

Wellesley Council on Aging  
Board Meeting  
November 15, 2018

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

**In Attendance:** Kathleen Vogel, Lisa Heyison, Dianne Sullivan, Diane Campbell, Penelope Lawrence, Thomas Kealy, Anne Marie Gross, Barbara Offenhartz  
Board of Selectmen (BOS): Beth Sullivan Woods  
Staff: Gayle Thieme, Linda Clifford  
Absent: Frank Pinto

**Call to Order:** Kathleen Vogel called the meeting to order at 4:04pm.

**Citizens Speak:** None.

**Approval of October 18, 2018 meeting minutes:** Anne Marie Gross put forth a motion to approve the October 18 meeting minutes and Diane Campbell seconded. Penny Lawrence requested that Gayle Thieme's comment about adding on 15-20% to the participation numbers to account for some users not signing in be added to the section on the EOE Annual Report. Linda Clifford will make this change to the minutes. The motion to accept minutes as amended passed unanimously.

**Updates from Board of Selectmen – Beth Sullivan Woods**

Beth said the HR department had a joint meeting with the BOS and several other Boards. The meeting reviewed how Hay (classification) system works. HR also did a salary comparison with 32 other towns. The results were favorable in that overall, Wellesley's salary system is competitive with other communities. HR will take a closer look at positions where the salary is lower than the benchmark communities. Beth added there was consensus that part-time staff wages should be increased at 2%, along with the full-time staff increases. Anne Marie Gross asked if that plan will be presented at Annual Town Meeting. Beth said it may not require Town meeting action to implement but it will be discussed. Kathleen Vogel asked if there is an opportunity to correct part-time staff classifications if needed. Beth said her takeaway was that Department Heads would bring to HR's attention on a case-by-case basis.

Beth said the FY 20 budget reviews for Boards and Departments that fall under the BOS will be taking place in early December.

Beth said the BOS are looking at potentially awarding a contract to a developer to develop the Tailby and Railroad lots. Anne Marie asked if this is part of the housing plan. Beth said a 40R will be going before ATM that would allow John Hancock to develop a 350 apartment building village in Wellesley Office Park, along with other convenience services.

Kathleen Vogel asked about receiving a formal reply for building modifications. Beth said it was not formally discussed at a BOS meeting, but Tolles Parsons Center (TPC) building falls under BOS jurisdiction. Kathleen asked how far along the COA should take an idea before bringing it to the BOS. Beth said the BOS could vet a concept before taking it to the next level. The group discussed examples of potential projects of differing scopes.

**FY 20 revised budget draft – Gayle Thieme & Linda Clifford**

Gayle circulated a revised budget request and said the revision reflects the Training and Development line item budgeted at \$4,000 versus the draft that was issued at \$2,200. The change was made based on comments

made in discussion with Kathleen and Beth Sullivan Woods and previous comments made in discussion with Anne Marie Gross. An additional \$1,800 offset from the EOEI grant was added to expenses, so the Town portion remains at \$2,200. Gayle noted she confirmed with EOEI it being an appropriate use of those funds.

Gayle provided a breakdown of what is expected for the FY 20 EOEI Formula Grant. The COA is being advised to budget at \$12/elder. The plan is to budget a \$43,432 offset to Personal Services, an \$1,800 offset for Training and Development, an \$1,800 offset for Conferences/Meetings and an \$8,000 offset for Printing and Mailing specific to the COA newsletter. This leaves \$10,116 that can be used for other purposes. In previous years, the COA has used funds for Volunteer Recognition, Enrollment Incentives and other ideas. This budget still comes in at the 2.5% guideline.

Beth Sullivan Woods said the COA has budgeted EOEI at conservative level should something happen at state level. Tom Kealy said the substantial increase in EOEI offsets to be able to come in at guideline and this is different thinking about how the EOEI flexibility is used, as opposed to previous year's budgets. Anne Marie said it will be important to educate BOS and Advisory on the rationale of using EOEI funds to offset expenses.

Anne Marie asked about planning for expanded hours and the associated cost to use staff. Gayle said what has been proposed with FMD Director Joe McDonough is to add 8 hours of custodial services specifically for TPC. Also, the addition of a second Activities Assistant at 10 hours/week will be posted reflecting the need for evening and weekend availability. Gayle said currently it is unclear what an expanded hours program would look like. Anne Marie said there is a lot of work to be done concerning the expanded hours and long term operating costs. Beth Sullivan Woods said the BOS have not discussed extended hours and it is unfortunate that at this point in the budgeting process the idea is still conceptual. Gayle said that one of her professional goals for this year is to explore possibilities for extended hours and pilot programs in FY 19. Kathleen Vogel said the key is having the FMD staff availability hours in their budget.

