

Wellesley Council on Aging
Board Meeting
February 12, 2018

Location: John and Dwin Schuler Multipurpose Room, Tolles Parsons Center

In Attendance: Diane Campbell, Anne Marie Gross, Thomas Kealy, Penelope Lawrence, Jacqueline Mahoney, Barbara Offenhartz, Frank Pinto, Dianne Sullivan, Kathleen Vogel

Associate Members: William Murphy

Board of Selectman (BOS): Thomas Ulfelder

Staff: Gayle Thieme, Linda Clifford, Kate Burnham, Elizabeth Bradley, Ashley Shaheen, Sara Raveret

Absent: Lisa Heyison, Miguel Lessing, Sheila Nugent

Call to Order: Diane Campbell called the meeting to order at 10:00am.

The Board took comment on recent changes to the COA's program cost structure and pricing model.

Diane Campbell and Tom Kealy discussed the following topics:

- The role of the Board of Directors in carrying out the mission and long-term strategic plan of the Wellesley COA. This includes considering the needs of all seniors in Town. One goal is to increase participation now that the COA has moved to Tolles Parson Center (TPC).
- The COA was aware that its fitness programs were more expensive compared to other COAs in the area. The COA had received feedback (via surveys and knowledge that Wellesley seniors were participating at neighboring COAs) that the higher cost of classes was a reason for non-participation.
- In early 2017, a working group of the Board researched the topic by speaking to several other COAs in benchmark communities and discovered Wellesley was an outlier in how it pays its instructors (per student versus per class). In the spring of 2017, Gayle Thieme notified longtime instructors of the working group's findings and that there likely would be changes made to the COA's payment model.
- At its December 2017 meeting, the Board voted to change to a payment per class model. Fitness instructors Leslie Worris and Judy Scribner-Moore would be offered a rate of \$95 per 60 minutes of instruction, compared to a \$50-60 range offered to prospective instructors.
- On January 10, 2018, Leslie Worris notified Gayle Thieme via email that she would no longer teach beyond the January/February 2018 session because she wants to pursue other opportunities. Leslie sent this email prior to receiving her rate offer.
- Judy Scribner-Moore accepted the offer for March/April and has not committed to teach beyond then.
- The Board acknowledges the feelings of the participants and that steps to make the public process more known to participants were not taken.

Gayle Thieme noted one of the COA's goals was to expand programs once in TPC and the COA has already brought on new instructors. Gayle outlined the process to bring on new instructors, which includes staff observing the instructor teach a class elsewhere, checking references and running a CORI.

Attendees raised concerns and asked questions including the following:

- Concern that the level and quality of fitness instruction can vary widely. Both Leslie and Judy are highly qualified, they offer the highest level of instruction and should continue to be compensated as they have been.
- The current participants of Leslie and Judy's classes are willing to pay the higher prices and most classes are fully subscribed. What will happen if lowering the price of classes attracts even more participants?

- Current participants will follow the instructors to other locations where they teach.
- The Board should have asked current participants of their opinions and included them more in the process.
- Concern is not the change in pricing model per se; it is losing the longtime instructors.
- The decision was made based on a relatively small percentage saying program costs were too high.
- Leslie resigned not because of the money but because she was hurt and disrespected.
- The Board should have these sort of meetings prior to Board meetings to gather participant input.

Meeting adjourned: Diane Campbell adjourned the meeting at 11:17am

Next Meeting(s): February 26, 2018 at 4:00pm

Minutes prepared by Linda Clifford