

Council on Aging Meeting
Ludlow Senior Center
228 State Street
Wednesday, January 17, 2024

Present: J. Zepke, D. Peacey (attended telephonically), K. Martin, R. Fort, B. Mishol, H. Grabowski, D. Johnson, K. Ribeiro, R. Radowski,
Excused: Fernando Barroso
Absent: J. DaCruz
Guest: K. Green

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I. Roll Call – The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Chairperson D. Peacey

II. Secretary's Report

a. Minutes from the December 13, 2023 meeting were reviewed and approved. M/S: R. Mishol/H. Grabowski. All in favor.

III. Treasurers Report

a. FY 24 Budget Status: Zepke reported that 2024 budget is on target. For FY25 budget was presented at the December 19th Selectmans meeting with the proposed changes. She feels that Select Board will probably approve funds for reclassifying the Program Coordinator and increasing the Bookkeeper hours; however, under the current economic climate, she is doubtful the Administrative Assistant position will be approved. If not, there is a mechanism that the matter can be brought up at the May 6 Town Meeting if sufficient support via signatures is obtained. D. Johnson pointed out that Precinct Members sometimes disagree with the Selectboard's decisions and vote accordingly at the Town Meeting. D. Peacey will call Kim Batista (Town Clerk) to find out what the process is and obtain the proper form(s) before the next Board meeting should the COA decide to pursue this further. She noted that information for a handout at the Town Meeting to explain rationale could be developed using data obtained by Kathy Greene.

IV. Director's Report

- a. Grant Updates: J. Zepke submitted a proposal to MassDOT for a 9-passenger van. MassDOT will only purchase Fords, and the delivery date for those wouldn't be until Fall 2025. The Friends wrote a letter of support and committed to funding 20% of the van. For the second van, there is \$50k from last year that Sen. Oliveira secured, \$20k left over from Formula Grant, \$25K from the Friends, and the balance is being requested from Capital Expenditures. Zepke noted that at the State level, there have been drastic budget cuts and earmarks for some items have been cut. Hopefully the Formula Grants will not be reduced for next year.
- b. Center Numbers: Attendance has been down in past month due to illness; there has been cases of COVID, RSV and other post-holiday infections. Weather conditions and cold temperatures also impact attendance in winter months.
- c. Budget Request/Process: Discussed above with treasurers' report.
- d. Future Planning: Beginning in February, Manda Day from Mobile Dental Hygiene Services of Western Mass will be at the Center to provide dental services. Services include dental screening, oral cancer screening, dental education, teeth cleaning,

polishing, and denture cleaning and inspection. Dental cleaning will cost \$75 and includes removal of plaque, tarter and other debris from the patient's teeth with autoclavable instruments. The cost to participants for denture services will be \$30. Fluoride treatment is also available for \$25. Treatment is free for participants.

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AARP Tax Services appointments are already 80% filled through March 27 and a wait list will be started.

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- e. COA Vacancy: Deborah Potter has been appointed to a one-year term and will be at the February meeting. Deborah currently volunteers at the Center's front desk.

V. Chairman's Report

a. Policy Manual: Members reviewed suggested changes to the Policy Manual draft. Agreed upon edits will be incorporated into the Policy Manual by K. Martin and sent to members prior to the February meeting. J. Zepke said the Transportation Services section does not include current transportation processes and policy. She is collecting policies from other Centers and is in the process of developing a new policy specific to transportation. Once finalized it will be included in the Policy Manual. D. Peacey asked members to bring any other changes to the next meeting for discussion.

b. Standards of Participation: Final edition was approved at the December 2023 COA Meeting. An article about its availability was put in the January newsletter. It will also be uploaded on the website and placed in the packets for new participants.

D. Peacey thanked the Board members who attended the Board of Selectmen meeting with J. Zepke to support the request for additional funding. Prior to that meeting, K. Green collected and added data from 2018 and 2019 (from the old building) related to the number of activities offered at the Senior Center. There was a dramatic increase in the number of activities (excluding lunch and outreach) in subsequent years in 2022 and 2023 despite the same number of staff. Data from 2020-2021 were not included due to covid. Further breakdown of this early data was not possible as MySenior was not consistently used at that time to mark attendance. This information will be invaluable to bring to the Town Meeting to support the request for an Administrative Assistant if the COA decides to pursue this. K. Green said she was happy to keep the statistics up to date.

c. COA Goals/Strategic Plan Discussion: Deferred.

VII. Adjournment: 5:30 p.m. M/S: K. Ribeiro/R. Forti. All in favor.

The next Board Meeting will be at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 21, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

K. Martin, Secretary, COA