



Robert McCarthy
ACTING MAYOR

Tricia O'Brien
SUPERINTENDENT

CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

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SALEM COUNCIL ON AGING REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

Date and Time: April 19, 2023 at 5:15 p.m.

Meeting Location: Community Life Center, in person, 401 Bridge Street, Salem MA

Members Present: Lynda Coffill (LC, Chair), John Russell (JR, Vice-Chair), Kristin Macek (KM, Secretary), Abigail Butt (AB, Treasurer), Eliud Alcala (EA), George Barbuzzi (GB), Michelle Bettencourt (MB), Michele McHugh (MM) and Patricia Small (PS)

Also Present: Teresa Arnold, (TA, Director of the COA) and Annette DeFrancisco (AD) from Beacon Communities

Clerk: Joanne M. Roomey

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

JR called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 15, 2023 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by GB to approve the March 15, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes. Seconded by EA. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

a. Kitchen Update - John Russell and Teresa Arnold

TA said since Michael Lutzykowski no longer works for the city, they will reach out to Thomas St. Pierre, the city's Inspectional Service Director, to talk about the next steps and to see if Joe Candelaria can steer everything moving forward. Everything is still going according to schedule.

b. Senior Housing - Lee Fort Terrace

Annette DeFrancisco from Beacon Communities updated the Board: (a) they will be considering adding two more two-bedroom units to make 53 subsidized units designated to seniors. The rent is still set at 30% of their income and heat and electricity will be included. She also said they are in the permitting process with HIU for relocation. Beacon Communities got permission from the Salem Housing Authority to use any units that are vacant while residents await their unit and they are giving preference to folks to see if they want to go to other cities until their unit is completed.

Beacon is hiring a full time Resident Services Coordinator during the relocation period to keep Lee Fort Terrace residents connected and engaged. The salary is commensurate with experience and will include benefits. Interested applicants can send their resume to Beacon Communities.

c. Food Insecurity

TA said the COA has a mini farmers market when produce is in season once a month. Farm Direct Co-op shares their organic produce. Monday through Friday, we offer daily lunch in accordance with the federal Title III-C program. The suggested donation is \$2.25. The COA will provide rides to the new Salem Pantry market at Lafayette and Congress Streets.

Salem for All Ages Funding

The COA Chair, LC, asked the co-chairs of Salem for All Ages for a \$20,000 donation for the kitchen. Salem for All Ages co-chair Dominick Pangallo suggested that the COA request additional ARPA funds. LC found out that the \$100,000 SFAA five-year grant is administered through the mayor's office. She will follow up with Chris Sicuranza from the mayor's office to get an accounting.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Senior Day Update

PS, MM, GB, EA and TA met last Friday to discuss having a Salem Senior Day to honor local older adults who have significantly contributed to the community and who have great life stories. Some of the ideas were to have an event in conjunction with International Senior Day, United States Senior Day or to create a Reframing Aging Day. The event could be a festival of some type to highlight contributions from local seniors. Beverly holds annually their Senior Day at Lynch Park; Gloucester did a book "The Past is the Present". TA will meet with the COA Director in Gloucester to learn more. Gloucester is currently celebrating their 400+ anniversary including recognizing indigenous people. They are collecting profiles of younger and older people. The City of Salem's 400+ is in 2026 and we should start thinking about what to do for the COA. TA said the Senior Day will not happen this year, but we need to start planning.

b. Strategy Meeting Update

MB, JR and LC met on March 31st and discussed a two-prong strategy:

1. Remove the COA out from the umbrella of Park and Recreation Department; and

2. Get a salary increase for the Director of the COA.

c. Friends of the COA Report

JR reported that one of the Friends' CDs is ready to mature and the group would like to take out \$10,000 and put it into the checking account. There is \$19,000 left in the checking account now.

