

Wellesley Council on Aging  
Board Meeting  
September 20, 2018

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

**In Attendance:** Kathleen Vogel, Lisa Heyison, Dianne Sullivan, Diane Campbell, Penelope Lawrence, Anne Marie Gross, Frank Pinto  
Board of Selectmen (BOS): Beth Sullivan Woods  
Staff: Gayle Thieme, Linda Clifford  
Guests: Pete Godfrey and Cynthia Sibold, Friends of the Wellesley Council on Aging (FWCOA)  
Absent: Barbara Offenhartz, Thomas Kealy

**Call to Order:** Kathleen Vogel called the meeting to order at 4:00pm and noted the meeting is being audio recorded.

**Citizens Speak:** None.

**Approval of August 16, 2018 meeting minutes:** Lisa called for a motion to approve the August 16 meeting minutes and Diane Campbell seconded. Penny Lawrence asked a clarifying question about the EOEI Formula grant budget. The Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes.

**Chair's report – Kathleen Vogel**

Kathleen referenced the PowerPoint presentation from Town Clerk KC Kato's recent training on Open Meeting Laws and provided a brief summary of points that were covered. Kathleen said Town Counsel Tom Harrington issued the following reminders: communicate via phone when possible, and do not use "reply all" when communicating via email on any topic subject to public deliberation. In addition, the training clarified that staff organize working groups but staff do not have to attend the working group meetings.

Kathleen reviewed the recent meeting attended by herself, Gayle, Linda, Tony Parker, and Tom Kealy to discuss the FY 20 Budget "message". Tony had said the New Era Fund (NEF) may be interested in funding a professional presentation highlighting the COA's successes since TPC opened and opportunities for future growth. Anne Marie Gross asked if this expenditure would be subject to the NEF grant guidelines and approved by advisory committee. Kathleen said she is not sure at this point and that the idea needs to be brought before NEF to discuss further before any decision is made. Diane Campbell asked if this presentation would be specific to the FY 20 Budget request or a future "ask" related to the COA's strategic plan. Gayle said the exact timing of a potential presentation is unclear and noted that for Annual Town Meeting, typically Executive Director Blythe Robinson reports on all departments that fall under the BOS, but perhaps there is an opportunity for Town Meeting members to receive information on TPC. Frank Pinto noted the School Department distributes a booklet Town-wide, and that a similar marketing document for the COA could be worthwhile. There was additional general discussion about the idea of a professional presentation.

Kathleen announced an upcoming Board working session regarding strategic plan priorities. The current strategic plan is set through 2020. Some objectives in the plan have been met and others are still outstanding. In addition, now that TPC has opened, some priorities have shifted. Gayle will send a Doodle poll with some potential dates for the working session to Board members. Diane Campbell suggested the COA look to different models, such as the Library and Schools. It may be useful for COA to understand how those groups are structuring their process and what the COA can learn from their process.

### **Director of Senior Services Report – Gayle Thieme**

Gayle referenced her written report. Gayle noted the publicity efforts underway for the TPC Birthday Celebration on 10/1, and the first Welcome Breakfast on 11/19 from 7:30-8:30am. At the Welcome Breakfast, an overview of the COA will be provided as well as volunteers available to give tours of the building and answer questions. The target group of attendees are those who cannot come to the COA during its current business hours. Gayle will be in touch with Board members to volunteer at the event.

The COA Policies working group will meet again tomorrow, with a focus on building use. There has been an uptick in requests from other Town Departments for meeting space during normal business hours. The COA has been able to accommodate some of these requests depending on previously scheduled program needs. Meeting the COA's programming need will continue to take first priority. Gayle and Penny Lawrence met earlier this week to discuss plans for increasing the décor in the Mary Bowers Café and Lounge area. The plan is to develop a group of volunteers and users to provide oversight and own this project. No steps have been taken to date to organize the TPC Art working group.

Gayle and Volunteer Coordinator Sara Raveret met with Environmental Health Specialist Vivian Zeng from the Health Department to discuss additional training for the lunch server volunteers. Anne Marie Gross said she noticed there is no recycling available at TPC. Gayle said only paper and cardboard is recycled currently and she has had discussions with Recycling and Disposal Facility Superintendent Jeff Azano-Brown and Facilities Management Director Joe McDonough about TPC's recycling needs. There was group discussion about the source of drinking water served at lunch and other programs. Currently cold tap water is used and there is no ice machine at TPC. Gayle will get clarification from the Health Department about requirements.

