

**Northampton Council on Aging**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**February 13th, 2020**

Northampton Senior Center, 67 Conz Street, Northampton, MA 01060

**Present: Gerriann Butler, Cynthia Langley, Michael Ford, Dennis Helmus, Jeanne Hoose, Deborah Epstein, Kathy Pekala Service, Kathie Bredin, Marie Westburg, Jae Casella, Laura Scott, Donna Park, Casey Fowler, Robert Dionne**  
**Excused: Benjamin Capistrant**

**Call to Order**

- Gerriann Butler called the meeting to order at 3:33 PM.

**Public Session** – There were approximately seven members of the public in attendance. At the outset of the public session, Gerriann Butler requested that members of the public who wished to speak, print their name on the sign-in sheet which was being passed around the room. Three members of the public signed up to speak. Gerriann thanked members of the public and advised protocol for the public session:

- The Council would listen, take notes, and take under advisement all questions, concerns, and comments but would not respond during this session.

The public session lasted approximately 20 minutes.

Following is a list of speakers and a summary of their comments:

Peter Jones, 105 Brierwood Drive, Florence, MA 01062

Peter stated he was there just to listen

Elaine Williams, 286 Rocky Hill Road, Florence, MA 01062

Elaine requested that the paperback book sale be brought back to the Center to bring in income.

Elaine expressed that she believes the standards of independence in the guidebook are not appropriate. She asked if we would be questioning patrons about their physical limitations. She asked for this section of the guidebook to be revised.

Kim Lambert, 97 Pine Edge Dr., Northampton, MA 01060

Kim spoke about the standards of independence in the guidelines. Kim feels that they are intimidating to seniors with disabilities. She wants the Senior Center to rethink the direction they are going with these policies. She again called on the Mayor to redirect the focus on making the Center more age-friendly. Kim stated that the grievance procedures are unnecessary and the staff needs training on conflict resolution instead of regulations. Kim also mentioned that her statements were not all included in the January minutes.

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

Dennis Helmus made a motion to accept the minutes. Robert Dionne seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by the Council.

**Announcements:**

**Note:** Jean Hoose mentioned the evening's art reception for Cathy Kenneally's painting display from 5-6:30 pm

**Old Business: None**

**New Business:**

- Nancy Yesu reported on current and upcoming events at the Center. Nancy thanked everyone for the wonderful Valentine event which included the Young at Heart Concert, luncheon, and cards made by local preschoolers. She also spoke on the overwhelming response to the language classes, the new foot nurse, Piper Sagan, Big Y's Spring nutritional program, weekly documentaries, and her Hot Chocolate Chats. Nancy thanked Jean Hoose for providing an artist per month through the end of the year. A special grant for cultural programming will focus on Latin culture. Historians & area teachers will be holding a class on the Constitution. We also have Forbes Library doing an oral history project. Health & Safety Fair prep has begun for the May 14th program.
- Gerianne Butler mentioned her email had been hacked
- New council members are needed in June with a nominating committee being formed in March. Dennis Helmus will circulate the information from the city website.

**Director's Report:**

- Marie Westburg covered the contents of her monthly report to the COA board. Topics included updates on suggestions/feedback for Guidelines Booklet, Code of Conduct, Standards of Independence, 2nd bid posted for Fitness Contract after error on 1<sup>st</sup> bid, On-boarding of Credit Card payment system, Transportation survey, Architectural Study of Lobby/Reception area, Book Exchange with Smith Voke building a free library stand, Facebook site for Senior Center, Staff photos, Food Access Programs with Grow Food Northampton

**Other Business:**

- Deborah Epstein asked if diabetic options other than fruit could be offered for bistro meals

**Assistant Director's Report:**

- Jae Casella again reported that they are working on the development of two groups. One is a focus group that will explore the idea of what it means to be a welcoming and warm environment. This group will be made up of a cross-section of volunteers, council members and patrons. The other group is a workshop group around volunteer appreciation. Jae responded to Kim Lambert's remark pertaining to minutes explaining that we do not record them verbatim but do record a summary of the topics discussed.

Jae mentioned the 2 new interns: Lindsay & Kayla and the high school student beginning in March. Jae spoke on the success of the new Fitness cards with sales of around 150 since its inception. Costs for Y instructors have been covered by these purchases. Jae also spoke on the Annual Appeal envelopes that have been coming in.

**Adjournment:**

Dennis made a motion to adjourn. Cynthia seconded the motion. The motion was carried by the council. The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 pm.

**Next NCOA Council Meeting:** Thursday, March 12, 2020, at 3:30 PM at the Northampton Senior Center.

Respectfully submitted by \_\_\_\_\_ Jae J. Casella