



Dominick Pangallo
MAYOR

Tricia O'Brien
SUPERINTENDENT

CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

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SALEM COUNCIL ON AGING REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

Date and Time: September 20, 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), Eliud Alcala (EA), George Barbuzzi (GB), Michelle Bettencourt (MB) and Patricia Small (PS)

Absent: Michele McHugh, Abigail Butt

Also Present: Teresa Arnold, (TA, Director of the COA) and Councilor Alice Merkl (AM)

Clerk: Joanne M. Roomey

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

II. APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 21, 2023 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by JR to approve the June 21, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes. Seconded by PS. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

a. Senior Housing Including Shetland Park

KM spoke with Dustin Luca from The Salem News about the housing authority situation. There was an article in WBUR saying "the housing authority in Salem took four apartments in a downtown tower for seniors and converted them into offices, including a break room and space for file storage. After the president of the tenants' association stumbled onto two of the repurposed units last year in the building he lives in, the housing authority launched eviction proceedings against him. The agency said

he was trespassing. He said there was no indication the offices were off limits. The case is pending.” Please see link below from WBUR News for more information:

[Mass. has a huge waitlist for state-funded housing. So why are 2,300 units vacant? | WBUR News](#)

TA will follow up with Cathy Hoog, Executive Director of the Salem Housing Authority, to get clarification on the article and where they are at with the four units and eviction.

The board members said Lee Fort Terrace is a done deal with the original plan and the same number of senior housing units.

Councilor Merkl went to the Point Neighborhood Association meeting on September 5, 2023 and said there are 1100 to 1400 units with no affordability. There are no specifics yet on the number of affordable housing units. Councilor Merkl will follow up with the board regarding the latest information on how many units are available.

On behalf of MM, TA began discussion regarding the housing development at Shetland Park and wondered if any units will be designated for seniors. It would be terrific if there was a consideration for a senior community featuring one stop living, independent, assisted and long-term care. The Board will follow this development.

b. Senior Day Update

TA said we should have Senior Day only for one day. A lot of these activities are what we already offer during annual Heritage Week. We will create a special celebration for Senior Day. GB spoke with Jeff Swartz from the Chamber of Commerce and Mr. Swartz said he could help with promotions. The Senior Day Committee is meeting tomorrow to discuss this further. LC mentioned that Salem’s 400 Anniversary is also coming up in 2026.

c. Follow Up from Meeting with Mayor Pangallo

LC said she had a couple of meetings with the mayor to discuss separating the Council on Aging as a stand-alone department. She also discussed changing Teresa Arnold’s title from Director, Salem Council on Aging to Director of Senior and Social Services. LC discussed salary ranges too.

The Mayor asked LC to have documentation of exactly what the Board is asking for. LC suggested finding out what other communities do. Is this a stand-alone department; salary structure/survey and what are the benefits to the community since 25% of the population are seniors and 30% of voters are also seniors. LC will send an email out again to the Board to finish up this justification at the October meeting. We should have an answer by November 1st to all the Mayor’s questions.

d. Kitchen Update

JR said Joe Candelaria, our Facilities Manager, met with Anthony Delaney, Chief Procurement Officer today to discuss finding a new contractor as Russo-Barr is not responding to emails and calls. The biggest issues are the installation of hood/vent and updating the plumbing. We are getting quotes on equipment. We will be able to save money if we hire someone local.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Haunting Happenings

The COA will attend the parade this year on October 5th around 6:30 p.m. The staff will decorate one of the vans and TA and GB will go in the van together with any other board members who would like to ride. LC, JR and others will walk. Seniors will ride in a trolley. LC also said you cannot throw candy out of the van. She usually just passes candy out to the seniors; it is not all about the young people.

b. Friends of the COA Report

JR said the Friends had a meeting this morning and they lost two past members. Roger Leger, an honorable Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War and Dianne Donahue, Rosanna Donahue's mother-in-law, who was a nurse.

They have approved Thanksgiving meals again for this year. JR said they want to have a pasta dinner. Maybe the Friends can use the Bass River facility which is a certified safe kitchen. LC has a contact person there and will get more information. The Friends have \$90,000 in their accounts and want to use it. JR suggested using it for more exercise equipment. LC also suggested using some of the money for exercise classes and possibly getting a divider between the COA reception area and the great room.

JR also spoke about the start of Halloween and the new parking lot regulations. They were going to advertise \$30 parking for the day at the CLC and let folks know that the money will be split between the COA and Parks & Recreation. Other parking lots are charging \$50 per day to park, such as St. Peter's and St. John's lots.

LC spoke about senior scam initiatives. She suggested having the Community Impact Unit come in again to speak with folks. She also suggested that seniors should have a safe word so if their grandchild called, they would know it was legitimate. The main thing is to educate folks so they will not get scammed. TA reminded the Board that we print scam information in the newsletter and the Community Impact Unit speaks a few times a year on scams and other useful information for senior safety.

c. Director's Report, Teresa Arnold

*Mayor Pangallo has approved a public service funding award for the Salem Council on Aging for the following programs:

•\$1,000 – Creative Art Program, •\$1,200 – Muscle, Strength and Endurance (Exercise) Program, •\$10,000 – Memory Café, •\$15,700 – Transportation Program

These awards are grants from the City of Salem's federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for the period of July 1, 2023 through May 31, 2024 (FY24).

*Michele McHugh spent time going door to door canvassing the Point neighborhood with Julio Mota and Michael Corley from the Mayor's office (2 hours) -distribution of Spanish newsletters at Wednesday pop-up pantry on Loring Street and at the Salem Pantry Market on Congress street -distribution at last Sunday Spanish Mass-Mary Queen of Apostle Church -contact with Charlie Joyce from Mary Queen of Apostle Church to display what's applicable to the Spanish community. Michele spoke with Michael Corley who may contact us to talk about a Latin event at the CLC, perhaps salsa or something similar.

*Tech Grant awarded. We received \$100,000 from Elder Affairs to train 55 seniors and provide a device and one year of internet after completion of 15 hours of education.

*Social Worker Staffing-Alyssa Flynn left to go to grad school. We are looking for a Spanish-speaking social worker.

*Kitchen- Russo-Barr, the contractor who started plans with the kitchen has been minimally responsive to Joe Candelaria, Facilities Coordinator. Joe will talk with Purchasing Agent Anthony Delaney for alternative steps to seek other contractors. Erica has received two bids for equipment; we hope to have three. (as mentioned in Old Business)

*Parade is Thursday, 10/5. Please let TA know if you are planning to participate and want to walk or ride. We have the trolley (priority for our seniors) and will likely have one of our vans participating as well. (as mentioned in New Business)

Departments are functioning status quo. We are very busy.

d. Annual Meeting - Election of Officers in October

Prior to the October Board meeting, they will need to elect a Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The current selections are:

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|---------------|------------|------------|
| John Russell | Vice-Chair | 11/15/2024 |
| Kristin Macek | Secretary | 12/08/2023 |
| Abigail Butt | Treasurer | 12/08/2023 |

V. OTHER BUSINESS:

Tray Heggie from Beacon Properties was in attendance. He introduced himself and said he is the new Resident Coordinator. He will reach out to TA and looks forward to working with Salem.

NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, October 18, 2023, VIA ZOOM

VI. VOTE TO ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Council on Aging Board this evening, JR moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by KM. 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.