

**SALEM COUNCIL ON AGING
Minutes of Regular Meeting**

Date and Time: April 20, 2022 at 5:15 P.M.

Meeting Location: Via Zoom

Members Present: Lynda Coffill (LC, Chair), John Russell (JR, Vice-Chair), Kristin Macek (KM), George Barbuzzi (GB), Patricia Small (PS), Abigail Butt, (AB), and Donna Clifford (DC)

Absent: Teresa Arnold, (TA, Director of the COA)

Also Present: Leveille McClain (City Council Liaison)

Clerk: Kathleen Fitzgerald

Meeting Called to Order

LC called the meeting to order at 5:15 P.M.

LC stated that pursuant to Governor Baker’s directive on 3/12/20 which supported certain provisions of Chapter 30A, Section 20, there are strict limitations regarding gatherings, so this meeting is being conducted via Zoom. The public and persons who would like to listen may do so by dialing in. All votes taken shall be by roll call.

Roll call was then taken.

A motion was made by JR to approve the March 2022 Minutes, seconded by AB, roll call was taken, and passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Sr. Housing Update: KM read a letter to the Board that she prepared to be sent to the Salem Housing Board and welcomed any facts that this Board might have. She said she put the letter together based upon collaborative findings as well as another resource. She stated that based upon the aging population and the fact that they are far out pacing younger age groups for demographics, she tried to demonstrate that the redevelopment as well as intergenerational aspect, 50 units at Lee Fort Terrace was shortsighted and more units should be set aside for seniors and the disabled.

She pointed out that the original 16 extra units were guaranteed and when the numbers came down, the 16 units fell off.

AB stated the letter was well done but asked if there was a way to do something with a chart. She suggested addressing it “Dear Members of the Board” instead of “Dear Ladies and Gentlemen”. She further asked if there was a way to have a heart string pull.

PS suggested trimming it a bit to focus on the population expanding.

LC suggested that something could be added stating that we want more subsidized units because we have a number of seniors who don’t meet any kind of affordable index.

KM asked if the letter should also be sent to the Planning Board. LC suggested it should also be sent to the Affordable Housing Task Force.

AB suggested in the second paragraph deleting “Every day 10,000 adults turn age 65 in the United States and this trend will continue until 2021. As baby boomer age,”.

KM advised that the data was a bit old as it was published in 2018. AB said she may have later data. She further advised that SNAP sends out numbers every January and July. KM asked if she would send her that information.

LC advised that the Board would work on the letter more for the May meeting.

JR suggested that it needs a little less if being sent to the Affordable Housing Task Force and Salem Housing Board. We want them to know that we are watching.

Friends Update: JR advised that Gregory Ford representing Beacon Communities and Lee Fort Terrace was at the meeting; but JR stated he was only at part of the meeting. He said he was aware of the Friends’ position on this, but anyone on the Board could individually support, but not the Friends’ Board.

LC suggested inviting Mr. Ford to the May meeting. JR said he wanted to see what information Mr. Ford gave when he sees the Minutes of the Friends.

JR stated that the Annual Appeal letter went out to an expanded population and went out to all seniors. He said he was happy to announce that early returns were very favorable. He will continue to keep an eye on the \$12,000-\$15,000 goal with the Annual Appeal letter.

JR said they are continuing to meet regarding the luau on July 14th at Winter Island. He said they hope to make a profit of \$5,000-\$6,000 and thought that was doable. He said he would speak with Councilor McClain regarding City Councilors.

JR advised that approximately 165 Easter meals were delivered and that people were very appreciative.

New Business:

New Board Members: There was a discussion about the type of Board Members the Board was looking for. LC said she had reached out to Kim Emerling at Veterans' Services but that had not worked out. She further stated she know of one person who comes to the COA who might be interested, and she would reach out and continue to talk with her and urge her to send in the required information to City Hall.

