

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

Date and Time: March 16, 2022 at 5:19 P.M.

Meeting Location: Via Zoom

Members Present: Lynda Coffill (LC, Chair), John Russell (JR, Vice-Chair), Kristin Macek (KM), George Barbuzzi (GB)

Members Absent: Donna Clifford (DC), Patricia Small (PS), Abigail Butt, (AB)

Also Present: Leveille McClain (City Council Liaison), Teresa Arnold (TA, COA Director)

Clerk: Kathleen Fitzgerald

Meeting Called to Order

LC called the meeting to order at 5:19 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 JR to approve the February 2022 Minutes, seconded by KM, roll call was taken, and passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Bylaws: LC asked if anyone had a chance to look at the Bylaws and if there were any suggestions. JR stated that the Board should have been doing more with the budget and keeping an eye on it. He noted that we could not add money to it, but at least look at it.

LC said since we updated the Mission Statement to be inclusive, the Bylaws should be fine. She said they will be retyped and sent out again.

55th Anniversary: TA advised that there was a team meeting last week. They are thinking about using the CLC facility with some kind of open house possibly in September. There would be tables for the Board, Transportation, the Friends, etc. Entertainment would be in the Great Room and possibly demo classes upstairs – art, exercise, etc. There would be food which Erica can put together. All ideas and suggestions are welcomed.

JR stated that an open house was a great idea and suggested other ideas to draw people in and not limit it to seniors. KM stated that the Park & Rec and CLC co-mingle and opening this up to a wider audience would be great.

LC cautioned about food and if doing demo classes upstairs, we need to make sure people are not bringing food up. TA said food demos would only be in the Great Room.

TA said she would send out an email between the Board, the Friends, and staff to see who wants to be on the committee.

Councilor McClain stated that it could be a great opportunity for the Friends to invite people to be sponsors. He said a lot of people are up for election who would like a photo op.

Subsidized Senior Housing – KM advised that she had looked through the slide deck and that it looked like the funding will be 100% affordable which would make a big difference for people in need of housing. She said there was a question about Lee Fort Terrance being cohorted. LC said it was unclear.

Councilor McClain said putting a higher concentration of one-bedroom units into a single wing and not being herded will allow for choice.

KM said it was still a 50/50 exchange, not an increase in the number of units. She said the seniors of Salem are not gaining any more units and the number of seniors is not decreasing so there is still concern and they are not addressing that. She said when Kathy Hoog was on at the last meeting, she said there was upwards of 7,000 on the waiting list, but not only Salem residents.

JR said it was suggested that we would get at least 16 units added to the list. KM said those were cut out. It started at 250, now at 123 and 50 are one bedroom and the rest for families or moderate income.

Councilor McClain said it was his understanding that there are still 15 added, but some are 2 and 3 bedrooms and Section 8 housing.

JR said that could be anybody in need of assistance. KM said you could take that voucher anywhere and don't even have to be a Salem resident.

JR asked if seniors are aware and applying for Section 8 Housing and that it is another avenue to get on a list to get assistance. KM said there is a Champ Housing Application now which simplifies things and that it is for elderly, disabled and families.

TA advised that our social workers help with those forms as well. KM said generally senior housing is easier to get than Section 8.

LC advised that her notes from the January meeting with Cathy Hoog said that there would be 53 senior units. KM asked if we gained 2 units. KM asked if the Board needed to make a strong statement about this advocating for more units specifically set aside for seniors.

GB asked when construction would start. KM said there was still a lot of discussion about the look and size of it. Neighbors are upset about how large it is and that it doesn't fit into the rest of the housing in the area and looks industrial. KM stated that was not enough being done for our seniors.

LC suggested that since KM was the Board Secretary, she might want to compose a letter and LC would sign it. She said the letter would be reviewed at the April meeting. KM asked LC if there was a sample of one she could use and LC said she would look.

Councilor McClain advised that there was a presentation made at the Affordable Housing Trust meeting a couple of days ago and one of the members spoke about intergenerational housing. KM said the interaction of intergenerational is great and that she was not advocating to be all senior housing, just more units for seniors. JR said intergenerational housing is very positive. KM said it was scary because it was new and it has been very effective in Europe because it lets seniors become engaged and less isolated. This gives an opportunity to draw the seniors out. She said she was a big proponent of multi-intergenerational housing. JR said this would help also with bullying. KM stated that housing is very "cliquey". She said it was her own personal opinion that it was more so in high rises than in garden style housing.

LC stated she would like a roll call vote to authorize KM and LC to write a letter strongly advocating for more housing in Lee Fort Terrace.

Motion made and unanimously passed.