Frank Pinto noted that in Sudbury, the Health Department nurse spends two hours per week at the COA doing blood pressure screenings. Tom Kealy has also made this suggestion to have at TPC. Gayle said prior to TPC opening there were many meetings on increasing the frequency of Keep Well Clinics, and adding nurses "office hours" at TPC. Gayle said the offer still stands and the COA considers the Health Department a close community partner. Beth Sullivan Woods said as the BOS liaison to the Health Department, she can share that they are interested in deepening the relationship, including inviting a COA Board member to their meetings. Diane Campbell said it would be helpful to know when they have COA related item on their meeting agenda.

Gayle reviewed the proposed holiday schedule outlined in the Director's report. Historically the COA has slightly altered its schedule from the holiday schedule followed by Town Hall departments. The Board has been in support and the schedule is published in the November/December COA newsletter. Beth Sullivan Woods said the Holiday schedule is distributed to all Town employees equally and the Town does not have a practice of employees using personal or vacation time as a block to close on a business day. Doing so has an impact on the availability of services to residents. Beth noted if the Board supports the proposed schedule, she would ask the COA to discuss with the full BOS at their next meeting. Gayle said all staff were polled and unanimously expressed support for the proposed schedule and she did not "force" full time staff to agree to it. This has been recent past practice and previously there have been opportunities for part time staff to make up hours on another day during the same pay period or work on a project from home. Diane Campbell recalled last year there were discussions about the day after Thanksgiving concerning low participation and difficulty in securing volunteers and instructors. The December dates this year are similar in terms of timing, both are on Mondays and the same difficulties may be encountered. Lisa Heyison noted in that her experience at the Somerville COA, they were open the day after Thanksgiving. No activities were scheduled but the center was open to residents.

Diane Campbell put forth a motion to support the proposed schedule for November 22 & 23 and December 24, 25 & 31, 2018 and January 1, 2019. Anne Marie Gross said we do not know how many people will visit TPC the day after Thanksgiving because TPC was closed last year. Anne Marie suggested TPC be open with a skeleton staff to be able to gather participation data on these dates to aid in making a decision about next year's holiday

schedule. Kathleen noted the Recreation Department is open and operates program the day after Thanksgiving. Gayle said she spoke with Recreation Director Matt Chin who said they are open with a skeleton staff and very limited programming. Kathleen said she would feel comfortable supporting requests from Gayle and staff but would like to discuss any variation from the Town-issued schedule with the BOS. The group discussed the COA's role as a service provider and even if no programs are scheduled, the building being open is an opportunity for residents to connect. Beth Sullivan Woods confirmed that the Health Department is also open with a skeleton staff. Gayle noted the COA has been open on the day after Thanksgiving in past years. Participation was low and it was difficult to secure volunteers. The lunch program operated differently and it is not clear if the restaurants the COA currently collaborates with will be open on those dates.

Diane Campbell withdrew her motion and the Board agreed the COA will be open with skeleton staff on 11/23, 12/24 (half day) and 12/31 (half day).

Dianne Sullivan asked a clarifying question about allocating some of the EOEI Formula Grant funds for transportation. Gayle said as it was proposed, the funds will be set aside for transportation to or from COA programs only, but as the year progresses the use of those funds can be looked at and possibly the approved list of destinations can be expanded to include non-COA related locations.

#### **Board of Selectmen update – Beth Sullivan Woods**

The BOS discussed the FY 20 operating budget guideline on 9/17 and will vote on it at their 9/24 meeting. It is looking like 2.5% guideline at this time. Anne Marie asked if there would there be an Inter-Board meeting. Beth said she is not aware of one scheduled at this time but there is a Capital budget meeting on 10/10 for Board Chairs and Department Heads of elected Boards. Anne Marie said even though the COA is not an elected Board, the COA should be afforded the opportunity to hear more about the process. Beth noted it is an open posted meeting and all are welcome.

Beth said she has had conversations with Chair of the Permanent Building Committee regarding resolution of the outstanding punch list items. A warming oven for the kitchen is ordered and once it is installed, the Health Department should sign off on the kitchen as being a formal catering kitchen. Discussions about the sewer line remain active; those involved are still evaluating the two strategies to resolve the issue.

Beth said Stephanie Hawkinson has started in the Selectman's Office as the new Communications Manager. Beth noted she is looking forward the upcoming working session concerning the strategic plan as the BOS are looking to fill the two vacant COA Board seats based on the needs and skillsets the Board identifies.

#### **Modified New Era Fund grant request guidelines & application – Pete Godfrey, and Cynthia Sibold, Presidents FWCOA**

Pete Godfrey acknowledged the need for a closer relationship between the COA Board and FWCOA. Pete reviewed the NEF grant guidelines for requests over \$1000 and role of the grant advisory committee. It is important that the requests be in alignment with the strategic direction of the COA. Requests for under \$1000 are informal between COA and FWCOA. Pete noted it is currently the halfway point of fundraising for NEF, having raised \$750K of the \$1.5M goal a year and a half into the three year campaign. Pete distributed copies of a letter sent by NEF Chair and co-Chairs to donors this month.

