Oak St. Ms. O'Connor spoke about Mixed Yoga, asking to keep the status quo of \$10 a class due to the excellent instructor.

Karen Melican, 3 Colburn Rd. Ms. Melican spoke about Mixed Yoga and expressed that she is willing to pay the \$10 fee per class due to the quality of knowledge, expertise, and instruction the instructor provides. Ms. Melican hopes the COA can make exception to let class continue for the small but strong group of students, or it would be a great loss.

Barbara Offenhartz, 9 Smith St. Ms. Offenhartz spoke about Mixed Yoga and informed the Board that she has been a faithful student of Judy for 23 years. Ms. Offenhartz expressed that there is no other program that equals Judy's program, highlighting the variety, individual attention, and intellectual reasoning the instructor presents that is most needed by the students that take her class.

Liza Schaeffer, 18 Priscilla Cir. Ms. Schaeffer spoke about Mixed Yoga, explaining that she found Judy's classes small and long enough when they were 1.5 hours, and they helped her with her chronic pain. Ms. Schaeffer spoke highly of the instructor, who provided individual care and attention, allowing Ms. Schaeffer to learn much about her body and integrate that knowledge into her life. Ms. Schaeffer explained that the instructor's fee schedule at the COA is half the amount of her normal fees, and Ms. Schaeffer believes that the normal rate is more than reasonable. Ms. Schaeffer also expressed having a shocking and distressing experience with the schedule changes and the prospect of a larger class, expressing that putting seniors through this continuous assault is incomprehensible. Ms. Schaeffer reiterated that the instructor cares about her students and asked the COA to at least continue the hour long class for \$10 with a limit on the amount of students.

Rise Shepsle, 35 Forest St. Ms. Shepsle spoke about Mixed Yoga and believes that the COA has served seniors well since the opening of the Tolles Parsons Center (TPC). Ms. Shepsle explained that she has been a longtime Yoga student, but is new to Judy's class and is impressed by Judy's knowledge and commitment to students. Ms. Shepsle offered her support for this class in particular, said to look out for additional opportunities for these types of services in town, and said it was important to try to accommodate needs of this instructor and the wishes of her students.

Gloria Zalosh, 20 Rockland St. Ms. Zalosh spoke about Mixed Yoga, expressing that all of the students are passionate about the class and instructor. Ms. Zalosh explained that the class is catered to individualized needs and said that students are more than willing to pay \$10 for the class. Ms. Zalosh asked the COA to please make an exception to the \$5 fee.

III. Meeting Minutes:

Minutes of the April 15, 2021 meeting were reviewed. An edit was found on page six under Reports and Updates, line two, which should read, "...to determine the slate of Board officers for July 1, 2021." An additional edit was found on page three, line three, regarding the vote to approve the revised January 21, 2021 minutes, which should read, "...the motion passed, 10-1." A final edit was found on page two under the discussion of the January 21, 2021 revised minutes, paragraph two, line three, which should read, "Ms. Allen stated that the minutes conveyed the discontent..."

A motion was made by Bob Ferrell and seconded by Kathleen Vogel to accept the minutes of the April 15, 2021 meeting as amended with the above mentioned edits. In a Roll Call vote by Members Present named above, the motion passed unanimously, 11-0.

IV. Director's Report:

Highlights of the report included:

- Finances
- Operations
- Policies

A. Finances

I. FY21 Budget Update

The current operating budget balance is approximately \$109,000, which includes \$72,000 in salaries, indicating about 76% of the budget being expended. Current estimates indicate that the entire salaries budget will be used and may go slightly over. Additional costs were incurred this year with bills assistance and training as well as from using Robert Half services for the Department Assistant position. Updates regarding the closure of the fiscal year will be provided at the next meeting.

It was clarified that the report attachments include a balance for maintenance on the COA bus, which should include a \$1,000 charge from the insurance company and a charge for the battery, as well as a balance for gasoline. It was also clarified that we may go over budget under personal services, but there is enough in the operating expenses to cover the difference. Additionally, it was clarified that for Equipment Maintenance, the money was budgeted for MySeniorCenter hardware upgrades, and the Equipment Maintenance/Repair Supplies was meant for coffee, fitness, and other machinery maintenance. Finally, it was clarified that while the COA has not taken on anyone from Robert Half directly at this time, the hourly rate to pay Robert Half is higher than paying a direct employee.

II. FY21 EOEI Budget Update

At this time, the COA is preparing to expend \$655.90/\$1,000 approved on card tables for the TPC. Mr. Wilson is working on buying a cart for the tables, and we have transferred \$1,475/\$1,950 to cover the Wellesley Media Programming costs. Pending confirmation from EOEI, it is understood that any unused EOEI funds can be carried forward and used in the next fiscal year without penalty.

