

Northampton Council on Aging Meeting
Thursday, March 11th, 2021, 3:30 pm, Due to the Covid-19 emergency,
this meeting was conducted via Zoom Video Conferencing

COA Minutes

Call to Order: Cynthia Langley called the meeting to order @ 3:33 pm

Present: Kathie Bredin, Cynthia Langley, Michael Ford, Jeanne Henry Hoose, Marie Westburg, Jae Casella, Laura Scott, Bob Dionne, Aurea Domenech, Gerriann Butler, Ben Capistrant & Dennis Helmus

Public Session: No public attended

Review and Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve February Minutes-Gerriann Butler 2nd-Michael Ford

Announcements: Dennis Helmus said they have successfully added Friends of Northampton Senior Center (formerly Elder Vision) to the Valley Gives website under donations for seniors. Dennis, as treasurer, will receive a monthly report on any donations made to this site. It was suggested that an article be placed in an upcoming Chronicle outlining the group's mission and this new way to support it. Dennis also mentioned that the group is in need of 3 more members. Kathie Bredin welcomed Aurea to the COA as she had not formally met her. Gerriann mentioned her experience at the CVS in Amherst and the new Johnson & Johnson vaccine she received there.

Director's Report: Marie commended the Board of Health for their work with the Covid vaccine and the update bulletins they have helped us get out to area residents. We are hearing a lot of praise for this very well run clinic. Marie continues to work on the FY22 budget and will meet next week with the Mayor to finalize it. The staff is hoping to use the reopening time to restructure some operations and workflow and start anew. It is hoped that some funding from FEMA may be allocated to freshen up the building after its use as a medical facility. In her budget, Marie has proposed 2 more full time employees to replace 4 part time Staff Assistants. She would like to see the taxi service continue beyond the end of the grant as it is more feasible than running our own vans. She will need to meet with PVTA to discuss the continued services with the NOHO Senior Shuttle as well. The Senior Center was awarded a \$6300 grant to address isolation through Mass Councils on Aging Service Incentive Grant Funding. Marie has spoken to the Chamber of Commerce in hopes that businesses might partner up with us in this endeavor. Various agency partners in the city have provided us with names of around 600

people who might benefit from this grant. We see this time as a transition and want to provide guidance to help people cope with life going forward from Covid isolation to Covid immunity and a return to activities under “a new normal”. It is thought that we might include a birding guide from Forbes Library, coupons for the Farmers’ Market, events & classes to be held outdoors, walking groups, and coupons for businesses that would like to participate. Jean Hoose asked if we might include a membership form to invite those who are not already members to join. Marie also reported that the Housing Authority has asked that for their upcoming clinics at Walter Salvo and Tobin House to use our transportation services for those over the age of 60. We have agreed to this. We have no known reopening date and will definitely not reopen until after the clinics are through with our building. At the Pioneer Valley Planning Commissions Regional Age Friendly meeting, Babson College reported on Seniors & tech difficulties. We are happy to report that we are helping in the many ways they suggested could support older adults with technology. Ben Capistrant asked if the Board of Health had any numbers on vaccinated vs unvaccinated at this time. We do not know of any statistics on this matter but Marie stated that the CDC and the local BOH does keep records on these numbers for our area .

Assistant Director’s Report: Jae spoke on the tech loan program. We have had eighteen 30-day tech equipment loans with 7 devices currently out and 9 more on a waiting list. With the BOH using our facility, we can only do 2 training appointments on Mondays in our office conference room. The tech trainer is also available by phone to answer questions during that 30 day period. Since beginning our taxi ride program, we have provided 232 taxi rides and 127 NOHO Senior Shuttle rides. We have spent approximately \$3100 of our MAPC grant. The grant has been extended to the end of June and we have added shopping, pharmacy and farmers’ market rides to our contract with them. Jae has been informed that Look Park is fundraising to give seasonal park passes to individuals who qualify as low income. They have asked for 140 passes to be included in our Brown Bag & Nutritional Outreach program. Gerriann asked an AARP Tax Program question for a homebound friend regarding whether you have to pick taxes up in person or can someone else do that for you? Nancy will reach out to our representative for clarification and let her know.

Program Director’s Report: Nancy is looking for suggestions/feedback from the board members as to what they feel should be our priorities when we reopen. Nancy would like to come up with a tagline to use in marketing our reopening program as well. Cindy suggested this be added to the agenda for the next meeting to give everyone time to think it through. Nancy is also thinking we should include a survey in the care packages for isolated older adults that we will be handing out. Kathie thanked the staff for all they have been doing during the pandemic.

Old Business: With the mayor’s approval and a short discussion on wording, a vote was taken to accept the Black Lives Matter statement. A motion was made by Ben Capistrant, 2nd by Michael Ford to accept the statement with the wording corrected as discussed. The vote was unanimous. Thanks were extended to Kathie & Jeanne for their hard work on this statement . Marie suggested it be posted on the City’s website under Senior Services. Bob Dionne asked that it be included in the May Chronicle. Cindy will write a short paragraph explaining what led to this statement for the Chronicle. Jean Henry Hoose suggested we use that statement in

our plans for the reopening. Gerriann asked that the spelling of her name be corrected in future publications.

New Business: None

Next Meeting: Apr 8th, 2021, 3:30 pm, Northampton Senior Center (via Zoom)

Adjournment : Motion to adjourn was made by Jeanne Henry Hoose, 2nd by Aurea Domenech

Meeting adjourned @ 4:31 pm