

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

Date and Time: October 21, 2020 at 5:21 P.M.

Meeting Location: Via Zoom

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

Members Absent: Abigail Butt, (AB)

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

Clerk: Kathleen Fitzgerald

Meeting Called to Order

LC called the meeting to order at 5:21 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 done.

A motion is made by PS to approve the September 2020 Minutes, seconded by AW, roll call was taken, and passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Auxiliary Dwelling Units: LC stated that she had not heard back from Dominick Pangallo about the insert in tax bills.

Sr. Housing Forum: JR stated that this should probably not be done virtually. LC stated that it could be done with a small audience. TA advised only 15 people are allowed in the Great Room. LC advised it could be put on and have SATV film it and then run it through them. TA said there are other players who would want to be involved.

LC asked if this should be before the end of the calendar year or put off until January. JR stated that we should wait and see what happens in the next 6-12 weeks to see if things open up. KM asked if there were any other venues that were bigger, and LC stated that people were fearful now. PS said if it had to be put off until the Spring it could be outside, and suggested Winter Island.

KM advised that SSU has multiple venues which could be another option; i.e. the O'Keefe Center. JR agreed that said that was a great venue.

JR said we would need to advertise by newsletter, SATV, phone tree, etc. LC suggested asking the City to do a robocall. TA said influencers were needed to attend as well as family members of seniors, etc.

KM asked if we have partnered with North Shore Elder Services regarding seniors getting services. TA stated that the social workers were in contact with them and that we could approach them about getting the word out.

KM, PS and JR volunteered to help with Housing Forum planning.

Director's Report:

Transportation: Transportation to medical appointments (within and out of town), grocery store trips to Market Basket and Crosby's as well as trips to the COA for social service appointments and classes are still being provided. We have three drivers back from furlough and with the uptick in requests, this remains manageable. Rides to the polls on November 3rd for the presidential election are starting to be scheduled.

The Farmers' Market has been extended through October and we continue to provide shuttle service from Old Town Hall to the new location at the Bentley School.

As of September, van driver Kris Wilson is helping the school department with the distribution of meals throughout the City with a van we are providing. Kris delivers meals 3x a week to designated areas for families in need. The schools are reimbursing the COA for driver compensation and mileage.

The Mass DOT has contacted us and indicated they will be letting us know the outcome of our grant request for a new van.

The vans have required quite a bit of maintenance and repairs over the past few months, and we are looking for areas we can obtain additional funds. \$7,000.00 had been allocated in the Operating Budget for repairs, but we are at the end of it. Annie O'Shea and TA will meet and we will probably need to go to the City for additional funds.

State inspections of the vans are almost completed.

JR asked if the vans went to private garages when repairs were needed. TA advised that DPW is so booked, that they do have to go to private garages. JR suggested checking with Salem Voc at the high school to see if they could do small jobs. He said he would see about a contact there. LC said Essex Tech also had auto repair. AW will reach out to a contact at Essex Tech.

iPads or Chromebooks: TA has asked IT to research and recommend reliable and affordable Chromebooks or Tablets for seniors. Mayor Driscoll is quite interested in making this happen to help alleviate social isolation.

Social Services: It is Medicare Open Enrollment through December 7th. Joe and Sharon are extremely busy. Lynne Barrett is out with a broken arm and not due back until November 9th. We have our student intern, Alyssa Flynn, to help offset some regular duties like phone calls, fuel assistance applications, etc.

The SNAP partnership will begin in January.

There have been more referrals to behavioral health counseling. We are offering online group support, but here has been only one call about group support.

Nutrition: We continue to have the pop-up Farmers' market on Tuesdays from 10:00-11:00 A.M. This will run through Thanksgiving week. Approximately 75 people are served weekly. A healthy treat and recipe is provided by Mary Ferreira. COVID relief grant funds help pay for her services as well as contractor, Kelley Annese, who orchestrates the markets and films and promotes them.

The Friends are sponsoring 150 Thanksgiving meals for Salem seniors in need. The meals will be cooked by Brothers Taverna. We will need volunteers to deliver the meals.

The Friends are still waiting to hear from the Cummings Foundation on whether or not they will be invited to apply for one of the \$100,000.00 grants. If awarded, we intend to use funding to enhance our nutrition education and outreach meal offerings and a Healthy Snack Shack with educational programs on "food as medicine".

Activities/Programs: We are still offering programs four mornings a week on SATV, Zumba and Tap in the parking lot, Zoom meditation, Book Club, and Balance and Chair Yoga at Winter Island. Facebook provides information on programming and other activities. There are policies in place should we be able to reopen to some indoor classes the week of November 8th. This will depend on COVID numbers and local guidance. Only the Great Room would be used with a maximum of 15 people per class.

SATV filmed our first COA show called "Senior Focus" on October 6th. We hope to do this either monthly or bi-monthly. Senior Focus is on Channel 3 Mondays at 8:30 A.M.

and Wednesdays at 5:35 P.M. and on Channel 15 Tuesdays at 5:10 P.M. It will be available online later this week.

On October 8th Kay and Brendan Walsh came to the COA for a small reception in Kay's honor to meet Alyssa Flynn, the first "Katherine Walsh" intern. The social work team, the Walshes, Trish O'Brien, Mayor Driscoll and TA visited, and Alyssa told Kay of her career goals. As most know, Kay was on the COA Board years ago, was President of the Board of North Shore Elder Services and a retired Nurse Practitioner, now diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Mayor Driscoll was instrumental in having the internship named in Kay's honor for all she has done for Salem seniors.

Next Board Meeting: November 18, 2020 in person or via Zoom.

There being no further business:

A motion to adjourn was made by JR.

The meeting adjourned at 6:01 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk