

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

Date and Time: January 20, 2021 at 5:15 P.M.

Meeting Location: Via Zoom

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

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

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 PS to approve the December 2020 Minutes, seconded by AW, roll call was taken, and passed unanimously.

Old Business:

CPA Rental Assistance Grant: LC advised that we received this Grant last year and the City Council brought it up to \$125,000.00. The CPA Grant is out again, and LC has learned that three applications have been approved and a fourth is pending. The approved applications are for \$4,200.00 each. The total amount of the grant is \$120,000.00. She advised that since there is a lot of money left from the grant, she would like the Board's permission not to apply this year.

GB asked how much was left from the grant and LC advised a little over \$100,000.00. AW asked if money is unspent, was it taken back. LC said no, that it was available until expended. JR asked if spent this year, could we apply next year. TA advised yes, but that we must watch and see what the need was.

New Business:

Friends Update: JR advised that the Friends were preparing for the SATV broadcast. TA advised the Board that the broadcast would be Thursday, January 28th at 6:00 P.M. She said only a handful of people would be live and the rest will Zoom in. They would be looking at the CLC space because the SATV space is very small. She advised that Patrick Kennedy would be at the CLC to see the space. State Representative Paul Tucker would be moderating. JR said the Board was welcome to Zoom in.

JR advised they were still working on the Cummings Foundation Grant application with TA and Fred Norton and that we were still on track for the \$100,000.00 grant.

LC asked if the Annual Appeal Letter had been sent out. JR said not yet. AW asked if there would be something on Facebook regarding donations and JR said yes. He said that timing was important and that they would wait until the Annual Appeal letter was mailed.

LC advised that the new liaison would be Councillor Domingo Dominquez. TA said Councilman Dominquez was very supportive of the Council on Aging and that she thought he would be a good fit.

Covid Vaccines: TA advised she had been talking frequently with the Health Department and they don't know yet when the vaccine will be available nor where it will be given.

LC suggested having the CLC a vaccine site and having senior only hours. TA advised that the Mayor had alluded to making testing sites vaccine sites. TA said she would advocate for the CLC to be a vaccine clinic.

LC stated she would send an email to the Mayor and Dominick Pangallo asking if the CLC could be a site.

AB stated that people know they are eligible but don't know where to get the vaccine and asked if we had the capacity where a nurse talks and answers questions via a Zoom site. LC suggested a robo call for seniors to sign up. AB said she would forward the email she sent out to people in Lincoln as Director of that COA.

LC advised that on the January 28th SATV broadcast, she would be speaking about ADU's and rental assistance and doing a preview on a housing forum. She asked the Board if there was anything else they would like her to talk about. TA suggested advising viewers that the COA Board had been advocating for affordable housing for seniors for a long time.

Director's Report:

Social Services:

- 31 seniors used email correspondence 55 times.
- 212 seniors called 407 times.
- 52 seniors came into the office or parking lot 68 times. (This will decrease in January and phone will increase due to not seeing in person with increased Covid #s.)
- All Covid Care Packages from CDBG grant distributed to approximately 500 seniors and disabled in housing.
- We are now designated as a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) partner and will hopefully bring in some reimbursement for processing applications; work we have already been doing for years.
- There is new paperless training for our food bank. Documentation is time-consuming but is part of the work that needs to be done under this program.

Programming:

We continue to work with SATV to provide several programs:

- Offering fitness classes at 9:00 am each morning
- *Senior Focus* show which highlights what is happening currently at the COA. We would like this to be a bit more structured going forward.
- We are working with local historian Jim McAllister to sponsor a lecture series on SATV.

We are offering three classes through a Zoom platform. We offer Zumba on Mondays at 1:00 pm, Meditation on Tuesdays at 11:00 am and Muscle and Strength on Wednesdays at 2:00 pm

In person classes have been suspended for the past few weeks due to the increase in COVID cases locally. When we do resume classes, following the state guidelines, we will be reducing the class size to nine. Participants will continue to do a Daily Health and Wellness Form, have their temperature taken, wear face coverings and maintain social distance guidelines.

GB asked if the COA had approached David Greenbaum about the rapid test which might help before classes. He said he had been using it before compassionate visits at their facility. TA said no, but would look into it.

The *Grab and Go Drive Thru Lunch* will begin on Tuesday, January 26th. Pre-registration is required with Rosanna. This is part of the Nutrition Education and Outreach program.

Transportation:

Last month saw a slight decrease in transportation ridership by roughly 50 rides. The majority of our rides remain to medical appointments and grocery store trips.

TA advocated to secure grant money for van repair and maintenance and the finance department met with the City Council on January 14th to secure \$7,000 to fortify our repair and maintenance budget. Until the City hires a fleet manager, we'd like to see options for a Plan B explored regarding funding for our budget. The Board discussed Essex Tech and Salem High School vocational students as possible groups we may be able to work with.

We added a trip to Wal-Mart at the beginning of December to meet the requests of seniors. Starting in February, we will be offering rides to all locations and destinations. When the time arrives, we will be offering rides for seniors to receive COVID-19 vaccinations.

Seniors have been very generous with donations during Covid. We again received over \$300.00 in donations during December.

We received notice from MassDOT that we have been awarded a new van which will arrive sometime this summer. Given the age of a number of our vans, this is very good news. In the months prior to receiving the new van, Annie O'Shea will be working with a local auto repair business to help us determine a van that we may be able to release from the fleet. The updates on that process will be coming.

The new Salem Skipper rideshare initiative implemented by the Mayor is currently seeing 200 rides a week. We have a number of seniors who have used the service and are very happy with the quality and ease. A few have mentioned the vehicle is difficult to physically get into which is why our service is still so important.

Nutrition Outreach and Education update:

Kerry Murphy from the Health Department and Kelley Annese are continuing to work on monthly nutrition and cooking videos. Video #4 (Peanut butter oatmeal bars) will be completed next week and ready for viewing. Video #5 is to be shot this week and completed by February.

We are working on getting the portable snack shack made for Spring programming. We want to be able to offer COA participants healthy snacks and easy to make recipes. We are researching healthy snacks to have available weekly in the Spring and going forward.

Tuesday, January 26th starts the drive-up free lunch program to help get older adults out of their houses to get a healthy lunch and a little socialization.

In the upcoming months, Kelley Annese will be working on "Secret Family Recipes" - a special cooking video or two that spotlights a COA senior that has a special family recipe to share and a guest chef that will make the recipe on video.

Next Board Meeting: February 17, 2021 via Zoom.

There being no further business:

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:49 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk