

Minutes for COUNCIL ON AGING Hybrid Meeting

JUNE 14, 2023 - 1:00 PM

via Zoom and in-person at Senior Center Room 304

PRESENT: ZOOM: COA Members: Alberta Lipson, Amanda Hirst, Clara Chin, Judy Chasin, Rina Jacobson, William Wong, Fran Perler **Staff:** Jessica Milley-Gee, Julie Washburn **Public:** Patty Levi, Ellen Zellner

SENIOR CENTER ROOM 304: COA Members: Yolanda Rodriguez, John VanScoyoc, John Mulhane, Helen Lew, Monique Richardson, Jenny Chan, Joyce Wishnick, Marcia Goldstein **Staff:** Ruthann Dobek, Jamie Jensen, Kristine Farley, Sharon Sandalow **Public:** Virginia Frawley, Ellen Wayne, Dorothea Brown, Lydia Kaufman, and others

WELCOME: Yolanda Rodriguez, COA Chair, welcomed all remote and in-person participants, and expressed thanks to all for attending the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER: Yolanda called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM

ROLL CALL OF ATTENDEES: Jamie Jensen read the names of those in attendance as of 1:03 PM (see above list of attendees)

OPEN DISCUSSION: Yolanda opened the meeting to participant discussion and topics not included on the agenda. Yolanda reported on the Special COA Meeting held on June 1 that included a discussion on asset limits on the proposed Senior Means-Tested Property Tax Exemption. Feedback from this Special Meeting was brought to the Select Board on June 6 by Brookline Finance Director Lincoln Heineman and Chief Assessor Rachid Belhocine. The Select Board voted to set the asset limit for the tax exemption at \$750,000- the same limit as the Town of Sudbury.

No other topics were introduced for discussion.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES: A motion passed to accept the minutes of the May 10, 2023 meeting with an amendment to include Ellen Zellner in the list of attendees. Minutes were accepted by unanimous vote.

INTRODUCTION TO GUEST SPEAKER: Yolanda welcomed and introduced Amanda Hirst, Director of Libraries for the Town of Brookline.

Amanda thanked the Council for the invitation to speak and provided a brief personal background. Amanda presented slides (see ATTACHMENT A.), and live navigation of the Public Library of Brookline website (www.brooklinelibrary.org) to supplement a presentation on the library and its offerings. Main presentation points included:

- An overview of library locations, statistics, and services
- Library accomplishments in FY23, which includes increased engagement to Brookline's older adult population with online and in-person programming.
- Library goals for FY24, including continued partnership with community organizations to increase the reach of library collections, programs, and services, especially to those who are unfamiliar with what the library is and does.
- New library initiatives, including outreach and mobile services, such as a fully-electric Library Outreach Vehicle (bookmobile).

Live navigation of the library website included:

- Demonstration of basic site navigation
- Locating unusual items to borrow (Library of Things)
- Highlights from the library's digital collection
- Navigating the site's Events calendar and its filter function
- *kanopy* movie-streaming service, and *Pressreader* magazine database available to library cardholders
- Overview of Summer Reading Program

Amanda welcomed participant questions and comments, including:

- Thank you to Brookline librarians
- Request for extended library hours at Coolidge Corner, and to post planned closures on door ahead of time
- *How extensive is the inter-library loan program?*
A: The program allows for borrowing within the Minuteman network. Inter-library loans include libraries outside of the Commonwealth of MA. These types of loan requests may be initiated through an in-person visit, by calling the library, or using the website's chat function.

Ruthann thanked Amanda and the Brookline Public Library network for the positive, collaborative relationship with the Council on Aging and Senior Center. Ruthann thanked Library staff Guy Harris, who works collaboratively with the Senior Center on the Tech Buddies Program, and who is a member of the Age-Friendly Cities Committee.

Yolanda and Ruthann thanked Amanda for presenting to the COA, and extended an invitation back to provide updates.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Nominating Report—Yolanda Rodriguez

Yolanda reported that this year the Town followed a new procedure of sending out letters to Council members up for reappointment. The Council on Aging, however, will follow the past procedure of Yolanda reaching out directly to any member up for reappointment. Yolanda and Ruthann continue to welcome suggestions for new Council on Aging members. The Nominating Committee will meet in a hybrid format on Wednesday, August 9, 2023 at 1PM at the Senior Center and via Zoom.

