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MAYOR

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SUPERINTENDENT

CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

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SALEM COUNCIL ON AGING REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

Date and Time: October 18, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

Meeting Location: VIA ZOOM

Members Present: Lynda Coffill (LC, Chair), John Russell (JR, Vice-Chair), Abigail Butt (AB, Treasurer), Kristin Macek (KM, Secretary), Eliud Alcala (EA), George Barbuzzi (GB), Michelle Bettencourt (MB), Michele McHugh (MM) and Patricia Small (PS)

Also Present: Teresa Arnold, (TA, Director of the COA)

Clerk: Joanne M. Roomey

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

LC called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 20, 2023 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by PS to approve the September 20, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes. Seconded by KM. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

a. Senior Day Update

The Board discussed having Senior Day on Saturday, May 18, 2024 at Forest River Park. TA already met with Joe Candelaria, Facilities Manager from Park & Recreation, to pencil in the date. The committee discussed having games, door prizes, and music. They suggested having a picnic lunch and putting up a tent. The group are hoping for donations or sponsors for "giveaways". This could be a celebration of seniors and a resource fair.

PS said we should promote a positive image of aging on Senior Day. The Board talked about honoring seniors who have contributed to the community, perhaps from each ward. Maybe each Ward Councilor could recommend nominees based on certain criteria which need to be finalized. The Senior Day 2024 Committee will need volunteers from the Board and Friends of the COA. The Friends will donate \$1,000 - \$2,000 from their fund.

TA suggested having the event at the CLC, so that we would not have to worry about a rain date, but the Board was leaning more towards Forest River Park since the seniors frequent the CLC and wanted to make the day special. The committee is open to suggestions and will discuss them further at the next meeting on November 9th.

b. Kitchen Update from TA

9/20 – Anthony Delaney, Purchasing Agent emailed Russo/Barr terminating their services.

9/29 – Joe Candelaria emailed Winter Street Architects of Salem and Walter Jacobs architects of Peabody.

10/2 – Walter Jacobs replied that they did not have time for this project right now.

10/2 – Joe met with Mark Meche and Paul Durand of Winter Street Architects at the CLC kitchen and went over things. Erica Blumberg was present.

10/5 – Kim Emerling, Veteran's Agent, let Joe know that DMS, the original building architecture firm was interested in bidding on the job. They became aware because Winter Street asked them for drawings and informed them as to what we were planning.

10/10 – Joe emailed Dan Skolski of DMS architecture, Peabody. Dan replied the same day.

Both groups have been sent the scope of work. Joe is planning on hearing back from them by the end of October. As everyone is well aware, the biggest issues are the installation of hood/vent and updating the plumbing.

c. Letter to Mayor Pangallo

Michele McHugh mentioned that the justification letter hits all the points we are trying to make but was worried about the format. Could we consider a different format like power point, with history, present situation and then bullet the justification points for the reader?

LC discussed changing Teresa Arnold's title from Director, Salem Council on Aging to Director of Senior and **Human** or **Social** Services. Also discussed was:

- Including a Mission Statement of Services
- Stronger benefits to the community
- Tie into the budget for January and February

LC will send an email out again to the Board to finish up this justification and we should have an answer by November 1st to all the Mayor's questions.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Friends of the COA Report

The Friends have approved \$900 towards the Holiday Party. The Board thanked JR and his daughter for making stickers for the Thanksgiving meal packages.

JR will get quotes for blackout blinds for the back door over the Great Room to keep the room dark when movies are shown.

The Friends want to do a monthly raffle for \$50 to a restaurant or Market Basket. In addition, the Friends would like to offer the same for the social workers to quietly discern a senior in particular need.

JR is disappointed that the parking lot fundraiser is not as busy as it was in the past. Park and Recreation and the Friends will probably only make one-half of the money, as they did last year.

b. Follow-up to the SHA Using Units for Office Space and Storage

LC sent Cathy Hoog, Executive Director of the Salem Housing Authority, an email regarding four housing units mentioned in the news that are not being used for senior apartments. JR suggested asking for a policy regarding making units into breakrooms.

c. Director's Report, Teresa Arnold

Social Services: We are still operating with two social workers. The vacancy is being advertised through Mass Council on Aging, the city website, Salem State University and TA is researching other colleges who have Social Work departments to get the word out to alumni and new graduates. TA has spoken with HR Director Lisa Cammarata about increasing the salary to attract candidates. There is a requirement to speak Spanish.

