

Wellesley Council on Aging
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Tolles Parson Center
October 19th, 2023 @ 4 PM

PRESENT:

Kathleen Vogel (Chair), Susan Rosefsky (Secretary), Marlene Allen, Patty Chen, Lori Ferrante (arrived 4:16 PM), Robert McCarthy, Corinne Monahan, Tony Parker, Cynthia Sibold, Dianne Sullivan, and Tina Wang, Beth Sullivan Woods (COA Liaison to Board of Selectman), Deborah Greenwood (Director of Senior Services) and Frank Lam (Assistant Director of Senior Services)

CALL TO ORDER:

Kathleen Vogel (Chair) called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM.
Ms. Rosefsky announced the meeting is aired live on Comcast channel 8 and Verizon channel 40 and will be available on demand the following morning. When two meetings are being held simultaneously, the second meeting will be live on Comcast channel 9 or Verizon channel 39. Meeting agendas are posted on wellesleyma.gov at least 48 hours prior to the meeting, and protocols for participating in Public Speak appear within the agenda.

CITIZEN SPEAK:

No member of the community attended this meeting.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

September 21, 2023 - Meeting Minutes

After rectifying an omission by adding Beth Sullivan Woods to the attendance list and addressing a spelling error, Mr. Parker proposed a motion, seconded by Ms. Monahan. All members of the Board in attendance unanimously APPROVED the minutes for September 21, 2023.

September 26, 2023 - Retreat Meeting Minutes

Following a correction to Ms. Wang's arrival time in the attendance, Ms. Monahan presented a motion, seconded by Ms. Rosefsky. All present Board members unanimously APPROVED the minutes from September 21, 2023.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – presented by Ms. Greenwood

Finance – presented by Ms. Greenwood

Gift Acceptance:

\$400.00	Friends of the Wellesley COA	Oktober Fest 10/23
\$350.00	Friends of the Wellesley COA	Veteran's Day Event

\$250.00	Friends of the Wellesley COA	Day After Thanksgiving Event
\$1,500.00	Friends of the Wellesley COA	Norman Rockwell Bus 12/23
\$625.00	Friends of the Wellesley COA	Christmas Lunch
\$250.00	Friends of the Wellesley COA	Frank King Christmas Event
\$351.79	Friends of the Wellesley COA	Coffee Subsidy September 2023
\$605.00	Friends of the Wellesley COA	Lunch Subsidy September 2023
\$1,277.00	Friends of the Wellesley COA	Simons Lunch September 2023

Key Points:

- Gift requests are submitted to the Friends of the Wellesley COA (FWCOA) board several months ahead of upcoming events.
- FWCOA will contribute approximately \$1,800.00 per month for programming.
- Starting in November 2023, a summary of all gifts will be included in the report.

Ms. Allen put forth a motion to accept the donations as outlined in the director's report, which was seconded by Ms. Sibold. The Board unanimously APPROVED the donations.

Administration – presented by Ms. Greenwood

Key Points:

- In September, the Tolles Parson's Center welcomed 552 unique patrons.
- There were 1,550 in-person sign-ins from 441 distinct patrons.
- Lunch participation has risen to 218 individuals.
- Analysis of event attendance indicates that we have returned to pre-summer levels of participation.

Personnel - presented by Ms. Greenwood

Key Points:

- The COA Transportation service now has a complete team of drivers, allowing for additional events and shopping trips to be accommodated.

Building Update - presented by Ms. Greenwood

Key Points:

- We have replaced the emergency sign located between the office and the bathroom, ensuring compliance with fire code regulations.
- The kitchen plans designed by Crabtree & McGrath are ready for the Select Board's review on October 24, 2023.
 - Any questions for the Board should be submitted in advance.

- Ms. Allen's notes have been shared with the Board.
- Unfortunately, batteries for the automatic bathroom doors are currently on back order.
 - Ms. Vogel inquired if there are alternative sources for obtaining replacement batteries.
 - In response, Ms. Greenwood will follow up with FMD regarding equipment.

Discussion – Building Art

Ms. Chen asked whether a 3-month display period for art is too brief and inquired about the absence of art by Wellesley seniors.

In response, Ms. Greenwood mentioned that a 3-month duration provides ample time for more artists to showcase their work.

