

# **North Reading Council on Aging Meeting Minutes Tuesday, July 25, 2023**

## **Attendees:**

Daniel Greenberg, Chairman, Maxine McPherson, Clerk, Valerie Schiavone, Member, Kim Manzelli Director, Senior Center, Lisa Ditrapano, Member, Margie Salt, Member, Angela Mauceri, Friends, Suresh Rao, non-member

1. Meeting called to order by Dan Greenberg
2. Minutes from the Last Meeting – the June 2023 minutes were approved by the Board.
3. Systems – Maxine. The Senior Center received a grant from the Massachusetts Council on Aging. The grant will allow the Senior Center to expand the lunch program to an offsite, larger location. The grant included money for rent, van driver, programs after lunch and other expenses. There was a brief discussion of the Cummings grants and why the Council and Senior Center don't qualify.
4. Dan explained the results of the Town Meeting changes:
  - a. The \$50,000 allocation was for a joint assessment with the Disability Council for a needs assessment and coordination on van driving needs.
  - b. The revolving fund limit was changed from \$12,000 to \$50,000. We have never taken advantage of the revolving fund and we need to look into bringing in fundraising for the fund. Might ask for donations for rides.
5. Director's report

## **Program Update:**

- Meal Program is ongoing 5 days/week with good participation
- Volunteer base is being increased to support programs
- Monthly special events and Monday exercise classes are at capacity
  - Aldersgate Church has agreed to the use of space every Monday, beginning September 11, 2023. MCOA Grant approved for full funding request – goal is to assist in funding/support for additional outreach to seniors in our community with pilot program and use of alternate space for 6 months.
- Second van on road on Tuesdays to support shopping trips to Market Basket and lunch outing
- Van drivers' hours are reaching the maximum allocated weekly budget of 35 combined hours
- The van schedule is to be re-assessed for maximum efficiency and best use of 35 hours maximum/week. Back up van driver was hired. Split shifts to be considered for drivers.
- Screened volunteer driver group has been implemented, with additional volunteer drivers still needed to fill service gap for out of town medical transportation. The lead volunteer is coordinating in collaboration with Lil Hartman and Susan Tilton. Sign - Up Genius in place.

## **Communication and Outreach:**

- Newsletter is in the process of revision. Friends of COA to cover mailing cost.
- Weekly email communication continues.
- Transcript and Norcam continue to promote Senior Center Programs
- National Night Out August 1<sup>st</sup> (rain date 8/8) 5:30 – 7:30 pm. Senior Center will have a table.

### **Facilities:**

- Handicap door buttons/Flooring /Interior paint - ? By Town in future. Date TBD. Recent meeting with Facilities and IT to prioritize projects and needs.
- Volunteers providing upkeep of outdoor flower garden and Trinity Church will return in the fall.
- Town Engineer and Town Planner reviewing traffic pattern
- New desks ordered to reconfigure office space and increase functionality

### **Budget**

- Increase in limit of revolving fund passed at Town Meeting. Tax Work off Program limit increased.
- Senior Gala Fundraiser at Hillview on Wednesday, September 27<sup>th</sup> from 4-7p.m. Venmo account was set up by Friends of COA and donations are actively being received.
- Future additional fundraising opportunities to be determined with Friends of COA

### **Staffing Update**

- Two paid summer interns were hired and will be leaving last week of August.
- Program and Volunteer Coordinator Position job description revised and posted.

## **6. Friends of the Council**

Working on the Senior Prom reservations and raising money to meet event costs. The budget goal was \$8000 and they already have over \$7000. Seniors can reserve a table for 10. Event is free but there will be a cash bar. Dan is going to reserve a table for the Board.

## **7. No Old Business**

## **8. New Business**

- a. Dan mentioned that there are about 4200 North Reading residents over 60, but only about 5% of the seniors use the center. We need to think about how to bring in additional people. What programs would they like to have available? Discussion on using available space away from the center, Val and Kim will talk to the Mason hall. Adding some form of life-long learning program might bring in people. Other suggestions: combining with another town senior center like Reading or Wilmington on special lunch program, having a discussion at Martins Landing about the senior center programs and what residents might like to see, seeing if a bereavement group or memory groups could be added at the church or other offsite, private space. Dealing with the growing problem of food insecurity in North Reading.
- b. Job announcement is out for a Program coordinator position. It is 19 hours a week at \$25 an hour.
- c. Val had sent out an email about grant possibilities and she will look into it and meet with Kim.

**Next meeting will be August 29 at 5:30 p.m.**

Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by Maxine MacPherson