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# CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

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## SALEM COUNCIL ON AGING REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

Date and Time: May 17, 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), Michele McHugh (MM) and Patricia Small (PS)

Absent: Abigail Butt, Treasurer

Also Present: Teresa Arnold, (TA, Director of the COA), Councillor Alice Merkl (AM), and Cathy Hoog (CH), Executive Director of the Salem Housing Authority

Clerk: Joanne M. Roomey

### I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

### II. APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 19, 2023 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by JR to approve the April 19, 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 - Lee Fort Terrace - Guest Cathy Hoog, Salem Housing Authority

Cathy Hoog, Executive Director of the Salem Housing Authority, updated the Board about adding two more two-bedroom units to make a total of 54 subsidized units designated to seniors. All the permitting and funding has gone through. They are waiting for a tax credit award and will be able to close early. They have created a relocation plan that is being submitted to the state. Beacon is following the Federal

Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act (URA) which is a federal law that establishes minimum standards for federally funded programs and projects that require the acquisition of real property or displaced persons from their homes.

CH reassured the Board that there is an onsite professional to guide residents during the relocation process and to answer any questions they may have. Also, she said the onsite professionals could be reached at any time by phone, email, or in person.

b. Senior Day Update

TA cancelled the meeting and will reconvene on June 2, 2023, at 12:00 p.m. TA spoke with Leo Jodoin who previously founded a Senior Celebration Week in memory of his mother. TA invited Mr. Jodoin to the next meeting to ask him what he did to organize a senior celebration that could help us for next year.

**IV. NEW and OLD BUSINESS:**

**Friends of the COA Report**

JR said the Friends were thinking about holding a golf tournament at the Salem Municipal Golf Course that could possibly bring in over \$5,000. He also spoke with Joe Candelaria from the Park and Recreation Department inquiring about getting a bocce court at the CLC. TA will follow-up with Peabody and Marblehead Councils on Aging to see what they have for measurements.

JR said some of the mothers were upset that they had to pay for Mother's Day luncheon and the fathers do not pay for the Father's Day Barbeque. He said next year there will be no fee for the Mother's Day event.

JR spoke with the building inspector who said it is fine for our Facilities Manager, Joe Candelaria, to serve as the point person for the kitchen project. JR, TA and Dining Services Coordinator Erica Blumberg are working with Mr. Candelaria on this project.

LC congratulated JR for being the moderator at the candidate forum. She said it was wonderful and got a lot of folks out to listen. KM said there was not a huge turnout for the special election and thought it had to do with transportation issues. She suggested getting a drop off box at the CLC to make it more convenient for early voting. TA said the COA does supply transportation to folks upon request but they need to educate folks on the process. The Friends will look into funding rides either by taxis or possibly dropping off ballots through meals on wheels.

The main goal for the COA Board is to separate from the Park and Recreation Department; they want to be their own entity. There was discussion about a more appropriate title for the director reflecting the human service components of the job, but that the term Human Services is quite broad and needs to be defined.

## **Director's Report, Teresa Arnold**

### **Dining Services:**

The Council on Aging hosted fifty dining guests for the Title III-C (congregate) meal in the Great Room on Wednesday May 3<sup>rd</sup>. This represents the most served on a regular day since reopening after the second closure due to COVID.

The kitchen rehab is in the selection of equipment stage in preparation for the architect's CAD drawing.

In the June newsletter, we will announce that starting in FY 2024, we will be requesting a \$4 donation for the meal we serve on our self-cook days to help cover food costs. Volunteers are doing very well with one another and with our luncheon guests.

### **Social Services:**

In reviewing the various ways that seniors reach out to us, most of our contacts are via phone, then in-person appointments and then emails. (So far, this fiscal year, 267 individuals emailed 882 times, 1191 folks called 4061 times and 597 people had 1196 office visits.)

Many years ago, we never received email inquiries, but this means of communication is growing with our tech savvy older adults. Housing and Health insurance options seem to be the most inquired issues right now.

Fuel season has ended, so those calls have stopped but a few people are coming in with 2022 tax returns in preparation for the Fall fuel applications that will reopen in September. This shows the concerns about the costs of heating a home for our aging population.

Sharon Felton is grateful to her colleagues Lynne Barret and Alyssa Flynn for covering while she was out on extended medical leave. They were happy to pick up more cases due to being short-staffed. Sharon thanked the management for their understanding as well.

### **Programs/Activities:**

We had a wonderful Mother's Day Luncheon on Thursday, May 11th. Approximately 100 guests came to enjoy a presentation from our Line Dancers, live music with Tony Malioneck, dancing, and a wonderful catered lunch.

Janelle Rolke, our city's Waste Reduction Coordinator was our guest walker for the May Wellness Walk at Salem Common. The monthly walk is co-sponsored by the COA and the Health Department, represented by Wellness Coordinator Kerry Murphy.

Our new Friday class, Strengthen Your Balance, is becoming very popular with our seniors. We have decided to continue with the class through September. The instructor will be leaving then to have her baby and then return after a few months.

### **Transportation:**

Transportation is as busy as ever, with 1100-1300 one-way rides each month. There have been some small repairs to the vans and regular inspections. We did have a senior fall out of van 204

this past Monday. She missed the top step and rolled out, hitting her head. An ambulance transported her to Beverly Hospital. She seemed alert and oriented at the scene per van driver Mary Caron.

#### Memory Café:

Kelley Annese is wrapping up the Mind Your Brain Wellness website videos. The projected launch date is July 1st and will be linked to the COA municipal website.

The May 25th Memory Café is *Flower Arranging* and on June 29th is a private tour of the Peabody Essex Museum.

We are advertising for the June 8th offering: *Dementia & Caregiving: Your Questions Answered* to be led by Karen Coppola, Certified Dementia Practitioner.

#### Other Noteworthy News:

We hired Mary Schaejbe to take over the front desk receptionist position. She fits in quite nicely. We are glad to have her here.

TA is writing a grant application to the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. The grant is entitled Enhancing Digital Literacy of Older Adults. We are partnering with the Lynn COA for \$100,000 each and receiving the support of Essex County Community Foundation, an organization that has piloted technology equity programs for gateway cities in the area. The grant will cover an instructor who will provide 15 hours of training for 80 older adults, a free laptop and free internet service for one year. The application will be submitted online this coming Monday, May 22nd.

TA will present the COA budget on Tuesday, June 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m., City Council Chambers.

TA will speak at the Rotary Club luncheon on Tuesday, June 13<sup>th</sup> with Friends of the COA President, Andrew LaPointe.

#### **V. OTHER BUSINESS:**

TA said at the candidate's forum Mr. Harrington suggested a different slant of the Tax Work-off program for elders and veterans. In Salisbury, if the owner of the home is unable to work, they can have someone else to do it for them. He thought that Salem could consider this as an additional option.

#### **VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, June 21, 2023**

There being no further business to come before the Council on Aging Board this evening, JR moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by GB. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at **6:25 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.