

Council on Aging Board of Directors

Special In-person meeting

September 23, 2021

Present: Director Jim Leyden, Assistant Director Lindsay Gill, Chair Rose Morace, Vice Chair Phil Hallahan, Secretary Ellie Tyson, Marybeth Bergeron, Saul Finestone, Sandra MacFadyen, Marge Morgan, Julia Moulton, Fran Miffitt, George Shea, Eleanor Stolar, Theresa Yesu

Absent: Jan Komaiszko, Maryann Squier, Judy Yaffe.

Guest: Jim Moulton, Robin Frechette

- I. **Welcome:** The meeting was called to order at 9:30am. Rose thanked both Jim and Lindsay for doing a great job during the pandemic. Also, a thank you to George for solving problems during his tenure.
- II. **Approval of Minutes:** There is a correction by Lindsay that she was working at the center and not working from home. Following the correction, the July 22 minutes were approved.
- III. **Reports:**
 - a. **Select Board:** Our liaison Thomas Lachiusa, was on zoom and out lined the select board agenda. There will be a town meeting on November 2, 2021. It will be outside at this time. The agenda will include:
 1. Longmeadow Street to be repaved; money will come from the state.
 2. Day care center to re-open starting in November. They are having difficulty finding people to work at the day care.
 3. After the next six month water/sewer bill, they will be sent out quarterly. For those who water their lawns, they will notice a decline in their bill.
 4. The zoning law will be on the agenda. The property at the end of the Longmeadow shops is zoned as residential and in order to change the zoning for business purposes at vote must be taken.
 5. Climate change for the town in the future. We have had severe weather changes in the town.
 6. For the Advisory board; we are looking for people to volunteer for this board. George wondered if a new member on the zoning board had been picked. There is no position by the select board as yet.
 - b. **State Representative:** Robin announced that the committee on Elder Affairs will have a hearing on several bills on Monday September 27th. These bills will be of interest to our group.
 1. H732; providing dental care to senior citizens, ages 65 and older.
 2. H739; to improve Alzheimer's and dementia care in senior care programs.

- 3. S432; a pilot program to promote restaurant recovery and food security for seniors. Marybeth noted that Rachel's Table goes to restaurants and gets food that would otherwise go to waste. Jim stated that during COVID, we were given some food from Rachel's Table.
- c. **Directors:** Jim noted we are still doing our Meals-on-wheels in our old building. We are adding 96 new clients that will be ready to go when the new building is open. Paperwork is done now which will save time when we are able to get into the new facility. Julia wondered where we are on the staffing of the new building. Jim will address that in old business. Phil wondered about the number of members we have now, Jim said 11,000 at this time.
- d. **Treasurers:** Please refer to page 9. Jim stated that we are in good standing on our revolving account.
- e. **FOLOCA:** Has a new slate of officers for 2021. Gerry Nolet, chair; Roger Wojcik is vice chair; Karen Shea, secretary. Eleanor wondered without the Maple Tree gift shop, how will we be able to pay for programs? Jim stated they will still be supporting our programs and both he and Lindsay said there were other avenues for paying for programs. We will have some low cost programs for some concerts and special events. Fran stated that FOLOCA is also helping with the voice. Lindsay said we are all on the same team, helping the seniors in Longmeadow. Saul noted that he has access to the new chair of FOLOCA should we need any additional information from FOLOCA.
- f. **GSSSI:** Fran noted they have returned to virtual meetings. A grant for \$25,000 was given to our center. They are having difficulty in staffing and are considering raising salaries to entice people to work. GSSSI works closely with Brian Ashe's office, our state representative.
- g. **Building Committee:** Marybeth said the goal for opening is November 1st. The sidewalks are finished allowing the staff to transfer over in a week or so. There is a major issue with the parking lot. The problem with the lot is with the asphalt. It needs to be as smooth as glass for walkers and etc., and it is shoddy workmanship, we have been meeting with our legal counsel to try to come to an agreement on re-surfacing. It cannot be done this fall. It is usable at this time and can be taken care of; the center would have to close for two weeks. Marge wondered if we are bending any rules in order to get into the center. Marybeth; no, not for the staff to move in. Marybeth also noted that we will have funding for electric starting stations in the parking lot.
- h. **Advocacy:** Eleanor has had many inquiries about the new building; as to when it will be open to the public and etc.

IV. **New Business:**

- a. **COA Committee Formation:** Phil passed out cards for members to choose their preference on this task force. They consist of: 1. Outreach, 2. Programs, 3. FOLOCA, 4. Café, 5. Food Pantry, 6. Marketing/communication, 7. Medical/ safety, and 8. Community center. We were asked to pick a committee or committees to work on. Jim noted that we are affiliated with the Western Mass Food bank and therefore our pantry is open to anyone and all ages. The hours of the center will be 8am-4pm seniors and

4pm-8pm open as a community center. George took a vote on the approval of all committees; it was seconded and passed.

- b. **2022 Real Estate Tax Abatement Program:** Jim stated this would be starting up January of 2022. Applications are on our website at this time. It's \$1,500 off real estate taxes. You have to have volunteered 125 hours.

V. **Old Business:**

- a. **Adult Center Staff update:** Jim is in the process of looking for staff for the new building. We have a member of the DPW, Hector Ortiz, who will help with our maintenance issues and setting up for programs, etc. Our outreach coordinator, Julie Pearce, will be having surgery and will be out 6-8 weeks.

- b. **Meals on Wheels Update:** We are preparing meals in both the old and new building. There are some issues in the new building that need to be addressed.

- c. **Food Pantry Update:** open to all

Programming Update: There will be more programming when we are in the new building.

Sandy was asked about the over 60 club. It will continue to be the 2nd Thursday of each month. October 14th there will be a program sponsored by East Village. She with her committee are working on other programs. At this time, no dues are required, but donations may be accepted. There will still be a 50-50 each month.

Fran had information on the possibility of a skateboard park behind the pool at Greenwood. This would create more traffic at the park and the noise would also affect us at the center. We need to keep our eyes and ears open as to this information.

Before the meeting was adjourned Saul asked to speak regarding his view on our meeting of July 22, 2021.

- VI. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:25am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth Tyson