III. Gift Acceptance (Vote)

An anonymous donation of \$15.00 was given to the Council on Aging general fund.

A motion was made by Kathleen Vogel and seconded by Tony Parker to accept this monetary gift given to the COA. In a Roll Call vote of Members Present named above, the motion passed unanimously, 11-0.

IV. FY22 EOEI Proposed Budget (Vote)

Ms. Munroe is seeking advanced COA Board approval on EOEI expenditures for FY22. The proposal, which can be amended, will provide guidance and security to plan for the operations of programs and activities beyond the usual scope into FY22. The FY22 EOEI budget could be

reduced to a total of \$62,253 if the amount awarded is \$9 per senior, and \$42,600 is appropriated to offset the FY22 budget, which leaves us with \$19,653; \$153 is unaccounted for at this time.

A breakdown of the proposed allocations is as follows:

- Wellesley Media Programming - \$5,000;
- Event/Holiday/Social Programs - \$5,000;
- Fitness Class Guideline Offset - \$5,000;
- Activities Additional Supplies - \$2,500;
- Fitness Center Supplies - \$1,000; and
- Volunteer Appreciation - \$1,000.

It was clarified that the operating budget allocation of \$42,600 was determined after the COA switched to using MWRTA for transportation scheduling and is an offset off of the salaries line. Ms. Allen explained that MCOA may provide less money per senior, but based on projections, Ms. Munroe indicated that it may result in a \$3,000 difference. Mr. Kealy raised concerns that the number of seniors used in this proposed budget calculation will not accurately reflect the actual number based on the upcoming census results and suggested paying for food out of the program and activities line. It was clarified that Town money should not be used for food. It was also clarified that within the past year, the COA has spent \$19,000 on senior programming, which is the highest amount ever spent on programming, and this proposed EOE budget will allow the programs and activities staff to allocate all the necessary funds for programming, food, etc.

A motion was made by Kathleen Vogel and seconded by Lori Ferrante to approve the FY22 EOE budget. In a Roll Call vote of Members Present named above, the motion passed unanimously, 11-0.

B. Operations

I. Reopening Plan Update/Modifications

The COA will continue operations in June as planned, except that any program scheduled outside will move to the multipurpose room in the event of inclement weather. The TPC will open up in July, but lectures and fitness classes will still be online at that time. The Director and Program and Activities team will meet with fitness class instructors to obtain feedback on remote vs. in-person classes, as some patrons have expressed excitement to return to the TPC, while others would like to remain online. Additionally, 10 patrons will be able to attend movie session at the TPC starting in June. In July, lunch and movies will be available on Wednesdays and Fridays at the TPC, coffee will be available in the café, and rooms will be available for drop-in use based on a schedule. Communications will be sent out to the public with more specifics as they become available, and in June, the staff will gradually move back to the office suite.

During discussion, it was clarified that social distancing guidelines are no longer required, as restrictions have been lifted. It was also clarified that, while cleaning of the building cannot happen as frequently as before, the reopening plan does outline cleaning protocols. Promoting outdoor activities will hopefully appeal to those still anxious about returning to the TPC in-person, and anyone feeling uncomfortable can still wear a mask.

II. Lunch/Meal Programs Update

The Lunch Program was launched at the beginning of May. For the first week, five participants signed up and, due to inclement weather, our bus driver had to deliver the meals. During the

second week, ten people signed up and eight people attended, and the bus driver delivered to the two people who were unable to attend. Currently, seven people are signed up for lunch on the 19th. At the end of the month, staff will work with the Friends for reimbursement. To date 22 people have signed up for lunches, 63% have paid full price, 27% have paid the subsidized (reduced) price, and 10% have received a lunch at no cost.

For the Hot Meal Program, a total of 120 meals were delivered in April, averaging 30 meals per week with a couple of recipients being added or removed from the list. The budget balance at the beginning of April was approximately \$6,500. Funding for the program is expected to continue through the end of June, and we are looking into funding through the Simons Fund to possibly continue the program through December.

III. Transportation Update

In April, our drivers delivered groceries from the food pantry to 13 households. We will continue to monitor usage of this service and look for any trends as vaccination rollouts continue. Additionally, the COA bus repairs are complete. Recently the battery was replaced, and a lettering error that has been identified on the side of the bus will be fixed. In April, there was a slight decrease in the number of operational days and an increase in ridership, trips, and the number of destinations compared to the previous months. In June, the only restriction on passengers is that they still have to wear masks.