LC said if someone is willing to do the work of the Board, they would be welcomed. She stated that she had reached out to the Latino community unsuccessfully. LC said it didn't mean the Board would stop looking, but right now we needed a full Board and hopefully by September we would have nine people on the Board. She said that if anyone had any suggestions to please bring the names forward.

AB stated that she heard the frustration in LC's voice and that the Board has not made headway and that she totally gets that. She said she hears LC's goal of wanting a full Board by September. LC stated that there were people out there that were very active and wanted to be involved.

AB said she thought it would be important that we bring on more Board members but did not think that we needed to get three people on by September and would caution getting people on the Board who might be wrong.

LC said she had the intention of getting people on the Board who are interested in being on the Board. She said we needed to have people who were feasible, would go to public hearings and do the work of the Board and that between now and September we need to be actively recruiting. JR said the Board needed to look for someone who wanted to do the work and not pad their resume and that we want diversity on the Board.

AB stated this was not an easy topic. JR said it was frustrating and that we need hard working people.

Councilor McClain said it would be helpful to have something that says this is what the work of the Board is, and this is what we are looking for. He suggested recruiting from our client base - people receiving services. He said there has to be a line between recruiting and bringing people on board. He said the Board wants to be sure to do its due diligence and that the Board did not want to be in a position of a bare quorum. He further suggested putting something together that could go out via social media or email. He suggested the application coming to the Board first to vet before going to the City. He said with a small amount of prep work something could go out.

LC said she was not sure the Board could vet in a public meeting and said she would check with Beth Remard. However, she said she loves the idea of putting together one page and figure out what the Board was looking for. She asked Councilor McClain if he knows of anyone who might be interested.

GB said when he first saw the ad in the Salem News he responded and submitted the information to the City, but that it was two years before he heard back from anyone.

PS said she would not recommend putting it on the website and recommended the need for a job description because most people do not know what the Board does.

AB asked if it was possible that City Hall has other names.

KM said she submitted her information twice.

AB said that whatever the Board puts out, it should say that it should be submitted to TA and City Hall. It should also say the COA Board is an advisory board. AB said she did not think it would be unhealthy to have a discussion about an applicant. She said the Board could put the Bylaws in the job description. She advised that Emmett Schmarsow, formerly of EOE, had put together a packet for Council on Aging Boards which we could include. She further stated that the Board needs to keep inviting people from different populations that we want to bring in and if they don't want to join, it is probably says more about our board's culture than something to do with their culture. AB said her veteran's agent in Lincoln is great and she could ask if they had anyone in Salem who might be interested.

LC advised that the veteran Kim Emerling suggested told TA today he could not do it because of health issues. AB asked if LC was going back to Kim Emerling to ask for another candidate. LC said tomorrow she would ask Kim Emerling to again initiate a search. TA has been working with Kim Emerling as well.

Councilor McClain said that he did not believe Kim Emerling would object to reaching out to other vets. JR suggested approaching Kim Emerling first and then reach out to other vets. KM suggested asking Kim Emerling if we could cast a wider net.

AB said she would pull a draft of what Lincoln had for a COA "job description" and asked if TA might have an old one. JR agreed to work on it too.

Director's Report:

Nutrition / Dining Services

- We welcomed two new volunteers this month, Mary Ann and Lee, that easily fit into our revamped task related shifts. We still have a few more slots to fill for Thursdays and Fridays. Our optimum number per day is four volunteers that cover coffee station set-up and monitoring; reservations and hospitality; lunch opening and lunch closing.
- We ran to back-to-back self-cook events earlier this month with the intention to determine what meal service capacity we currently have. We prepared and served a Thursday hot lunch and a Monday hot brunch which stressed our refrigeration,

oven and storage capacities to maximum capabilities. We succeeded in hosting 36 and 33 respectively.

- Starting next week, we will cycle into our regular hot menu a seasonal cold meal. It is something of a request among some regular luncheon participants.

