



Dominick Pangallo
MAYOR

Tricia O'Brien
SUPERINTENDENT

CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

JEAN A. LEVESQUE COMMUNITY LIFE CENTER

401 Bridge Street, Salem MA 01970

Tel. (978) 744-0180/(978) 744-0924

Fax (978) 219-1665

PObrien@salem.com

SALEM COUNCIL ON AGING REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

Date and Time: June 21, 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), Abigail Butt (AB, Treasurer), Kristin Macek (KM, Secretary), Michelle Bettencourt (MB) and Patricia Small (PS)
Absent: Eliud Alcala, George Barbuzzi and Michele McHugh
Also Present: Teresa Arnold, (TA, Director of the COA)
Clerk: Joanne M. Roomey

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

II. APPROVAL OF THE MAY 17, 2023 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by PS to approve the May 17, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes. Seconded by JR. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

a. Senior Day Update

The committee had a meeting on June 2, 2023 with Leo Jodoin, who previously founded a Senior Celebration Week in memory of his mother. They wanted ideas from Mr. Jodoin on how he organized the senior celebration that could help them for next year. A lot of these activities are what we already offer during annual Heritage Week. However, we will create a special celebration for Senior Day.

LC suggested that someone from the Friends of the COA and/or Veterans should participate in the meetings. Other suggestions for participants were to have Julio Mota from the Mayors' office and Councilor Merkl attend. The committee will hold their next meeting on July 7, 2023.

b. Budget FY'24

TA presented the budget on June 7, 2023 to the City Council and it was passed.

Councilor Dominguez had questions regarding Spanish outreach and hiring bilingual staff. The COA could ask the DEI director for some assistance to get a broader pool of people when hiring staff. In the meantime, Julio Mota and Rosanna Donahue are available for Spanish translation when needed.

Councilor Morsillo asked about aging services for the homebound. TA responded that the social workers do see some homebound clients and these individuals usually become clients of AgeSpan when requiring home care services. Our team is still part of a care plan for the homebound. Rosanna Donahue translates if necessary.

AB said, "for shame that the City of Salem is making the COA use the grant money for the van drivers and other staff instead of including it into the budget."

JR said, "it is embarrassing for what some of the staff are making now. They are underpaid and the staff feels slighted." Suggestions were to have HR do an area salary survey.

There was discussion about a more appropriate title for the director (TA) reflecting the human service components of the job, but that the term Human Services is quite broad and needs to be defined.

TA will start having monthly meetings with the mayor and will continue to attend monthly department head meetings.

IV. NEW and OLD BUSINESS:

New Business:

There was further discussion about a more fitting title for the Director of the Council on Aging. The Board also discussed having a city social worker that would work under the supervision of TA. JR will contact Sabrina Trask from the Mayor's office to set up a meeting in July to discuss these matters.

Old Business:

a. Friends of the COA Report

JR said the Father's Day Barbeque went off great. 165 people attended. The Friends suggested having a golf tournament for a fund raiser or perhaps a pasta dinner. There was a discussion about what to do with the \$80,000 that reflect the funds now; perhaps investments.

b. Mass Council on Aging Call for Presentations

TA spoke about Rev. James Ashton, an interfaith minister, who the COA has engaged to guide seniors in a once-a-month group session through the *Heart and Soul Conversation Series*. Sponsored by the Friends of the COA, this program is to help connect with life's deeper spiritual meaning. TA and James Ashton have applied to present this series and its impact on seniors at the MCOA Conference this Fall in Danvers.

Boston University MetroBridge Project

MM reached out to Julio Mota, Regina Zaragoza Frey; Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Councilor Dominguez and Councilor Merkl to try to gain suggestions on how to engage and work more closely with diverse populations. MM, on behalf of the COA, applied to the MetroBridge program.

MetroBridge cultivates projects by seeking out the distinct research needs of cities, towns and community-based organizations and collaborating with faculty across the university to find the best course match for each project. They view their approach as a win-win solution as it provides tailored research support to under-resourced communities, while simultaneously providing real-world learning experiences to students from various disciplines to prepare them for their future careers.

