

**Northampton Council on Aging  
Meeting Minutes APPROVED  
5/16/19**

At the Northampton Senior Center, 67 Conz Street, Northampton

**Present:** Gerriann Butler, Kathie Bredin, Ben Capistrant, Robert Dionne, Deborah Epstein, Michael Ford, Casey Fowler, Dennis Helmus, Jeanne Henry Hoose, Cynthia Langley, Donna Park, Kathy Pekala Service, Marie Westburg, Kim Park.

**Excused:** Mary Lastowski

**Absent:** None

**Call to Order**

- Gerriann Butler called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM. She welcomed our new Council Members Robert Dionne and Ben Capistrant.

**Public Session** – There was one person from the public present to observe.

**Review and approval of minutes from the previous meeting**

- A motion was made by Michael Ford and seconded by Dennis Helmus to approve the 4/11/19 minutes with two changes. Jeanne Henry Hoose was excused from the April meeting; and under Assistant Director's report, there were 104 people at the movies in the month of March. The minutes were unanimously approved with changes.

**Announcements:** None.

**Old Business**

1. **Golden Age Meals Tax:** We were declined for this waiver again because we also serve those under 60 (55-59).
2. **Increasing COA member visibility, introduction of members through Chronicle articles, mechanisms for public feedback:** Discussion: The bio's of current NCOA Members in the May Chronicle were enjoyed by Council Members. Deb Epstein and Donna Park, Ben Capistrant and Robert Dionne's bios will be featured in the June Chronicle.

**New Business**

1. **What to raise \$ for from Elder Vision:** Dennis Helmus is now on the Board of Elder Vision. He will bring the NCOA's ideas for fundraising for the Senior Center needs back to Elder Vision.
2. **Emails or letter of support to Mayor for Senior Services Department Budget Request:** Currently there is no need for Council Members to advocate at City Council for the budget request submitted for FY2020. If

they were thinking of decreasing budget items, this might be needed. City Council is unable to decrease items from the budget and they cannot add items. The budget is approved by the Mayor. The FY2020 request includes an increase to our budget to provide for more staffing needs. A bid was put out for a city contract and the Gazette will be providing marketing and design services as opposed to a staff position for this going forward. Funding for outdoor furniture through a Capital Improvement Request was not approved this year. Elder Vision has voted to allocate funds for this purchase. The request for funding to do a study with an architect around our use of space, programming needs and especially how we interface with patrons at reception was approved and will occur this summer. Other upgrades identified in this process will likely occur over the next two to five years.

3. **Ideas for mechanisms/process for public feedback**-The NCOA is working on encouraging the visibility of Council Members to provide the public with the ability to convey feedback and to ask questions.

4. **Assistant Director's Report:**

1. **Volunteer Recruitment:** Volunteers are needed to help in the Bistro, at reception and for dispatch.

2. **NCTV update:** Videos of NCOA Meetings are available online and can be accessed through the link to YouTube on the city webpage

3 **Working groups:** These are to inform programming planning and other decisions we are making here. Current committees meeting monthly are: The Movie Committee and the Culture & Arts Committee. Two new working groups forming soon will focus on Inclusivity (meeting Friday June 14<sup>th</sup> at 11AM) and a Building Upgrade Committee (meeting on Friday June 7<sup>th</sup> at 11am.) We are looking for volunteers (patrons, volunteers and staff) for both of these new committees.

5. **Director's Report:** Arts Night Out has been a success with over 100 people attending for presentations by five artists of The Art Salon. This was funded by a Cultural Arts Council Grant. Marie will be interviewing for a Program Coordinator. An Age Friendly Listening session was conducted in April. Cindy Langley passed out notes on the discussion and summarized answers from this event. The Health & Safety Fair was also a big success. This year a resource booklet was created, rather than an event program and this resource will be available all year round. The Blood Drive at the Health & Safety Fair was a huge success and collected over 30 pints of blood.
  
6. We now have a Facebook page. Marie also sends out updates through email in Constant Contact every week. New programs include painting, drumming, ukulele and guitar. All have been very popular. The Pollinator Friendly Gardening Workshop provided by Western Ma. Pollinators was a success with over 35 people in attendance. Discussion of pollinators planting on the senior center property will be planned with a Landscaping Designer from the Conway School of Design. Recently a new notch has been cut out in the reception desk to allow staff and reception volunteers to more easily greet patrons as they arrive.

### **Other Business**

1. Gerriann encourages people to bring feedback to her and the Council Meeting.
2. Discussion about whether to meet in the summer resulted in a decision to meet and the request that if you are away, that you just excuse yourself by emailing the Chair or Director.
3. Dennis will check on having elections in June. If you are interested in being an officer, please email Linda.
4. A question was asked by a member "Is there an issue with senior bullying here?" A recommendation for a presentation by Julie from Armbrook was made. Marie will check into scheduling this.

### **Adjourning the meeting**

Deborah Epstein made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Kathy Pekala Service seconded it at 4:35 PM. The motion was unanimously approved.

- **Next NCOA Council Meeting:** Thursday, June 13th, 2019, at 3:30 at the Northampton Senior Center.

Respectfully submitted by \_\_\_\_\_  
Linda R. DeMercurio