Open Enrollment has started. We have two SHINE counselors who can help with a lot of insurance information, and we are booking appointments with them as well.

Transportation: Mike Phelan's last day is October 30th as he heads for Florida in the winter. We have hired Michael Cormier who started this week. Brenda D'Eon's last day was this past Friday, and she started a new job with Northeast ARC as an administrative assistant. Brenda enjoyed being on the staff but needed a full-time job with benefits that we didn't have the resources for.

Annie O'Shea will attend a virtual training on applying for a new vehicle later in November. We will be applying for a new van. Should we be awarded a van, it would not arrive until sometime in 2025. Mayor Pangallo asked us to look at electronic vehicles and TA spoke with Neil Duffy, Director of the Sustainability and Resiliency Department. TA did some research on what the state offers and there is a possibility of an eight-seater van.

Ridership is steady with about 1100-1200 one-way rides per month.

Dining Services: Erica Blumberg, Dining Services Coordinator has shaped kitchen operations into a professional setting. Volunteers are diligent and helpful. Erica is the only paid staff person in Dining Services. To operate the way we do, volunteers are essential. They are a dedicated crew and offer great hospitality to our seniors.

Not our operation, but the Salem Pantry will be coming every Tuesday instead of once a month, likely starting in December. The Pantry will be receiving a food truck, and it will be stationed in one corner of our parking lot during distribution days. We are working with Fred Norton from the Salem Pantry, Donna Hermann who leads a volunteer team on Pantry Days, Erica Blumberg from the kitchen who keeps an eye on the home-delivered meals operation and Annie O'Shea, Transportation Coordinator, so we can figure out parking lot/vans/Meal on Wheels driver logistics on those days.

Programs/Activities: Classes and Programs are full. Two new classes will begin in November; a Vegan Nutrition class and a Low Impact Cardio class, both taught by Eme Mizioch. Strengthen Your Balance returns in November after the instructor's maternity leave.

Day trips to restaurants and museums are popular. Yesterday, a van full of our seniors went to Essex Tech's Maple Street Bistro for lunch.

Memory Café: The monthly series facilitated by Kelley Annese continues. Workshop leaders present on topics around Art, Health, Cooking, Music, Hobbies and more. The field trip to Ironstone Therapeutic Horse Farm in September was a hit. This month features Alisa Apreleva, a Board-Certified Music Therapist who is the founder of Sing4Change. She will present Songs4Comfort, a program for seniors where there will be live singing, movement, conversation, and simple activities to enhance emotional well-being. The caregiver support group, run by Stacey McCarthy, continues, and is held once a month. Kelley Annese and Stacey McCarthy will plan a few Caregiver Retreats for 2024.

Heart and Soul Conversation Series: James Ashton, who leads our monthly series, and TA presented at the Mass Council on Aging Conference on October 11th. We spoke about the need to connect, no matter what spiritual path one is on, social isolation and loneliness and how this program has helped many of our seniors.

Technology Grant: We are in the process of recruiting seniors 60+ who do not have access to technology. We will hire instructors to offer fifteen classroom hours to 55 participants. After completion of the training, seniors will be able to keep their computer and will have free Internet access for a year. We anticipate that training will begin at the first of the year.

V. OTHER BUSINESS:

There was a discussion regarding meal delivery for Thanksgiving Day. Volunteers will meet at Brother's Deli at 10:00 a.m. The more volunteers, the less time for delivery. If anyone wants to volunteer, they should contact Rosanna Donahue.

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, November 15, 2023

V.1 VOTE TO ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Council on Aging Board this evening, JR moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by PS. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at **6:35 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Joanne M. Roomey
Board Clerk

Know Your Rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. Chapter 30A ss. 18-25 and City Ordinance
Sections 2-2028 through 2-2033.