During discussion, it was reiterated that the COA should continue to provide food pantry deliveries to those that need it. It was also clarified that the bus is from 2014, is at around 70,000 miles, and does not need to be replaced until 150,000 miles. It was also clarified that the Volunteer Driver Program will be re-launched in September/October, and we will look into the possibility of adding insurance from the Town. Additionally, it was clarified that at this time that volunteer drivers cannot be required to provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination, unless the Town or legal department suggests otherwise.

IV. Volunteer Programs Update

The phone pal program had 23 active patrons at the end of April, and the volunteers continue to provide positive feedback on the program. Volunteers are being contacted to gauge interest in continuing in the program through the summer and into the fall. In addition to lunch, the TPC will host activities on the patio throughout the summer. Additionally, there is a running list of volunteers interested in volunteering once the TPC is fully open, and our Volunteer Coordinator is vetting and processing them for when more opportunities arise. Last, appreciation cards were sent out to active volunteers, and the Volunteer Coordinator is planning an appreciation event in June or July.

C. Policies

I. Fitness Fee Schedule/Matrix (Vote)

Ms. Munroe presented a proposed fee schedule for Board approval which will provide guidance to COA staff on how to determine instructor rates as well as the costs of classes, which will fit into a flexible drop-in model. This matrix is meant to coincide with the proposed Fitness Class Programming Guidelines.

During discussion, it was clarified that the Programs and Activities team will use this matrix to help determine each individual instructor rate, which will then help to determine how much to charge for each class.

A motion was made by Gerry Hume and seconded by Bob Ferrell to approve the Fitness Instructor Compensation Matrix. In a Roll Call vote of Members Present named above, the motion passed 10-1. Mr. Kealy voted against the motion.

A motion was made by Mr. Kealy to keep the Mixed Yoga fee at \$10 per class. The motion was not seconded, and Ms. Munroe clarified that we are moving forward with charging \$10 per class already. Mr. Kealy asked again for a second for the Board to vote officially, and it was clarified that the Board was not willing to vote at this meeting. It was also clarified that motions always require a second in order to discuss, and the Mixed Yoga classes will have a \$10 charge in the next program cycle, so there is no need to vote on this topic.

It was clarified by the Board that the COA can move forward with drop-in classes.

II. Revolving Fund Policy (Effective July 1, 2021) (1st read)

This policy/procedure covers advance planning related to the annual reconciliation of the revolving fund with a goal of keeping the year-over-year carry forward balance manageably low and will allow the designation of available funds to be set aside for holding new programs/classes at no cost to participants, while building support and following for new programs.

During discussion, Ms. Sullivan requested that a definition of revolving fund be included in a heading titled "Authority." Additionally, it was clarified that free fitness classes are funded by a particular project code in the general revolving fund, separate from the general fund.

III. Fitness Class Programming Policy/Guideline (1st read)

Ms. Munroe presented guidelines regarding fitness classes, cancellation policies, compensation, and fees to assist the staff and the Board as the new fiscal year approaches. The guidelines cover the COA Board role, fitness classes advertised in the Newsletter, low enrollment, positive evaluations, contractual provisions for all fitness instructors, new classes/pilot programs, and long-term instructors and annual contracts. It was clarified that the Board would need to vote on any programs that fall outside of the guidelines and matrix before that program could run.

During discussion, positive feedback included the flexibility of the guidelines and the Board's ability to make decisions when required. Mr. Hume voiced concerns about timing if the Board needed to vote on a program outside the scope of the guidelines, and Ms. Munroe explained that it should not be an issue with how far in advance the Programs and Activities team plans. Concerns were also raised about the language indicating that programs with too low enrollment cannot continue until the following fiscal year, and it was suggested that the language around that piece be softened to allow for greater flexibility, especially if low enrollment occurs early on in a fiscal year. Dr. Ferrell suggested language indicating that programs with too low enrollment will be re-evaluated for a specified time period.

Mr. Kealy expressed concern that the guidelines do not consider the students in classes that may have lower enrollment, especially if seniors are willing to pay more to support the costs to run the class. Mr. Kealy expressed that he believes enough revenue from paid programming as a whole should cover classes that have low enrollment, and the guidelines should be centered on supporting the needs of the public. Ms. Allen expressed that the guidelines should promote a balance, supporting the idea of reallocating resources that will better serve more individuals when needed. Mr. Kealy urged the Board to consider what is being cancelled, who it would affect, and if cancelling raises any participant health concerns. Dr. Ferrell commented on the need for flexibility among the

different levels of commitment (the COA, instructor, and participants) with the understanding that commitment levels may change over time.

