

COA Board Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2023

9:00 AM

In Attendance: Bert Lannon (Chair), Helen Daly, Meredith St. Sauveur, Elizabeth Derwin, Loring Barnes, Debbie Sand, Brooks Corl

- The March **meeting minutes** were accepted.
- The main topic of the **HESSCO** board meeting was the impact of declaring the COVID public health emergency over on those receiving MassHealth only because of the public health emergency. There is a 14-month transition period to prepare these folks as the emergency benefits dissolve. The most important thing is for those receiving these benefits to make sure MassHealth has their correct contact information. The main concern is the population under 65 that are receiving these benefits (those over 65 will still have Medicare). They will be receiving information in the mail but might not know what to do with it. There is funding available for HESSCO to hire a Benefit Support Specialist until June 2024 to help with this issue, and they will soon begin the search for someone to fill this position. There will be an item in the newsletter about this topic plus we are going to look to put something on the COA website for awareness of the topic.
- **Outreach** – In March 142 individual people sought assistance a total of 357 times who were over 60 years of age. Seven people under the age of 60 sought assistance a total of 26 times. This compares to a total of 144 people and 427 total interactions a year ago.
- Bert confirmed our bylaws call for the **election of board offices** at the April board meeting, and the board terms run coincident with the fiscal calendar (terms end on June 30th). We elected Loring Barnes as the chair, Meredith St. Sauveur as the vice-chair, and Elizabeth Derwin as the secretary for the next year.
- We have a new **opening on our board** and everyone is excited to recommend Joyce Boiardi to the Select Board as our newest member. Elizabeth will send a notice of this to the Select Board.
- The new **department assistant** is starting next week and will work Wednesday – Friday.
- Meredith and Debbie are going to work on a plan to add more **storage space** by re-arranging the room that is currently for the department assistant and HESSCO. There is also some space available at the end of the hallway that can be used for seasonal items.
- We are going to start making use of **Rooms 104 and 206** in the VMB building for meetings with the SHINE counselor and the legal advisor. These room can be reserved on the dates these meetings will take place, offering privacy to the residents seeking counsel.
- We reviewed the job description for the **new director** and Elizabeth is going to add in more detail on programming responsibilities.

- An artist (Amy) received a cultural grant to offer two **art classes**. We are going to offer them in June and have a \$10 fee to cover refreshments. People will need to register and pay the \$10 upfront.
- May is **Senior Citizen month**. We are going to ask the Select Board to honor one citizen who has contributed to our town, and also our oldest resident. Loring will make this request.
- We have **change** coming at us with two new board members, and a new Director. This is an opportunity to rebrand the Center: get the word out on all of the good things that happen in the Senior Center and let the community know what is available now, and what could be available with an appropriate building. We all recognize the work Debbie does in Outreach is not well understood by the town, and there are other vital services that the common person in town does not comprehend. We talked about getting input from people in town as to what they would like to see the Center offer and determine what we can offer now, and what has to wait until we have a new building. We are looking to embrace the change and move forward.
- The Friends paid the yearly fee for us to continue to use **non-profit postal rates**.

Action Items

- Debbie will inquire about getting a menu item on the COA website (and COA facebook) about the end of Medicare benefits for those that received these benefits because of the pandemic emergency.
- Elizabeth will notify Select Board of our recommendation of Joyce Boiardi to join the COA board.
- Elizabeth will update Director job description to emphasize programming needs
- Meredith and Debbie will develop storage plan
- Loring will notify the Town Administrators office about the new board officers
- Loring will talk to the Select Board about honoring two residents during Senior Citizen month.

Next Meeting – May 11, 9:00 AM.