

Wayland Council on Aging

MINUTES

NOVEMBER 13, 2023 4:30 PM

ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING

FACILITATOR	Betsy Soule, Chair
NOTE TAKER	Mary Antes, Secretary
ATTENDEES	<u>COA Board Members Participating Remotely:</u> Mary Antes, Judy Currier, Carol Glick (4:34), Frank Kennedy, Becky Patterson, Ellen Scult, Betsy Soule, Denise Yurkofsky, and Julie Secord <u>COA Board Members Absent:</u> Bill Sterling <u>Guests:</u>
PUBLIC COMMENT	

Agenda Topics: Meeting Convened at 4:33pm

CALL TO ORDER

BETSY SOULE

DISCUSSION	Betsy called the meeting to order at 4:33pm by roll call and welcomed new board member, Judy Currier. Members introduced themselves and Judy described her background.
ACTION	

COA/COMMUNITY CENTER

FRANK KENNEDY

DISCUSSION	<p>Frank thanked Bill for his long-term dedication and leadership that is finally bringing to fruition a new senior center for the town, and to Julie for her patience and guidance. The contract has been signed and the project is shovel ready. The price, which came in under-budget, includes three alternates: a metal roof, the patio, and screening for the patio. In addition to the long durability of the roof, solar panels can be attached to the metal roof ridges instead of drilling holes. The contractor is Tower Construction who was also the contractor for the middle school roof and another town project. Ben Keefe, facilities manager, knows and is comfortable with the company. Patrick Fitzgerald is the construction manager. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2024.</p> <p>While this is very positive, Frank said there are important unresolved issues. One is that only one custodian is budgeted for a building that will be open 70 hours per week (8am to 10pm plus weekend hours). (Custodians are in the facilities budget.) Judy illustrated the problem: The Dudley Pond Association has met in the town building on a Sunday night for its annual meeting for many years. This year the building was locked and a custodian had to be called to open it so the meeting could be held. Julie thinks one full-time and two part-time custodial positions are needed.</p> <p>A second issue is scheduling the use of the building. It will have the latest technology and will be much in demand. Once again Julie suggested that the Recreation Department manage the scheduling because it has good software and lots of scheduling experience. She and Katherine Brenna work well together.</p> <p>Julie said the staff has talked about having a regular project update in the COA monthly newsletter, including some sketches of the building. She also mentioned holding a ground-breaking ceremony. Betsy thanked Frank for joining the COA board and jumping right in to working with Bill on the project.</p>
ACTION	

MINUTES

DISCUSSION	The minutes of October 2, 2023 were reviewed. Denise said Medicare on the top of page 2 should be Medicare
ACTION	It was moved, seconded, and unanimously voted by roll call vote to approve the minutes of October 2, 2023 as corrected (Kennedy/Yurkofsky). (Antes, Currier, Glick, Kennedy, Patterson, Scult, Yurkofsky 7 Yeas).

SENIOR TAX RELIEF

JULIE SECORD

DISCUSSION	Julie said the Senior Tax Relief Committee met on October 11 th with Susan Ruffo as chair. The committee reviewed tax relief options gleaned from other communities and discussed the updated circuit breaker bill. The state deduction has been doubled, which impacts Wayland, which matches the state amount. However, property assessments have increased so much that many people may no longer be eligible to
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	apply for the circuit breaker, the most helpful of the tax exemption programs. If the match is continued, there is no need to go back to Town Meeting. The hope is that Town will continue the match this year and then assess the impact of the match on the budget. About 120 people apply for the deduction.
ACTION	

FRIENDS OF THE COA

FRANK KENNEDY

DISCUSSION	The Friends have not met although they will be scheduling a meeting now that the contract has been signed for construction of the COA/CC. Frank mentioned that the Select Board acknowledged the gift of \$100,000 from the Friends.
ACTION	

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

JULIE SECORD

DISCUSSION	<p>Julie said today was the worst (busiest) day of her life. The number of new people utilizing the COA is increasing and most programs that require reservations go to wait list. The exercise classes are nearing their maximum capacity. She is still having space issues: recently three events were scheduled for the large hearing room at about the same time.</p> <p>The grant money for free taxi cab transportation to medical appointments is ending in December. It covered the cost of hundreds of rides into Boston, that sometimes cost as much as \$200 round trip. The directive for the 2025 town budget is to maintain service levels. Transportation is a large budget item and without these grants, it is not clear how much money the COA can request. Another unanswered question is whether the COA can continue to use supplies from the Town Building when it is located in the new building, or whether the department will have to order its own supplies.</p> <p>Julie has been in discussion with Uber Corporate offices to explore how Wayland might use their services. Currently requests for MWRTA Dial-a-Ride require 48-hour notice, a condition that often cannot be met. Uber may be able to create a dashboard for Wayland residents that the COA would control. The COA could request that an Uber driver be dispatched for a particular individual. This idea appears to be a very cost-effective way to response to urgent needs.</p> <p>Wayland, Sudbury, Weston, and MWRTA are working on a grant application for \$180,000 that would provide MWRTA door-to-door service to Newton Wellesley Hospital and Boston medical facilities three times a day five days a week. If a rider is unable to make the last shuttle of the day, the COA would be able to fall back onto Uber for rescue rides. The COA is also seeking a \$25,000 grant from MA COA for a variety of rides as well as to get spouses to hospitals to visit their partners.</p> <p>The COA has to outsource drivers through Student First but drivers are available only when school is in session. The staff is considering exchanging the current 16-passenger van for a 12-passenger van because it does not require a commercial drivers' license. While liability is a concern, if the volunteer driver were a tax work-off participant, s/he would be considered a temporary town employee and the town's liability insurance would cover the driver. (One drawback to the smaller van is that trips on the 16-passenger van cover the full cost of trips while some 12 passengers trips are subsidized.) Judy asked about using volunteer drivers as was done when FISH was operating. Julie said that the town's insurance does not cover private automobiles, leaving drivers liable. Ellen suggested that lots of people might be willing to drive. There are so many possible uses in town if the volunteer driver issue could be resolved.</p> <p>The COA cannot control some budget items such as postage. The newsletter is free because of the advertising it contains but the cost of postage to send it to 1,200 households is about \$800 per month. Equipment repair will be reduced by soliciting donations of medical equipment that is good shape and donating/cycling equipment that is not in as good shape.</p> <p>The staff would like to revive the Handyman Fix It program. Frank suggested that service orders might work; they would limit the work to be done to a specific project identified in advance (no, while you are here, can you do this).</p> <p>Office coordinator Paula is a perfect fit and Maura is starting the monthly visits to Bent Park and the Cochituate Village Apartments. She is very busy because there are many unusual situations.</p>
ACTION	

ADJOURNMENT

DISCUSSION	The next meeting will be Tuesday, December 12 th at 4pm in person and hybrid.
ACTION	The meeting was adjourned at 5:36pm.

Materials handed out at the meeting: Agenda & Minutes of Oct. 2, 2023; Report on the COA/CC from the Wayland Voters Network