In addition to NEF, Pete said the FWCOA raise funds through their annual "Circle of Friends" campaign. Donors to this campaign are generally businesses or organizations with an interest in or who serve seniors. Pete also acknowledged Elizabeth Bradley's fundraising efforts through the Boston Marathon charity bib program, which has resulted in over \$4K each year she has run the marathon for FWCOA. Pete added FWCOA administers the Simons Fund, and the expected distribution this year is \$38,000. Pete reported more requests for assistance

from the Simons Fund are being approved and funds are getting to the people who need them. COA Health and Social Services Administrator Kate Burnham facilitates applications.

Pete said FWCOA looks forward to cementing its relationship with the Board while looking to the future. FWCOA has an interest in piloting new innovative programs, but currently there is no policy regarding exactly how long a program subsidy will last. Funds dispersed by NEF are subject to the grant guidelines and FWCOA is interested seeing how the COA measures the impact of FWCOA's program subsidies.

### **COA Lunch Program Update – Gayle Thieme**

Gayle reviewed the report previously distributed to the Board. Some action steps that will be taken include increasing publicity for the program and surveying COA participants regarding price point as it relates to the FWCOA subsidy. Diane Campbell asked if some current diners receive a scholarship to cover their lunch fees. Gayle said some diners have applied and received Client Assistance funds for this purpose. The group discussed the Springwell lunch model that other COAs in the area use and that Wellesley used prior to switching to the current model. Anne Marie Gross noted staff are developing ideas to bring in more diners, such as including musical entertainment. Kathleen Vogel expressed concern that FWCOA has previously expressed interest in supporting pilot programs but not necessarily supporting ongoing needs while noting the Town policy of not funding food. Anne Marie suggested researching how other COAs fund their meal programs, if not through Springwell (or similar agency). Diane Campbell asked if EOEI Formula Grant funds would support the lunch program. Dianne Sullivan asked how staff handle cancellations after the headcount has been called in. Gayle reviewed the current protocol, which includes selling any extra meals to diners who wish to take one home. The program is averaging five unsold meals per month through August. Gayle added staff would institute a tracking system to monitor who is frequently canceling. The group discussed the letter to the Board from Linda Senecal, who noted some seniors may prefer to pay the full price of the meal and the group expressed agreement that staff can take steps to anonymously survey COA participants about price point.

### **TPC updates – Gayle Thieme & Kathleen Vogel**

It was noted Beth Sullivan Woods covered most updates during her agenda item.

### **Working Groups update – Kathleen Vogel & Lisa Heyison**

Lisa distributed a draft list of suggested working groups, which was developed with input from Gayle. The group discussed adding a working group to review lunch models and changing the name of one proposed group to Strategic Plan Review. Gayle will issue a revised version of the list and ask each Board member to respond to her indicating which groups they would like to join.

### **FY 19-20 Reporting Schedule – Gayle Thieme & Kathleen Vogel**

Kathleen said there were some questions regarding the frequency of some reports of services under review such as lunch and transportation. Gayle said she would like to know how often the Board would like reports on the lunch program. Diane Campbell suggested one more report before the end of the pilot period. Kathleen noted the FY 18 full year transportation data was not included in the draft schedule. Linda Clifford suggested adding it in November. Dianne Sullivan said she thinks transportation data should be reported quarterly. Linda said at the previous meeting, the group discussed the fact the transportation working group could receive additional information in between the bi-annual reports and decide to push pressing information or concerns to the full Board on an as needed basis. Kathleen said the working group has met once to date and other members may join before the group meets again. Kathleen suggested the reports come to the working group first and the group will determine what pertinent information needs to be shared with the full Board.

**New Business:** None.

**Meeting adjourned:** Kathleen Vogel adjourned the meeting at 6:12pm.

**Documents and/or Exhibits referenced at this meeting (previously distributed by Gayle Thieme unless otherwise noted):**

- Director of Senior Services Report
- Open Meeting Laws PowerPoint Presentation
- New Era Fund (NEF) Grant Guidelines and Application (revised)
- Letter from NEF to donors (distributed by Pete Godfrey)
- Report of the COA Lunch Program Expansion
- Letter to the COA Board from Linda Senecal
- FY 19 Proposed Reporting Schedule
- Working Groups updates (distributed by Lisa Heyison)

Minutes prepared by Linda Clifford