B. Springwell Report- Judith Chasin

Judy Chasin reported that Springwell is completely merged with Baypath, and still seeking staff and volunteers to help with a variety of activities including serving hot meals/ delivering meals, answering phones, and ombudsman positions.

C. Recreation Report

Fran Perler reported that pickleball is still in progress with the Recreation Department, and there will be a senior pickleball tournament on June 18. Friends of Halls Pond is holding its Annual Meeting at the Senior Center.

D. Redesign Report

Ruthann reported on the new chairs throughout the Senior Center, as well as a future order of club chairs for the coffee lounge, etc. Those who would like to lend their opinion on chair design should contact Ruthann or Julie Washburn.

REPORT FROM SELECT BOARD – John VanScoyoc

John reported on the following:

- The question raised at Town Meeting of establishing a Housing Stability Office within the Town of Brookline. This Office would not provide monetary assistance, but assist individuals navigating housing crises, and putting residents on the path to housing stability by helping help residents find and maintain stable, safe, and affordable housing.
- Various resources among existing Town departments would be combined in the proposed Housing Stability Office
- The Town Administrator will be reporting on next steps.

REPORT FROM THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE –Nancy Rhei Gorer

No report today- Nancy not present at meeting.

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR – Ruthann Dobek

1. STAFF TRANSITIONS

- Clinical social worker Freddi Langenthal will retire from the COA on June 30 after many years of dedicated service. The Council on Aging wishes Freddi all the best in retirement. A coffee hour to honor Freddi's contributions and celebrate Freddi's retirement will be on June 20 at 11:00 AM. All are welcome.
- Tech Buddies Digital Navigator Annie Braudy will be leaving the position, and Alex Krieger will cover this position over the summer until it can be filled permanently.
- Barbara Rabinovitz will retire from the Communications Consultant position with the Council on Aging at the end of June. Barbara was responsible for the addition of an Around Town section in the monthly newsletter.

2. UTILITY BOX UPDATE

The utility box outside the Senior Center has been beautified with a sunflower mural painted by an artist contracted with Eversource.

3. THANK YOU NOTES

Ruthann and Yolanda shared three thank you notes received by Ruthann and the Council on Aging by Senior Center volunteers and participants.

4. AARP GRANT AWARD

In June 2023, The Brookline Senior Center was awarded a Community Building Grant from the AARP of Massachusetts to support outreach on transportation options and resources in the community. This

project will provide transportation for low to moderate income residents including seniors to two important community events. A community survey and focus groups on the transportation needs of the community will be conducted.

5. FY24 BUDGET UPDATE

Town Meeting approved COA budget recommendations from the Advisory Committee. In FY24, the COA will receive additional funding to support a longstanding request for a needs assessment and 10-Year Strategic Plan development. The FY24 budget also supports the funding of a full-time clinical social work position that was previously funded as part-time.

6. UPDATE ON VARIOUS PROJECTS

- Etsy update: \$8,838 in revenue from 183 orders since start of shop
- Stop and Shop continues to send us donations from its reusable bag and Bloomin' 4 Good bouquet programs
- The Quilt Raffle raised \$688 in proceeds. Winner Janet Weinberg was drawn on Friday, 6/9 at the Marie Lavine concert.

7. UPDATE ON PROGRAMS (Ruthann & Jamie)

- Yard Sale on Thurs, 6/15 from 10a-2p
- Reagle Theater- The Little Mermaid on August 2- Tickets still available.

8. RECYCLING UPDATES

- The Universal Waste Program will run from May-October
- Shredding event was a success

9. HANDOUTS

- Meeting schedule handout (see ATTACHMENT B.)
- Home Health Aide article from Boston Globe (see ATTACHMENT C.)

NEXT MEETINGS

NO COA MEETING IN JULY. AUGUST 9, 2023 IS NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEETING. NEXT REGULAR HYBRID COA BOARD MEETING SEPTEMBER 13, 2023 at 1:00 PM.

Ruthann and Yolanda wished all fathers and grandfathers a Happy Father's Day weekend.

Yolanda motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:17 PM. It was so moved and seconded.

Respectfully submitted by Jessica Milley-Gee.