Ms. Sibold added that younger seniors highly value the chance to exhibit their art, highlighting the importance of fostering community engagement.

Ms. Vogel emphasized that increasing intergenerational activities aligns with our strategic goals.

Programing - presented by Ms. Greenwood

Key Points:

- 15% increase in programing from last year.

Transportation - presented by Mr. Lam

Key Points:

- Volunteer Driver Program (VDP) Update
 - We currently have 2 active volunteers.
 - We are still actively seeking additional volunteers to join the program.
 - Please note that we are only able to accept a limited number of ride requests currently.
- Bus
 - We have included three additional Beth Israel stops in Needham on our Medical route.
 - Ms. Allen inquired if there's a requirement to extend the COA bus schedule.
 - The response was that the request for the bus ride aligns with the current schedule.

Volunteers - presented by Ms. Greenwood

Key Points:

- We strongly recommend applying via the town's website.
- We also receive volunteers from Wellesley Friendly Aid and Wellesley Service League who assist with lunch and greeter roles.
- Sally Miller and Mr. Lam participated in the town's Volunteer Fair on October 1st and 2nd, 2023, where they identified more potential volunteers.
- The Wellesley League of Women Voters is hosting an event at the TPC on November 1st, 2023.

Operations - presented by Ms. Greenwood

Newsletter Change to Opt-in Delivery - presented by Ms. Greenwood

Key Points:

- The COA newsletter is distributed to over 4,000 households six times annually.
- There is no expense associated with producing the publication through LPI.
- The fee for the newsletter designer has recently risen by an additional \$100.
- The COA has initiated a campaign to update our participant database with their current email addresses.
- The approximate mailing cost for the newsletter is \$2,600.00 per cycle.

Discussion:

- Ms. Vogel raised a question about whether the contract with LPI requires renegotiation.
 - Ms. Greenwood responded that as per the contract terms, a 180-day notice would be necessary if we wanted to discontinue the newsletter. There would be no additional cost for altering the print volume or increasing the number of pages within the newsletter.

Ms. Allen emphasized the value of having newsletters delivered to homes where at least one senior resides. She believes this outreach approach helps attract individuals who haven't visited the center yet and ensures the newsletter is readily available when needed. She also suggested exploring electronic options, highlighting that it doesn't have to be an exclusive choice.

Mr. Parker pointed out that many COAs are moving in the direction of digital communication. While outreach is a part of the strategic plan, he emphasized that the modern world doesn't rely solely on physical mail.

In an informal straw poll conducted by the board, 10 out of the 11 members expressed a preference for opting in to receive the physical newsletter at their homes.

Ms. Wang proposed a different approach, suggesting an opt-in for an electronic version and an opt-out for the physical one, as some seniors may not read emails but still prefer a hard copy.

Ms. Vogel recommended running a campaign through the newsletter to allow individuals to opt-in or opt-out for receiving a hard copy. She raised several important questions: What's the reason behind this significant change? Is it primarily driven by financial or environmental considerations? The existing budget does not currently cover the increased mailing and newsletter design costs, and it's crucial to define what success and failure would look like in this context.

- Ms. Ferrante inquired about the vision for encouraging people to opt-in.
 - In response, Ms. Greenwood presented a sample flyer under the heading 'Future Newsletters,' indicating that action is required. The flyer requests individuals to update their email addresses and provides an option to continue receiving the paper newsletter.

Ms. Sullivan proposed conducting a survey of the patrons visiting the TPC within a defined time frame.

Ms. Monahan expressed her belief that a complete transition to digital communication is still a few years away.

Ms. Greenwood clarified that the intention is not to cease sending paper newsletters but to make it an opt-in service. Currently, the annual cost of mailing 4,200 newsletters is \$13,000. To put this into

perspective, the COA's budget for programming and activities is \$19,000. Additionally, the newsletter's graphic designer incurs an extra annual cost of \$5,000. If the COA were to continue sending the newsletter to everyone who participates in person or via Zoom, it would involve mailing approximately 500 copies.

- Question from Ms. Sullivan – What is the timeframe for possible transition?
 - A – Ms. Greenwood – We would be looking at March/April.

