

**SALEM COUNCIL ON AGING**  
**Minutes of Regular Meeting**

**Date and Time:** December 16, 2020 at 5:15 P.M.

**Meeting Location:** Via Zoom

**Members Present:** Lynda Coffill (LC, Chair), John Russell (JR, Vice-Chair), George Barbuzzi (GB), Alice Williams (AW), Donna Clifford (DC), Kristin Macek (KM), Patricia Small (PS), and Abigail Butt, (AB)

**Members Absent:** Julie Carver (JC)

**Also Present:** Teresa Arnold, (TA, Director of the COA)

**Clerk:** Kathleen Fitzgerald

**Meeting Called to Order**

LC called the meeting to order at 5:15 P.M.

LC stated that pursuant to Governor Baker's directive on 3/12/20 which supported certain provisions of Chapter 30A, Section 20, there are strict limitations regarding gatherings, so this meeting is being conducted via Zoom. The public and persons who would like to listen may do so by dialing in. All votes taken shall be by roll call.

Roll call was then taken.

A motion was made by AB to approve the October 2020 Minutes, seconded by AW, roll call was taken, and passed unanimously.

**Old Business:**

**Tax Bill Insert:** Information about ADU's and tax benefits to seniors would be included in January property tax bills.

**Senior Housing Forum:** The Friends will be on SATV on January 28, 2021 and will be talking about what they do and then LC will be on to talk about housing issues and the housing forum. There was some concern about distancing in the studio so some people

will be on via Zoom. Details are being worked out with Patrick Kennedy at SATV. JR advised that they did not want to postpone or delay this because they wanted to get this program aired on time to keep moving forward.

**Sr. Covid Testing** - There was some confusion about Covid testing for seniors at The Willows. Lisa Cammarata from Human Resources went down because there was no distinction for age. PS stated she had gone, but since there was no distinction for age and many people who were not seniors were in line, she left. LC asked why there could not be one day for seniors at the CLC for Covid testing. TA advised that it related to funding. TA did state that she had made it clear that we would like testing to remain at the CLC and would have vans available to accommodate. LC asked if it would help if the Board contacted the Mayor about senior testing and PM asked if testing at the CLC only went until the end of December. TA advised that it may depend on funding.

### **New Business:**

**Friends Update:** JR reaffirmed that the SATV program would be January 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 P.M. He said the program would begin talking about the Friends and what they do and then LC would talk about senior housing and the senior forum.

JR stated that the Cumming Grant deadline was January 8<sup>th</sup>, and that Fred Norton and TA are working on it. He stated that if we got the grant it would be used for nutritional matters.

Regarding the generator, JR advised that we might be looking to the Friends for this.

JR advised that the annual appeal letter would be going out in January and would be going out to approximately 600 people who had given in the past two years. He advised that they would put it up on Facebook, so hopefully it would reach other people. He stated that last year the Friends raised \$5,000.00 in two weeks because of Facebook.

LC advised that the Friends were also funding some of the cost for the printing of information to be included with tax bills. JR stated the Friends wanted to make sure they didn't throw all their money into one basket, so they were giving \$500.00 to help with printing. He advised that the print job at the jail could print it but could not fold it.

### **Director's Report:**

**Transportation:** Last month saw a slight increase in ridership and we have averaged 260 one-way rides in the past 3 months. We are averaging 50% + of our rides to medical appointments, roughly 35% for trips to the grocery store, and the balance of rides to the polls, COA and pharmacy.

We have seen an increase in repairs to the vans over the past month and have currently spent 100% of our repair and maintenance budget. Currently, the position of fleet manager vacated by Steve Tassinari remains unfilled which in large part explains the depletion of funds. Historically, DPW serviced our vans for repairs and pre-inspections for yearly inspection stickers. In the interim, the COA is responsible for outsourcing

repairs to the vans which has proven quite costly. Laurie Giardella, the City Finance Director, is currently trying to secure \$7,000.00 to replenish our budget. We currently have a few vans in need of service, and at the beginning of the new year will start the cycle of state inspections and pre-inspection visits to our local repair shop.

We have added a trip to Wal-Mart this month in December to meets the requests of a number of seniors.

Jorge Lugo, Anne Caron and Mary Caron are our transportation heroes and continue to transport our seniors to their respective destinations during COVID. We are grateful for their dedication and service.

Seniors have been very generous with donations during Covid. We are averaging \$350.00/month.

**Programming/Activities:** We continue to offer a few in person classes (Chair Yoga, Meditation, Book Club and Balance) at the CLC following all public health guidelines to include:

- \* limit to 15 participants
- \* chairs are stationed 6 feet apart
- \* face coverings mandatory at all times
- \* daily health and wellness/temperature check
- \* keeping all the doors to the great room open at all times.

Currently we are offering Muscle and Strength and Zumba through a Zoom format once a week.

We are working with local historian, Jim McAllister and with SATV, to sponsor lectures to be aired on SATV. Jim will be producing three lectures entitled “25 Things You Didn’t Know about Salem”. We will work with SATV on a schedule of when they will be shown and advertise through Facebook and our newsletter.

Our Christmas Drive was today, December 16th. Rosanna Donahue worked with Manny Cruz at Brothers Taverna to make the meals. The event was sponsored by Mayor Kim Driscoll and other donors. Seniors stayed in their cars and drove through the parking lot. There was holiday music on speakers and a visit by Santa.

Special thank you to all who assisted in providing 300 Thanksgiving meals to seniors on Thanksgiving Day including the Friends, some City Councilors, and private donors. We also received donations for those who lacked the funds to purchase food to make their own meal. Thank you to Lynda Coffill and many others.

Our new show, *Senior Focus*, will be shown on SATV on Mondays and Wednesdays. The first episode is airing, and we taped part of the next today. Through the program, we are trying to keep our seniors engaged by showing them what we are doing here, giving out important information and just a friendly visit into their homes.

SATV is still showing our pre-taped fitness classes on Mondays, Tuesday, Thursdays and Fridays at 9:00am. Several of our instructors have provided taped segments, so that seniors can exercise at home.

**Nutrition:** A COVID relief grant from Elder Services has allowed us to pay vendor Kelley Annese to spearhead the grab and go farmers' market, and we will start offering nutritious grab and go lunches with healthy recipes and laying the foundation for enhancing Nutrition Education and Outreach. ROOT will make the lunches.

We have Title III grant funds (Nutrition) that can help pay Kelley when the grant closes in January, then Eastern Bank funds that were donated for COVID relief projects.

We don't know when we can reopen the congregate meal program, so we are trying to be creative.

We are in the process of becoming a SNAP provider (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) starting in January. TA received the contract for review yesterday.

**Tablets for Seniors.** TA spoke with Mayor Driscoll and Trish O'Brien. The Mayor is looking to use some COVID relief funds to purchase the tablets. IT attained a quote from Apple for 30 tablets. A ten-inch IPAD is about \$294 a piece. If we order 30, it would be \$8,820.

**Tax Bill Insert:** The Friends paid \$500 to help with this expense which was over \$3,000. The rest will come from COA donations.

**Grants:** The Friends are working on an application for the Cummings Foundation Grant for Nutrition Education and Outreach; a continuation of the program we have already started.

We received a Notice of Grant Award from Elder Services for the Title III programs; Nutrition – a little over \$13,000 and Transportation; \$15,600.

**CDBG Care Packages** will be distributed between today and December 28th by staff and the Police Department.

Next Board Meeting: January 20, 2021 via Zoom.

There being no further business:

A motion to adjourn was made by JR, AB seconded, roll call was taken and passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk