

Needham Council on Aging Board Meeting

March 14, 2024

Present: Penny Grossman Vice Chair, Kathy Whitney, Carol De Lemos, Sue Mullaney, Anne Brain (Friends), Helen Gregory, Ed Cosgrove, Kate Robey, Liane Relich, Dave Goldberg, Ann DerMarderosian, Needham Housing Authority Representative,

Guests: Michelle Gucciardi, SHINE

COA: Latanya Steele, Director; Jessica Moss, Assistant Director of Counseling, Aicha Kelley, Assistant Director of Programming

Advisory Board: Ann Cosgrove

1. **Call to Order** The meeting was called to order by Ms. Grossman at 5:05 pm combination in person and on Zoom. She noted that Ms. Schaller could not attend this meeting because of a family commitment.
2. Tina Burgos a candidate for the Selectboard made a brief presentation on her candidacy and then sat in at the meeting.

Aging Services Division

3. SHINE, Ms. Michelle Gucciardi

Ms. Gucciardi noted that February is their quiet time. Ms. Gucciardi noted they are working on recertifying counselors and preparing for a new class of SHINE counselors with a 5 week training. 9 trainees are in the pipeline. They had more applicants than slots. Ms. Gucciardi also noted that Mass Health Medicare Savings Program previously looked at both incomes and assets and this year for the first time assets will not be required. This should mean that mean seniors who are asset rich but with lower incomes will qualify. In answer to Board questions that for an individual to qualify they must have a gross income of under \$2800; for a couple it is approximately \$3600. Ms. Gucciardi noted it is a self-attested program with a simple application with only a social security administration check on income. Ms. Gucciardi noted that the two grant funded administrative assistants through the end of the fiscal year have been instrumental with outreach for the program change. Ms. Steele will have the flyer sent to the Board later in the week. Ms. Gucciardi also mentioned that the billboard advertising on the Mass Pike has also helped with outreach.

4. Social Work, Ms. Jessica Moss

Ms. Moss noted it has been a busy month. The counseling numbers have decreased slightly. It is good to have a shorter wait list. Ms. Moss is preparing to send out a grant application to fund a ½ time clinician on elder mental health issues to provide home based therapy. The second grant application is to fund the Dinner Bell program to cover the cost of food and entertainment; this would mean not having to look for sponsors every month. Ms. Moss is also applying again for the MetroWest Health Foundation to fund the mobile market—if funded a vendor would provide prepared meals on the weekends which is the current gap in the CATH meal program as there is no food available on the weekends. This would supplement the Springwell/Cath programs. MetroWest encouraged Needham to apply again. The statistics and sustainability course at Olin College taught by an adjunct professor is moving forward to research social isolation; the hold up in the research is that the tablets to be distributed have not yet arrived. Ms. Moss noted they will continue the partnership with Olin. Ms. Moss continues to work with

the Homelessness Prevention Coalition. Ms. Moss also noted that Isabelle Dick's weekly meetings at the Needham Community Council have further assisted with spreading the word about CATH's services. Ms. Moss also noted that there are 29 active volunteers between the boutique and the kitchen.

Mr. Goldberg asked about trying to locate home health aides for 4 to 5 hours a few times a week. There was a brief discussion of private agency costs and Springwell's subsidized care options for those who qualify. A list cannot be vetted which is why the COA no longer keeps one and most other COA's also do not keep lists. Suggestions were made to check care.com and Needham Facebook. Ms. Burgos the Selectboard candidate suggested an elder caregiver share arrangement modeled on nanny share arrangements for young children.

5. Directors Report, Ms. Latanya Steele

Ms. Steele noted it was National Social Work Month and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs sponsored a 2 day workshop that she attended. MCOA will be experiencing more changes in the coming months.. She also noted that not only is CATH programming strong but the Center has been following diversity, equity and inclusion principals for years.

Ms. Mullaney noted that the Senate Hearing Link that Ms. Steele shared was great and informative. The Funding for the Older American Act is nowhere near where it needs to be. Other Board members noted that State revenues are down and that will also effect funding to senior programs across Massachusetts. Several Board members noted that the gym renovation is not in the FINCOM current fiscal year budget request.

6. Programming, Ms. Jessica Moss for Ms. Aicha Kelley

Ms. Moss noted that programming was busy and that Ms. Kelley and her staff were planning events throughout the summer. Attendance data is being kept through a combination of my senior center and excel instructor spreadsheets.

7. Transportation Update, Mr. Grably

Ms. Steele presented his report. Mr. Grably noted the vans are due for maintenance. Having EV vans when these are past their useful life is under discussion though large ones are not currently being manufactured. He is receiving about 50 ride requests a day. There are approximately 190 medical rides left. Meal delivery remains strong. The drivers are part time employees and so cannot work more than 19.5 hours.

- 8.** Ms. Robey noted that Ted Prorok VFW Representative was unable to attend the meeting but wanted the Board to know that Vietnam Day March 29 was coming and the VFW will be hosting a celebration at the memorial.

9. February 8, 2024, Minutes

Mr. Cosgrove made a motion to approve February 8, 2024, minutes as written. Ms. Gregory seconded. Mr. Goldberg abstained as he did not attend the February meeting. **The February 8 Minutes were approved by voice vote with one abstention.**

10. Old Business

FINCOM has recommended funding the ½ time social worker to deal with isolation and the ½ time front desk person.

There is no update on the MBTA parking spaces. Ms. Steele will email Mr. McDonald head of the Department of Health and Human Services to obtain an update.

11. Friends Update

Ms. Brain noted that donations continue to arrive many with notes on how much the CATH and COA means to seniors. The March 8 staff appreciation lunch was an enormous success. Mardi Gras party was also successful. The Compass mailing which the Friends funds has run into a snag as the newsletter now has to be taken to Waltham rather than Newton Highlands for mailing. The clerk there has said the advertisements means it does not qualify for the nonprofit rate. Board members suggested contacting Senator Markey and Representative Auchincloss office to get help with rectifying this issue.

12 Motion to Adjourn

Mr. Cosgrove made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Mullaney seconded the motion. **The Board meeting was adjourned by unanimous voice vote at 5:52 pm.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Faith Crisley

Recording Secretary