Easter meals were down from last year. The Friends want to focus on folks with no family and who cannot get a meal on Easter. They put aside \$4,500 and only used \$2,900 so they will put \$1,600 back into the Friends' account.

The Friends approved an \$850 Father's Day barbeque at Winter Island to feed about 150 people. They will have hot dogs, burgers and chips.

The Friends will host a Mayoral Debate on May 8th at 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. to address senior issues. The candidates will get two minutes to respond and one minute for a rebuttal. JR will be the moderator and it will be on SATV broadcast live and advertised through the Salem News, Salem Digest, Salem Patch and the Friends' and COA's respective Facebook pages.

d. Director's Report, Teresa Arnold

Social Services:

The social workers would like to thank Abby Butt for all her hard work and advocacy regarding the Farmer Market Coupons. Folks across the entire Commonwealth will benefit from the increase as well as the farmers.

Eighty-one seniors were assisted 231 times with their fuel assistance applications this heating season so far. NSCAP is taking much longer this year to process these applications leaving many worrying whether they will receive the benefit. The delays are due to a larger number of applications received this year, staffing issues, and their director leaving back in December. The social work team will continue to assist those anxiously waiting for their letters.

We are still seeing evictions and many applying for senior housing. The team has assisted 31 seniors with NEW applications this year.

We continue to outreach to those turning 60 with a birthday letter and our newsletter. Two-hundred and seventy-one have been mailed since the beginning of the fiscal year.

Our intern, Lanai Ritchie's last day is tomorrow. She has gained acceptance into the SSU School of Social Work for her Master's degree.

Transportation:

Transportation will be saying goodbye to van driver George Lugo this week. He has decided to move on.

The addition of an extra one-way ride per day is reaching our seniors and working nicely for folks that need the extra service.

Transportation will be providing rides for the new “The Market” by the Salem Pantry. Folks needing rides to pick up food can call the office to schedule rides on Fridays from 10-11:00 am.

Dining Services:

This month, three volunteers are stepping away for various reasons and we have Mary, newly joining our team. All enjoy being here and help with extra shifts.

Consistently our Wednesday lunch is between 45 and 49 people; today we had 51 reservations.

We don’t see anyone sitting alone anymore; great to see people visiting outside their “regular” group and enjoying each other.

We are in the process of ordering a food slicer and robot coupe, both pieces of equipment should enable reduction of food costs and labor time.

Programs/Activities:

The Wellness Walks series has returned. The second Wednesday of each month, we gather at Salem Common for a walk. The guest speaker this month was Julio Moto of the Mayor’s office. This event is co-sponsored by the Salem Board of Health.

There is a group from the COA going to the PEM this Friday to see the Iris Apfel “Rare Bird of Fashion” collection.

We have been working with students in the SSU Occupational Therapy Department this month. They created and facilitated four lectures for our seniors held each Monday afternoon. They have been well attended and the topics have included Fall Prevention, Thriving in Retirement, Managing Sleep and Successful Living with Low Vision.

We also continue to collaborate with Salem State’s School of Nursing. The spring cohort of seniors will continue to be here on Wednesdays through May 3rd. The students meet with seniors, participate in classes and lectures, offer fall prevention education, blood pressure screenings and more.

Memory Café

The April Memory Café is Thursday, April 27th at 1:00 pm and will be a group sound healing. Next month is a flower arranging class.

Kelley Annese is working on building a six-week Cognitive Empowerment Wellness Series specifically for those living with dementia and their caregivers.

On Thursday, June 8th, we will host Karen Coppola, Certified Dementia Practitioner for a workshop entitled *Dementia & Caregiving: Your Questions Answered*.

V. OTHER BUSINESS: None

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, May 17, 2023

There being no further business to come before the Council on Aging Board this evening, GB moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by MM. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at **6:15 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Joanne M. Roomey
Board Clerk

Know Your Rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. Chapter 30A ss. 18-25 and City Ordinance
Sections 2-2028 through 2-2033.