

Needham Council on Aging Board Meeting

September 11, 2025

Present: Colleen Schaller Chair, Penny Grossman Vice Chair, Ed Cosgrove, Ann Cosgrove, Dan Goldberg, Ann DerMarderosian, Kate Robey, Ted Prorok, Leanne Relich, Sue Mullaney, Kate Robey, Kathy Whitney, Helen Gregory

COA Staff: LaTanya Steele, Director Jessica Moss Assistant Director of Counseling & Volunteers

Director of Health and Human Services: Timothy Muir McDonald

Director of Design and Construction: Hank Haff

BHA (Bargmann, Hendrie & Archetype Inc.): Nancy Johnson,

BME Consultants: Arissa Ruano, Brad Clarke

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

2. Arissa and Brad discussed goal setting. After a brief discussion, the Board agreed to hold a separate meeting arranged by a Doodle poll to work on this issue. This may involve several separate meetings throughout the fall.

3. Design Project for Cath Renovations (Hank Haff, Nancy Johnson, BHA)

Nancy Johnson went through a series of slides showing what the design team is thinking of based on the COA Board supporting an all at once renovation. The renovated space study includes the game room, exercise room, handicapped vestibule entrance by the café, and the kitchen renovation to commercial grade.

Tim McDonald noted that this is a project that Board needs to actively support with town officials as the construction funding request will be presented at May town meeting. There are many other priorities but this is important to the many seniors who use the space.

In answer to Board questions Nancy noted that there will be buttons on the back door accessible to both wheelchair and walker patrons, that some of the kitchen cabinets can be reused, two dishwashers are part of the design, and a new grease hood/new trap to properly vent the kitchen and a walk in freezer. The counter to the café will be kept but there will be new appliances.

An extensive discussion occurred on the need for a staff break room. There isn't a perfect solution for this space; the basement might be too expensive and too dark for the staff, moving the veteran's office to Town Hall has some issues, office pods by the copier might not provide enough privacy, the conference room is also used by the veteran's and social work meetings. Tim noted that he and Hank will work on a decision matrix to help the Board think through the tradeoffs. A staff member noted that the social workers share the veterans space to meet with clients and not all the staff have a private

office so turning this space into a breakroom creates other issues. This will be discussed further as there is always a tension between programmatic space and office space. The Board supports a staff break room.

The game room will move upstairs. The fitness room expansion will include a further look at electricity needs in case more powered machines are required in the future. A mirror and ballet bar will be added. The new space will be 1000 to 1300 square feet.

The computer room will be upgraded to laptops moveable tables which will allow it to be flexible space suitable for SHINE and AARP meetings but also other uses.

The kitchen renovation will take 6 months; there was a lengthy discussion of programmatically providing alternatives using the school kitchens in the summer months but then how to provide services from other space town owned or rented or bringing in outside meals through Springwell or other vendors during the remaining 4 months.

The advantage of the commercial kitchen includes moving the traveling meals preparation to the CATH as the hospital does want to move this program out, more lunch meals can be prepared in house and perhaps a breakfast service, the Dinner Bells program could be freshly prepared and there might also be other town wide events that could be held in the space.

The issue of budgeting and staffing a professional kitchen was also discussed.

The estimated cost is \$1,634,510.00. The timeline is for the redesign to be completed in January, bidding in February and March to meet the May Town Meeting funding vote deadline.

In answer to parking questions there is a discussion to borrow parking from the MBTA, and off site parking for the contractor staff.

There was also a discussion of having the Friends of the CATH fund raise for things that are nice to have but not part of the budget renovation including flatware, a good coffee machine, tables for multi-use. One of the Board members also recommended reaching out to the Rotary and Exchange clubs for these items.

4 . Social Work, Ms. Jessica Moss

Ms. Moss handed out her report since the meeting was already lengthy. She noted that the new BC intern has started and is a great help. She is looking for volunteers for the Community Connection program which replaced the Friendly Visitor program.

5. Programming and Transportation Reports

Ms. Steele noted that both of these reports will be circulated to the Board on September 12th.

6.Chair Report, Ms. Colleen Schaller

Minutes

Mr. Goldberg made a motion to accept the June 12 Board minutes as written. Mr. Cosgrove seconded. The Board minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Ms. Schaller noted she had extensive summer discussions with changing the make-up of the Board which is up to her as Chair.

She noted that Ms. Grossman does not want to continue as vice chair. She also noted that Carol DeLemos may not continue as a Board member and she will be looking for a new Board member.

Ms. Schaller noted that for succession planning she would like to add a second vice chair position. She had conversations with both Ms. Mullaney and Ms. Gregory taking these positions. They can learn about all the issues including the renovation project and the budget process over the next year and one can take over as Chair with the other serving as Vice Chair if the Board agrees. Ms. Schaller noted she will remain on the Board, just not in an officer position.

The Board thought this planning process was a great idea.

Mr. Cosgrove made a motion to establish the positions of first and second vice chair. Ms. DerMarderosian seconded the motion. The Board established the two positions by unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Cosgrove made a motion to nominate Ms. Schaller as Chair, Sue Mullaney as first vice chair and Helen Gregory as second vice chair. Ms. DerMarderosian seconded the motion. The motion to nominate and approve the three officer positions passed by unanimous voice vote.

In answer to questions Ms. Schaller noted that the second vice chair position could be filled next year or eliminated as needed after a full year with these positions in place.

7. Programming Discussion

Director's Report, Ms. Latanya Steele

Ms. Steele noted that her Board report outlines the summer activities.

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

Mr. Prorok noted the 4th of July parade event went well. The state representative recognition of a veteran will take place on Veteran's Day.

9. Friends of the CATH

No report.

10. New Business

Mr. Goldberg noted that the 110 West St. redevelopment proposal (tearing down the Carter's building) will pass the planning board on September 15th. He noted that many seniors will be eligible for 12.5% of

affordable units. He asked if the developer is considering Needham residents and seniors as first applicants for this piece.

11. Motion to Adjourn

Mr. Goldberg made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Robey seconded the motion. **The Board meeting was adjourned by unanimous voice vote at 6:35 pm**

Respectfully Submitted,
Faith Crisley
Recording Secretary