Ms. Sullivan asked for clarification on what is meant by “subsequent cycles,” and it was clarified that if a program experiences low enrollment for two program cycles in a row, the COA would need to intervene. It was also clarified that the Director can include deficit reports throughout the year to keep the Board continuously informed. It was also clarified that the section on instructor contracts should start as a guideline initially and can be converted into a policy at a later time. Ms. Sullivan expressed that the sections regarding instructor contracts should be policies. Additionally, it was clarified that, while revolving funds will be used to cover any deficits, \$5000 from the EOE budget should be allocated to this because of the uncertainty with drop-in classes. Drop-in classes mean that patrons can sign up for as many or few classes as they wish at any time.

Ms. Vogel highlighted the main intents of the guidelines, which are to establish flat rate costs for classes whenever possible, supplement where needed, and keep patron costs low. She also expressed that while there should be guidelines and boundaries for staff to follow, these guidelines need further refinement.

IV. Lunch Policy (Review Only)

Ms. Munroe submitted a formal Lunch Policy for the Board’s review. This policy tackles equality, equal access, and financial options for each participant and will be discussed and voted on at the next meeting.

Citizen Comments on Director’s Report Items

Ms. Allen invited Elaine Elliot, Regina Kealy, and Barbara Werner, members of the public, to speak in front of the Board regarding items on the Director’s Report.

Elaine Elliot, 27 Forest St. Ms. Elliot spoke about advantages of a \$10 fee for Mixed Yoga, such as contributing more to the revolving fund and funding pilot classes. She expects that when in-person classes resume, additional enrollment is expected and explained that eliminating those courses would disappoint 25-30 seniors that are willing to pay the higher fee. Ms. Elliot advised asking participants in a class at risk of being cancelled if they are willing to pay a higher rate and urged the COA to use the revolving fund for pilot classes and under-enrolled classes that people like.

Regina Kealy, 46 Lehigh Rd. Ms. Kealy had many positive things to say about the Mixed Yoga instructor, and she is always mindful of injuries people may have. She expressed that the instructor is very special and helps her work through any physical ailments she may have, and said that it would be upsetting if the COA did not keep the instructor.

Barbara Werner, 26 Howe St. Ms. Werner spoke in support of a board-approved exception to charge \$10 per class with less students. She spoke highly about the class and instructor, and said the \$10 fee is still a bargain given the level of instruction she receives.

V. Reports/Updates:

Ms. Allen explained that she spoke to Board members whose terms were ending, and out of the four members, Mr. Parker, Ms. Ferrante, and Ms. Sullivan requested that their names be submitted to Board of Selectmen for reappointment consideration, and they have all been reappointed. In addition, Gerry Hume is resigning from the Board June 30, leaving two openings to fill for July 1.

There are 12 residents interested in serving on the COA Board, from which the Select Board will fill the vacancies.

From the Nominating Working Group, Ms. Vogel said the group contacted existing board members to gauge interest in leadership positions. There was great future interest, and the proposed slate for FY22 is:

- Chair- Ms. Allen;
- Vice Chair- Mr. Parker; and
- Secretary- Ms. Rosefsky

Mr. Parker clarified that it was not his intent to continue as Vice Chair or to become the Chair and reiterated need to identify more people to take on leadership roles in the future.

From the Development Working group, Ms. Vogel indicated that a consensus on one type of card table was reached. Additionally, Ms. Vogel and Ms. Allen met with Mr. Wilson about the workstation for the Front Entrance Greeter, and will obtain more specific measurements before moving forward.

From the Transportation Working Group Ms. Vogel explained that the group is collaborating with Mr. Wilson on necessary and overdue policy work on HR management for drivers, safety, and accidents.

VI. Old Business/New Business:

Matters not anticipated by the Chair at the time of posting.

None

VII. Next meeting dates/time:

COA Board Meeting Thursday, June 17, 2021 at 4pm

VIII. Executive Session:

M.G.L. CH. 30A, § 21(a)(1). "To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual." Ms. Allen presented the single agenda item to approve the minutes from the Executive Session Minutes from April 1, 2021. Ms. Allen called for motion to go into executive session and only return to open session for the purpose of adjournment.

Mr. Kealy left the meeting at 6:20 pm.

A motion was made by Bob Ferrell and seconded by Kathleen Vogel to enter into Executive Session under Purpose 1 to discuss the minutes of the April 1, 2021 Executive Session, to invite Tom Harrington, Maurica Miller, Heather Munroe, and Gregory Wilson to attend the executive session, and to return to open session for the purposes of adjourning. In a Roll call vote by Members Present named above, the motion passed, 10-0.

Entered Executive Session at 6:21pm.

Returned to Open Session at 6:36pm.

X. Adjourn:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:37pm.