

Needham Council on Aging Board Meeting

February 13, 2025

Present: Colleen Schaller, Chair, Penny Grossman Vice Chair, Carol De Lemos, Helen Gregory, Ed Cosgrove, Ann Cosgrove, Ann DerMarderosian, Kate Robey, Ted Prorok, Kathy Whitney

COA Staff: LaTanya Steele, Director Jessica Moss Assistant Director of Counseling & Volunteer, Aicha Kelley, Assistant Director Programming and Transportation

Friends of the CATH: Beverly Pavasaris

SHINE: Michelle Gucciardi

Director of Health and Human Services: Timothy McDonald

Support Services Manager: Myles Tucker

1. **Call to Order** The meeting was called to order by Ms. Schaller at 5:02 pm combination in person and on Zoom

2. Senior Veteran and Property Tax Work off Program.

The overview was presented by Myles Tucker.

The article will be brought before Town Meeting in May. The proposal is to combine Senior Corps program with the Valor Act into a new Work Off program that is allowable by a new MA General Law.

The income caps are \$45,000 for a single household and \$60,000 for a couple for Senior Corps; the town proposes 80% cap of AMI for the senior side age of anyone over 60 but the veteran can be of any age to qualify. Right now \$83,000 for a single family household and about \$95,000 for a two person household is the AMI. New program ties to the minimum wage. The 80% applies to both veteran's and seniors over 60. An asset cap is not applied.

An eligible senior who cannot do the work physically can select a representative.

The Valor Act has not been implemented before; Senior Corps currently has 6 participants and started in 2014.

They are in addition to other property tax relief programs the Town operates. The community service work overseen by COA staff cannot be work that regular staff perform.

The cap is at the \$1500 fix dollar amount or a fixed amount of hours at 125. Work performed is at the minimum wage. Work needs will be checked across the Town. Certification happens each October.

Board members suggested looking into tutoring roles or work outside of Monday-Friday work week as well as possible work at the library in addition to work within the COA.

Mr. Tucker noted that the program would start November 1 after arranging for work across Needham where applicable and administered by the COA.

Aging Services Division

3. Programming Report, Ms. Aicha Kelley

Ms. Kelley noted they have implemented charges for classes at \$5.00 to cover each 8 week class. Voluntary payment has not worked. The staff are explaining that this covers instructor costs and other costs.

\$5.00 for a series of 8 classes is reasonable and less expensive than adult education, private entities and some COA programming.

She also noted that fifteen programs have been added.

The number of swipes into the building in January was 2852 which is an undercount as some patrons forget to swipe.

4 Social Work, Ms. Jessica Moss

Ms. Moss noted that Ms. Jessica Rice's program on community connections neighbor to neighbor is going well. The first match happened this week.

Springwell will provide staff training on all their programs and it is open to volunteers and Board members -- February 26 at 10 am.

The Exchange Club handyman program is now twice a year. Some volunteers from that program still help their person outside of the twice a year window.

5. Director's Report, Ms. Latanya Steele

Ms. Steele noted she is only providing highlights as the Board report outlines the full month.

March 20 at 5:30 pm is the next Community Dinner she is looking for volunteers to assist.

She also noted the Black History Month program went well.

She also noted that the monthly COA Director's meetings have been going well and provide a great source of support and information for across COA directors.

6. SHINE Report, Ms. Michelle Gucciardi

Ms. Gucciardi noted that they have been busy. They are funded by a federal grant from Health and Human Services and with the changes under the new Federal administration it is business as usual right now but it could change.

7. Chairperson's Report, Ms. Colleen Schaller

Ms. Schaller noted she attended a district meeting for the Exchange Club. They are starting to think about new projects and the latest is "Rides for Seniors for Fun" arranged through the COA to take advantage of volunteer options and transportation. It would work similar to medical appointments and done by volunteers. Ideas so far are a movie, dinner out or laundromat trips. Other Exchange Clubs are already doing this and are passing onto Ms. Schaller to be shared with the Board and COA staff.

8. Update on Veteran's Affairs, Mr. Prorok

Mr. Prorok noted that the Wreathes Across American event on December 14 went well.

The joint meeting with the Exchange club was an exceptional event.

The winners for the Voices of Democracy and Patriot's Pen will be announced soon. He noted that each year the middle and high school essays are unbelievable.

On March 29th is the next VFS event at Needham's Vietnam Memorial.

9. Approval of December 12, 2024 Minutes

Ms. Cosgrove made a motion to approve December 12, 2024 minutes. Ms. DerMarderosian seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote

10. Old Business None

11. Friends of the CATH

Ms. Pavasaris noted they Staff Appreciation Lunch catered by Panera's is March 7 at 12:30. On April 14 at 12:30 the volunteer lunch will take place. The Friends hope many members of the Board will attend.

The Friends have revised the policies for boutique donations and once it is finalized it will be sent to Ms. Moss to distribute to the volunteers.

Ms. Pavasaris thanked Helen Gregory for helping her pick up end of day products from Panera's and deliver to the COA. She calls it "team Bev/Helen" for the Wednesday night pick up/Thursday morning drop off. Tuesday and Thursday mornings the volunteers set up a drop off point.

12. New Business

Mr. Jess St. Peter's a member of the public who attended spoke about his Oakley Home Access business but understood that the COA makes it a general guideline to not promote companies. He enjoyed hearing all the COA does for Needham seniors.

13. Motion to Adjourn

Mr. Cosgrove made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Whitney seconded the motion. **The Board meeting was adjourned by unanimous voice vote at 6:15 pm**

Respectfully Submitted,
Faith Crisley
Recording Secretary