Friends Update: JR stated that the Friends welcomed Andy LaPointe back as he continues to recuperate. JR said there was approximately \$60,400.00 in their treasury. The Annual Appeal letter was about to be sent out and that there was a group at the COA stuffing envelopes. JR said he was hopeful that the appeal letter would go out on Monday and that they usually see about \$15,000.00.

JR said the increased cost for the newsletter postage had been approved. A luau was being planned for July 14th. A committee is being put together to determine the ticket price, food, drinks, etc. He said there would also be a tiki bar. He said they were looking to do another comedy night and that the Friends would continue to fund a lot of programs. JR

said they would again apply for the Cummings Grant. Fred Norton will once again help with the grant as we were encouraged to apply again.

Director's Report:

Social Services:

Social Services continues to see an increase in calls about housing options, behavioral health counseling needs and many are struggling to meet their basic living needs. Any covid related issue (masks, kits, vaccines) have decreased but we are still giving out N95 masks and test kits.

February 2022	269 seniors serviced 794x
February 2021	501 seniors serviced 935x

These stats show a decrease this year and Sharon Felton feels this is due to all the Covid related inquiries we had last year.

The use of our durable medical equipment "lending closet" increased. In February of 2022, 51 items were distributed where in February of 2021, just four items were borrowed or given. The Social Services team thinks that this change may be due to elective surgeries that were not taking place last February.

Transportation:

Brenda D'Eon has joined the team for 15 hours per week as a driver but she is also helping Annie O'Shea with dispatching and scheduling. She worked for the public schools as a driver and interim Transportation Coordinator. She is doing an excellent job.

An application was submitted to CDBG. This application is an annual request to pay for one driver. We continue to average 1,000 one-way rides per month. Two vans are at the garage currently for repair.

Nutrition:

Sadly, three of our volunteers have had to retire for health reasons from their regular shifts.

With the current oven we are capable of making a casserole, baked goods, etc. for up to 20 people.

We are awaiting a few pieces of equipment that will create efficiencies, enable us to cook on the stovetop and manage storage better.

This month's article spotlights the dedicated volunteers who manage our Farm Direct Coop's surplus organic vegetable stand, all valuable partnerships.

TA submitted a CIP application for \$175,000 to enhance the kitchen flow and function.

Programs/Activities:

Programs are extremely busy. All classes are filled with 20 participants. The new registration system is working well. Participants can register the 3rd week of the month prior for the class. Walk ins are allowed once registered seniors have entered the room. Any available spots are filled with walk ins. We like the consistency of each class enrolling 20 and most classes at \$5.00 per head.

The fitness room is very busy. Several new seniors are utilizing the equipment. The St. Patrick's Day Luncheon is on the 17th. Eighty seniors are registered for this event. Movie and Brunch is on Monday, March 21st. This worked out so well last month. Brunch is at 11:00 am with the movie to follow. Due to the delay in the Red Sox season opener, Opening Day event has been changed a bit. Lunch will still consist of hot dogs, but instead of watching the game, we will be playing board and lawn games and watching a baseball movie.

We were approved for our CDBG programs for another year. This includes our Art Program and our Muscle and Strength Class.

The monthly Memory Café is off to a great start. Donna Clifford's evening wellness classes are a hit.

Newsletter:

The Community Life Center Engagement Committee has been looking at what LPI, our current publisher and other printers can offer for a revised newsletter. TA met with LPI and they are willing to add four more pages. This will allow greater font size. They are also going to set us up with one of their graphic designers to help us "jazz things up". In the meeting, we learned that our contract doesn't end until June 2023. This will give us a chance to work more intentionally with LPI for a better product. Then, toward the end of that contract, we can regroup on next steps.

LC stated that she reminded the SFA group that any decisions regarding the Newsletter must be approved by the. SCOA Board.

Patricia Zaido representing Salem for All Ages has two proposals for consideration from local groups, Sperling Interactive and John Andrewes.

55th Anniversary:

The COA staff met, and we recommend an Open House in September to celebrate the anniversary. We could have information tables for staff departments, the Board, Friends, and a Volunteer Info table. We could demonstrate our dance, exercise and art classes and run a few classes for people to drop in to. We will have food and beverages made in our own kitchen. Certainly, TA is happy to hear ideas from the Board and Friends.

LC said the question of capacity at the COA needed to be addressed – where will we put additional staff, what can we reasonably expect from the staff we have, and what could we expect with additional staff?

LC also stated that she had reached out to Veteran Services but has not heard back regarding a suggestion for an additional Board member. LC said she would ask Dominick Pangallo to see if anyone has expressed interest to be on the Board as we are down two members.

There being no further business:

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

Next Board Meeting: April 20, 2022 via Zoom.

The meeting adjourned at 6:14 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Clerk