



# CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

JEAN A. LEVESQUE COMMUNITY LIFE CENTER

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Robert McCarthy  
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SUPERINTENDENT

## SALEM COUNCIL ON AGING REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

Date and Time: December 21, 2022 at 5:15 P.M.

Meeting Location: Levesque Community Life Center Board Room, 401 Bridge Street, Salem, MA

Members Present: Lynda Coffill (LC, Chair), John Russell (JR, Vice-Chair), Kristin Macek (KM, Secretary), Abigail Butt (AB, Treasurer), Eliud Alcala (EA), George Barbuzzi (GB), Michelle Bettencourt (MB), Michele McHugh (MM) and Patricia Small (PS)

Also Present: Teresa Arnold, (TA, Director of the COA) and Councillor Leveille McClain (LM) via Zoom

Clerk: Joanne M. Roomey

### I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

LC stated that notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Council on Aging is held in person and via remote participation in accordance with a Chapter 107 of the Act of 2022.

In-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted and the public may also participate, listen and/or view this meeting while in progress via the remote participation platform Zoom.

Roll call was then done.

### II. APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 2022 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by JR to approve the November 16, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes. Seconded by EA. The motion carried unanimously.

### III. OLD BUSINESS:

#### a. Subsidized Senior Housing Update

KM said no new updates to report since last month. TA sent an email to the Board referencing a letter to the editor regarding Lee Fort Terrace written by resident Steve Kapantais. The next step is to go before the Conservation Commission. KM will follow-up.

### IV. NEW BUSINESS:

#### a. Advocates for Positive Aging

LC reiterated that the goal of this group is to advocate for positive aging and to educate first. They are reading different articles regarding ageism bias. They discussed several articles that focus on other cultures. Japan and Korea highly respect their elders and we could learn a lot from their cultures. Japan has a national holiday to celebrate elders. The Board wants to focus on helping folks combat ageism. TA said the COA hosted a workshop regarding Reframing Aging; a workshop that teaches about ageism and how to work against stigmas associated with the aging process.

MM went to a couple of exercise classes and thought the classes were too slow and suggested some modifications. The group discussed that perhaps the COA could offer classes by intensity levels. This would depend on what the individual can handle. JR said a 70-year-old 20 years ago is much different than a 70-year-old now.

TA explained that she has had to educate some of the people associated with Salem for All Ages that we have been offering many wellness programs for years, community outreach and a robust monthly publication.

EA suggested that since there is going to be a change of administration, the Board should invite the candidates to a forum night and advocate for better funds and educate them on what the COA does.

#### b. Salem for All Ages

TA chairs the Salem for All Ages Community Life Center Engagement Committee. The Board agreed that if there is a new website to promote the COA that the staff and Board need to be involved. Another effort of this committee was to establish focus groups who gathered 18 people in total to gauge what users and non-users of the CLC knew about programs.

JR said there is a constant battle keeping seniors separated; it is CLC not COA. However, people are starting to understand. JR said there is always room for improvement. A newsletter survey was conducted that was quite favorable. Constructive feedback was to increase font size.

#### c. Friends of the COA Update

JR said they did not have a meeting this month. He commented on the Thanksgiving meals that he delivered to different folks. He was dismayed as to the living

conditions that were very cramped, dark and cluttered. JR said the Friends need new ideas for fund raising. There is approximately \$65,000 in the account. He said they need suggestions on what to spend the money on.

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

### **Social Services:**

During open enrollment (October 15 through December 7), the Social Service team provided health insurance counseling to 353 individuals serviced 421 times.

During this time, the team also continued to deal with the increasing housing crisis. Fifty-four people were serviced 165 times on the following: how to apply for emergency housing, referring to housing court specialist when court date set, assisting with housing applications and documents needed, tracking them through the housing CHAMP system and constant reassurance of process.

During this time, our student intern Lanai Ritchie, along with the social workers, completed 44 fuel applications which took 138 service units to complete. Many do not come in with the proper documentation which can take 2-3 appointments per person to complete.

Twenty-one pieces of durable medical equipment were distributed. Regular appointments for SNAP applications, RMV online transactions and appointments set and property tax exemption information shared.

### **Transportation:**

Mike Phelan has been a helpful addition to the department on an interim basis as we look for a permanent part time driver.

We continue to average over 1,200 rides per month transporting seniors to a host of activities at the center, medical appointments and the like.

There were no major issues with vans repairs and/or maintenance this month and there were no major changes to our service schedule.

We continue to encourage people to wear masks while riding on the van as we are seeing increased cases of RSV, the flu and COVID.

### **Dining Services:**

We have an excellent crew of volunteers with ages ranging from mid-60's to almost 90 years old. They enjoy being in service to others. Their return is they thoroughly enjoy engaging our guests, with the knowledge that for many who arrive at our CLC each day, being here is the highlight in their day and they are a significant part of that experience.

This month marks the first anniversary of Erica as Dining Services Coordinator at the CLC. Her employment in hospitality began fifty-four years ago. She is pleased that she left retirement for this; that she works alongside caring, thoughtful, dedicated fun loving people.

The goal in this first year was to build systems, establish protocols and standards, create a team of knowledgeable volunteers, use existing wares to redesign this kitchen into a functioning space to meet the mission of the CLC/COA of serving wholesome food to our community and increase attendance.

We established a once-a-month self-cook luncheon, enhance with upgrades the weekly cold Trio meal, and offer soups as much as is possible.

We began an inviting morning café from 9 am to 11am with volunteers who greet our guests with a hot cup of coffee, tea, seasonal cider or chai and usually pastry or fresh fruit, granola, yogurt, etc.

In 2023, our goals are to be an integral part of the committee revamping the kitchen, increasing “self-cook” days each month, perhaps locating local culinary students to assist, and much more.

### **Programs/Activities:**

These are highlights from December’s activities:

Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup>- We had our monthly brunch and movie. Participants enjoyed the “Polar Express” movie.

Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup> – 31 seniors participated in our annual Holiday Light Ride. Three COA vans traveled around Salem to view spectacular holiday light displays in different neighborhoods.

Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> – 80 participants came for the Christmas Tea. This was a Victorian themed tea.

Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup> – We had 130 seniors for the annual holiday party. We were entertained by the tap-dancing group and the Goldentones from the COA and live music with Pete Saran.

Wednesday, December 21<sup>st</sup>-The Saltonstall School Band performed holiday music for our seniors.

Thursday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> – The Salem High School Music program will stop by and play holiday tunes for us.

Thursday, December 29<sup>th</sup> – We will celebrate the New Year with a brunch and entertainment from Tony Malionek.

### **V. OTHER BUSINESS**

LC said the holiday party was a wonderful success. Folks came dressed in native outfits. They even had a Yankee swap. There were a few newcomers.

LC asked the Board if they wanted to have remote meetings for the months of January and February 2023 and everyone agreed.

MM said she read the previous minutes and it was mentioned about collaboration with Salem State School of Nursing. The students did broad assessments, blood pressure

screening and interviewed seniors regarding social determinants of health. MM was curious about the students' findings. TA will follow up with their professor. MM is willing to volunteer her time, especially with a health care background.

**VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, January 18, 2023**

**VII. The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.**

JR made a motion to adjourn, AB seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

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.