Director's Report, Teresa Arnold

Social Services:

- Farmers Market distribution: Calls are already coming in to register and people are pleased to learn that the amount has increased to \$50.00. Thank you to Abby Butt for her advocacy.
- Durable Medical Lending Closet: Since July 1, 2022, 258 pieces of equipment have been borrowed from 185 individuals (not to mention Depends, pads/shields that have been handed out as they are donated). Many are saving funds by using our program.
- Housing issues continue. 107 individuals have been assisted 497 times for eviction and housing issues since July 1, 2022. This does not include the number of folks assisted with new applications or recertifying their lease with Salem Housing. We are thankful to have the housing court advocate available right here in the CLC with office hours.
- Smartphone assistance: We just recently added this category to track the number of inquiries. This month, four individuals were assisted ten times by social worker Alyssa Flynn. We will continue to track the number of inquiries.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) It was mentioned there was misinformation in our newsletter in May. This information was actually sent to us from the SNAP program, but out of date. We will be careful to ensure information is up to date for any subject we add to our monthly *Senior Power*.

Dining Services:

- The surplus from the monthly Salem Food Pantry day helps to offset our food costs when we prepare the meals, enhance Trio's catered lunch and cook soup. This month we received two cases of organic sliced turkey, bags of fresh apples, walnuts, pasta and a case of sweet potatoes.
- This is the second year we received a donation of many cases of Girl Scout cookies. We incorporate them into meals and set some out as "free food" which is popular for our guests.
- We will attempt to serve a "cooked upon request" breakfast Thursday 13th July. The donation is \$4 for scrambled eggs, bacon, and an English muffin.

Activities/Programs:

- Salem Rotary Club sponsored our Senior Prom event on Thursday, June 15th. 80 participants enjoyed salad, chicken parmesan, dancing to live music and our night was capped off with the selection of a prom king and queen. Special thanks to the several members of the Rotary Club that came to help at the event.
- Special thanks to the Friends of the Salem Council on Aging that sponsored our Father's Day BBQ at Winter Island on Friday, June 16th. John Russell and crew fed 160 seniors.
- Due to the popularity of our Chair Pilates class, we will be adding a second class beginning in July. The second class will be held on Friday mornings at 8:30 am.
- Starting in July, Bonnie Peruffo will be teaching a Ballroom and Swing Dance class on Tuesdays at 11:30am.
- Friday, June 30th will be our annual Fourth of July celebration. Erica Blumberg, Dining Services Coordinator, will be preparing breakfast treats and music will be provided by Tony Malioneck.

Transportation:

- We have welcomed back Michael Phelan and do not have any other staff changes at this time.
- In addition to our regular schedule, we are meeting the increased demand of summer schedules and activities.
- We continue to repair and maintain the condition of our vans. Our fleet is aging, and we are starting to look for grant opportunities to prepare for future needs.

Memory Café:

- This month at the Memory Café, folks will learn about the mythology and spiritual essences of flowers while getting a chance to make their own flower arrangements.
- The "Mind Your Brain Wellness" website is getting ready to launch this summer with free videos on yoga, guided relaxation, and healthy cooking.

Other Noteworthy News:

- TA and Friends President Andrew LaPointe presented an overview of the COA and Friends of the COA mission at the Rotary Club meeting on June 13th at the Hawthorne Hotel.
- The Council on Aging is grateful to the 8th grade class from the Saltonstall School for their kind donation of five-hundred and twenty dollars to support Salem seniors. Back in March, COA Director Teresa Arnold was contacted by 8th grader “Mia” and teacher Katherine Jahl to see how the students could help the seniors as part of their *Action Civics* class. The students had a meeting via Zoom with the director to learn about our services and offerings at the Council on Aging. The students then raised funds to support our programming and services as their mission was to make a difference for a component of the community.

V. OTHER BUSINESS:

- TA reached out to the City Clerk regarding ballet boxes being placed at the CLC. Ms. Simons said she did not think it was a good idea since there are no cameras or security in place.
- There are several SCAMS going around, and example of one is folks get a call saying their grandchild is in jail and to give them money. The Board wants to make folks aware of these scams by putting them in the newsletter and having the impact unit from the Police Department come and do a presentation. A suggestion was to have a code word between you and your children/grandchildren. TA assured the Board that we print scam information regularly in *Senior Power*. In addition, the Community Impact Unit presents one to two times a year to the seniors.

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, September 20, 2023

There being no further business to come before the Council on Aging Board this evening, JR moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by AB. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at **6:20 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.