Ms. Sibold noted that this is a complex and multifaceted issue that involves outreach and inclusion, and it requires careful consideration. She expressed her trust in the staff making the right decisions.

Ms. Woods, from a marketing perspective, shared that most companies initially use an opt-out approach before transitioning to an opt-in one. She pointed out that it might be more challenging to engage people digitally than to send physical mail, as it could be perceived as an annoyance. She suggested reaching out to the Recreation department, as they had previously attempted a similar approach but had to return to mailing.

The Board expressed a desire for more information before deciding on a vote.

Building Update Kitchen presented by Ms. Greenwood

Key Points:

- The most recent document generated by Crabtree & McGrath is the feasibility study, which includes cost estimates.
- Ms. Allen noted the absence of a working group established to engage with FMD and Crabtree & McGrath to ensure that the final product aligns with everyone's expectations.
- As per Ms. Woods, the feasibility phase is now complete, and the next step in the process is to move into the design phase. The COA is required to make recommendations for budget requests at the Annual Town Meeting, including detailed cost estimates for bidding.
- Ms. Vogel pointed out that based on the timeline provided by FMD, the document received was supposed to be the study, followed by phase 2 feasibility planning with user feedback.
- The Board has been extended an invitation to attend the kitchen presentation to request additional funds from the Select Board on October 24, 2023.
- Despite a clear path for upgrading to a commercial kitchen, there has been a lack of communication with the Board.
- After voting to accept the Feasibility Study, work can commence on the design phase, allowing the Board to have a role in obtaining the necessary modifications.

Grant Update for Extended Hours this Spring - presented by Ms. Greenwood

Key Points:

- There has been no official word on this, but preliminary notification looks promising.
- We can also apply for other Grant application to Campana or New Era to pilot program of **extended hours**, regardless of approval from The Wellesley Community Fund.

Strategic Plan Report - Presented by Ms. Greenwood and Mr. Parker

Key Points:

- Drawing from information compiled by Ms. Greenwood, which encompasses the efforts of the Strategic Working Group and the prior Strategic Plan, along with outreach to other COAs, several common themes emerge:
 - Architecture = Growth
 - The Town is maturing.
 - Looking at growth of the kitchen, evening, weekends, staffing
 - Growth will be measured by data collected from My Senior Center software.
- Over the coming five years, our focus is directed toward optimizing space usage, expanding our program offerings, innovating in nutrition through kitchen expansion, fully leveraging the EOA Grant fund for programming, collaborating with the town to address Out of Guidelines Requests, and acquiring additional space.
- Goal and development
 - Outreach efforts
 - Enhancing participation and services to align with the expanding population.
 - Expanding our scope beyond senior activities
 - Promoting diversity and inclusion within Wellesley's diverse demographics
 - Exploring our contributions to the broader Wellesley community
- Communications and Branding Goals
 - Enhance our public relations efforts to raise awareness within the community regarding COA opportunities.
 - Collaborate with the communication manager.
 - Develop outreach initiatives targeting seniors and caregivers.
 - Foster a culture change to align with our values.
 - Present the age-friendly community concept, involving all the Boards in Wellesley. Improve transportation services.
- Proposal for another Retreat.
 - Proposed Date: December 11, 2023, from 2 PM to 5 PM
 - Generate a list of prioritized action items.
 - Prepare a presentation on constructing an Age-Friendly Community.
 - Formulate a Vision Statement.
 - The development of an Age-Friendly Community will serve as the central focus to help us achieve our other objectives.

Code of Conduct - Presented by Ms. Vogel

Postponed to November Board Meeting

Director of Senior Service APR Review – presented by Ms. Vogel

The postponement of this agenda item is necessitated by a delay in obtaining the aggregate score for the 2023 COA Board. The item has been rescheduled for October 24, 2023, at 6:00 PM via Zoom.

NEXT MEETING DATES:

Next monthly meeting of the Board: November 16, 2023, at 4:00 PM

ADJOURNMENT:

At approximately 6:14 pm, following a motion was put forward by Ms. Monahan seconded by Mr. McCarthy, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Lam

MEETING DOCUMENTS:

- COA Board Meeting Agendas
- Board Retreat Minutes 9.26.23
- Draft Meeting Minutes 9.21.23
- Director's Report October 2023

Approved 11/19/23