Social Services

- 405 seniors serviced 1209 times between 3 full time social workers and 16 hour a week student intern.
- 14 pieces of Durable Medical Equipment taken
- 124 mailings/phone calls under “client finding” (60th birthday and those 80+ living alone in private housing)

Programs/Activities

- “Opening day” celebration was a hit. Even though there wasn’t a Red Sox game, seniors participated in various games like corn hole. The hot dog lunch was enjoyed by all. We capped off the event watching “Fever Pitch” and snacked on popcorn and cracker jacks.
- After a two-year hiatus, we were able to hold our Remembrance Ceremony on April 12th. This gave us the occasion to remember those friends and family members no longer with us.
- Movie and Brunch seems to be a success. This month seniors enjoyed homemade frittata and watched ‘House of Gucci’. This event will be scheduled monthly.
- Thanks to Rep. Paul Tucker for joining our April Wellness Walk on April 13th.
- We were able to offer two blood pressure clinics this month with the addition of another volunteer nurse. Each month we will offer a clinic on the first Thursday and third Tuesday.
- We have a volunteer senior who conducted a cooking demonstration this month featuring foods of her heritage.

Transportation

- Transportation continues to grow in ridership. We serviced over 1300 rides last month and are preparing for our spring and summer increase.
- We will be saying goodbye to Arthur Jalbert next month and are currently looking at hiring a new driver(s).
- We are busy keeping up with van maintenance and inspections.
- We will be partnering with Salem Pantry to bring seniors to pick up groceries.
- We are also discussing transportation needs with Sail Salem for transportation for their scholarship program.

Other Highlights

Mass Association for the Blind and MABVI

Darren Black from the Mass Association for the Blind called TA. He and a colleague from MABVI will be touring the CLC in May to see if we can be a training site for their

statewide program to train visually impaired and legally blind seniors on a range of assistive technologies.

Reframing Aging

We will be hosting a presentation called Reframing Aging on Friday June 3rd at 8:30 am. Melissa Donegan from AgeSpan (Elder Services) will present and this will be open to professionals and anyone from the community. “The Reframing Aging Initiative is a long-term social change endeavor designed to improve the public’s understanding of what aging means and the many ways that older people contribute to our society. This greater understanding will counter ageism and guide our nation’s approach to ensuring supportive policies and programs for us all as we move through the life course.”

Community Life Center Engagement Committee

This committee is part of Salem for All Ages. It consists of Patricia Zaido, Dominick Pangallo, Tara Mansfield, Director of the Salem Public Library, Michelle Sweeney and Rod Kessler, both retired professors from SSU, Kathy McCarthy, Lynda Coffill and Teresa Arnold.

We are collecting surveys to learn the level of satisfaction with Senior Power, our newsletter. Responses to date are largely quite favorable. Dr. Sweeney is drafting a CLC participation survey. The focus of this group is to help to increase participation at the CLC. On a positive note, we have wait lists for most COA classes and the fitness center is quite utilized.

Other Business: LC stated that there was no sign saying Community Life Center and thought the Board should advocate for a sign at the corner of Boston Street and near the entrance. She asked if the Board should write a letter to the Mayor. JR said that was a good idea. He said there was no mention of the Council on Aging. LC said she would take care of that.

PS stated that she went to the movie and brunch at the CLC and the movie was not close-captioned and something should be done for the hard of hearing. LC also said the print needed to be enlarged on the monthly Newsletter.

Councilor McClain stated that it seemed likely that the CLC would become a new voting location for Ward 2. He said there was some discussion of trying to create transit options for people who are far and there was a suggestion about using the CLC transportation system.

LC wanted to wish Donna Clifford good luck and thanked her for her time on the Board. DC said this was her 19th year on the Board and that it was a pleasure to be part of it.

There being no further business:

A motion to adjourn was made by JR, AB seconded, roll call was taken and passed unanimously.

Next Board Meeting: May 18, 2022 via Zoom.

The meeting adjourned at 6:14 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk