

Needham Council on Aging Board Meeting

November 14, 2024

Present: Colleen Schaller, Chair, Penny Grossman Vice Chair, Carol De Lemos, Helen Gregory, Ed Cosgrove, Kathy Whitney, Ann Cosgrove, Dan Goldberg, Sue Mullaney, Leanne Relich

COA Staff: Latanya Steele, Director, Jessica Moss Assistant Director of Counseling & Volunteer

Friends of the CATH: Beverly Pavasaris

SHINE: Michelle Gucciardi

Call to Order The meeting was called to order by Ms. Schaller at 5:10 pm combination in person and on Zoom

1. **SHINE, Ms. Michelle Gucciardi**

Ms. Gucciardi noted that SHINE has been busy in the midst of Medicare open enrollment which runs October 15-December 7. This is the busiest she has seen it over five years. All 500 of the Needham appointments were taken by the last week in October. By early November, the entire Metrowest region was full. At this point they can only refer clients to the 1-800 number or add someone if there is a cancellation. She attributes the fact that no spots are left to extensive advertising and outreach over the last two years and the extensive changes in Part D drug coverage. Ms. Gucciardi noted that there funding is partially federal from the community living grant and a grant from the MA Executive Office of Elder Affairs. In order to keep Needham as the subgrantee site for Metrowest, SHINE requires a letter of support from the COA Board. Ms. Steele will write the letter. **Mr. Cosgrove made a motion in support of the Director of the COA, Ms. Latanya Steele writing a letter of support for SHINE to the Office of Elder Affairs. Ms. Grossman seconded. The Board voted unanimous by voice vote in support of the letter.** Mr. Cosgrove noted that he can't imagine any senior who was alone being able to navigate Medicare and knowing what was legitimate or not without the SHINE program. The Board also noted that it is a free service almost entirely volunteer run. Ms. Gucciardi noted that there are 750 counselors state-wide with 72 in Metrowest of which 60 are volunteers and the other 12 paid.

2. **Aging Services Division**

Social Work, Ms. Jessica Moss

Ms. Moss noted there has been an increase in numbers during October.

Ms. Cusack finished her 3 month training in internal family dynamics.

Go Go Grandparent (ride share service) is now live for clients they are able to reserve accessible vans in addition to Uber and Lyft. The grant is just under \$10,000 and includes rides to Boston. Ms. Moss noted she has applied for a \$50,000 grant from Mass Dot to continue the Go Go Grandparent service.

The Mitchel school partnership where students interview seniors is going well. The plan is for a podcast with a power point slide show. The life history meetings are once a month until the end of the school year.

Ms. Moss noted that Ms. Mullaney is helping with the iPad deliveries beginning two weeks ago. So far 40 have been given out of 96. The plan is for a survey once a month to ascertain if the technology helps with social isolation and/or increases enrollment in on-line programs. The training materials that were developed with the Needham Community Council are considered so strong that the State plans to use them for other COA's.

Ms. Moss noted that the transportation update is in the Board report. There was a small accident with one of the vans but no was hurt and the van can be repaired.

The negotiation for parking places on Hillside Avenue is almost complete and should be available soon.

The COA is restarting its joint program with Youth & Family Services a shopping service with 3 pairs of youth and seniors who once a week shop at CVS or the grocery. This is modeled on a very successful and long standing program at the Brookline COA.

Ms. Rice has restarted the Friendly Visitor program.

Ms. Dick had 103 appointments at the Community Council during October.

3. Chairperson's Report, Ms. Colleen Schaller

Ms. Schaller noted that at the special Board meeting on November 12 the Board quorum voted to issue a letter of support for the Town Meeting's vote on the MBTA housing plan. The letter is being written by Mr. McDonald for Ms. Schaller to review and sign.

4. Approval of October 10, 2024 Minutes

Mr. Cosgrove made a motion to approve the October 10, 2024 minutes. Ms. Grossman seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote

5. Programming Report in the Board Report

The Board had no questions. Ms. Schaller raised the issue of duplicate programming at Park & Rec with the same teachers. Ms. Steele noted she is looking into that to see if the teacher might be able to teach in the evenings at the COA which is the time needed to expand programming.

Ms. Steele also noted a planned lecture on holiday support. The annual Thanksgiving dinner is now full at 125 people.

6. New Business

Mr. Goldberg noted that with Denise Garlick, state representative retiring the seniors have lost a strong local voice. He noted he has emailed Kevin Keane, the chair of the Selectboard about having a member from the COA or board on the search committee for the new manager with Kate Fitzpatrick's impending retirement. This is important to follow up on as the representation could not come from just Board members but other interested in seniors in town.

He also noted it was important for more seniors to speak with Josh Levy from the Selectboard during his office hours to voice senior's concerns.

Mr. Goldberg also highlighted Belmont's Kin for Kinless program that matched seniors who do not have relatives in the area (or any relatives) that could be a new program at some point for the COA.

Ms. Steele noted that Springwell will not be having monthly meetings about their services.

7. Old Business

None

8. Friends of the CATH

Ms. Pavasaris noted the day old program with Panera is going pretty well except she needs volunteers to help collect the bread and other baked goods on a Monday night at 9 pm and then dropped by at the CATH by 8 am Tuesday morning. It is too hard for her and her spouse to do both the Monday pickup and the drop off each week.

She also noted that the boutique continues to go well and they are planning a jewelry themed table the first Friday of every month.

9. No VFW report in Mr. Ted Prorok's absence.

10. Motion to Adjourn

Mr. Goldberg made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Cosgrove seconded the motion. **The Board meeting was adjourned by unanimous voice vote at 6:06 pm**

Respectfully Submitted,

Faith Crisley

Recording Secretary