Diane Campbell made a motion to accept the FY 20 budget as revised on 11/15/18 and Tom Kealy seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Gayle distributed copies of the narrative that accompanies the budget template. Gayle noted it is not normal practice to handle it this way and that the narrative will be submitted tomorrow.

Beth Sullivan Woods said she has not yet received verification on the Eastern Development grant, but will follow up.

### **Transportation Report (FY 18 closeout) – Linda Clifford**

Linda referenced the FY 18 Transportation Report previously distributed, which provides data on the bus, VDP, taxi use and passenger demographic information. There was some group discussion on the data and percentage differences compared to FY 18. Anne Marie Gross asked that the numbers for both years be included when showing a percent change. Tom Kealy noted that the passenger demographic information shows how COA transportation serves the Town's oldest seniors and how a relatively small number of people account for the majority of completed rides. There was a request to include data on destinations in future reports. Dianne Sullivan noted the number of completed rides has decreased over the past few years and the number of cancellations has gone up. Dianne asked if any interventions has taken place with those individuals. Gayle and Linda noted that if the situation called for it, such as a clear abuse of the system, then steps could be taken with those passengers; however, it has not appeared to be an issue in most cases. Linda said the data indicates that the passengers who cancel the most often also ride the most often. Linda said she is going to take a closer look at the ride requests that are not met to see if there is a correlation between those requests and last minute cancellations, because currently it is not clear if cancellations are preventing other ride

requests from being met.

Diane Campbell added that as a volunteer driver she sees how passengers request rides in well in advance, but then need to cancel due to various life circumstances, such as illness. Anne Marie said she views the COA as a service organization and she hopes the COA would not take a strict stance on cancellations due to the population served and the fact the COA wants to encourage participation, adding it is important that passengers feel comfortable riding the bus and the staff with whom they interact.

Linda added that the raw numbers presented in the report are more reflective of the workload, i.e. the number of calls coming into the transportation department. Linda gave the example that there were several cancellations for tomorrow due to an uncertain weather forecast and that those rides may end up rescheduled and completed on another day.

Gayle said it will be important to think of additional creative ways to publicize the COA transportation services, adding that a transportation program is being planned for January to include a meet and greet with transportation staff, an overview of the services and an opportunity to board the bus in the TPC parking lot.

Barbara Offenhartz asked if there is a way for staff to be made aware of potential changes in the health or status of a passenger, e.g. if they are recovering from a surgery can more attention be paid by staff. Linda noted there is frequent communication between COA staff and gave a recent example of a passenger not showing for their ride. The driver notified the Transportation Coordinator and soon after, Health and Social Services Administrator Kate Burnham did a well-being check only to find that the passenger had fallen inside their home. Diane Campbell it noted the Transportation Coordinators often encourage passengers to participate at the COA as well.

### **Working group updates**

*Policies and Procedures* – Gayle said the group has been working on developing draft room utilization policies for other Town departments/groups during regular business hours. A more comprehensive update will be provided at a future meeting. Next steps for the group include developing other policies, e.g. Standards of Independence.

*Art* – Diane Campbell said the first working group meeting of interested participants has taken place. The conversation focused on where to display art in the building and first steps to take. A starting point may be with an art show or displays of art from COA classes that take place at TPC. Diane added the group needs experience with hanging art with the picture rail system.

*Lobby/Lounge Shelves* – Gayle reported that no one has responded to a recruitment effort in the newsletter. Gayle said she Penny Lawrence and Sheila Nugent are going to reconvene and discuss next steps.

*Lunch Model and Funding Sources* - Anne Marie said the group is meeting on 11/29. Board members can still send comments on the draft diner satisfaction survey to Gayle who will share with the working group.

*Newsletter* – Linda said the working group has met twice. The most recent meeting was to review the responses from the 11 COAs the group contacted to learn more about their newsletter production and distribution methods. Linda provided a summary of the findings. At this point, the working group is making the following recommendations:

1. Continue to mail the newsletter to all Wellesley households with someone age 60 and over. The FY 20 Budget request includes an \$8,000 expense offset (EOEA Formula Grant funds) specific to the newsletter printing and mailing costs.

2. Introduce an annual \$10 subscription fee for non-residents who wish to receive a copy in the mail. Non-residents who do not wish to pay the fee can pick up a complimentary copy at TPC or view online at no cost.
3. As the FY 20 Budget request is final, no recommendation on potentially changing the publishing frequency (which would affect postage and service costs) before July 2020.

There was general discussion about encouraging people, especially those who have recently turned 60, to opt-out of receiving a hard copy now that the document can be viewed on the website and is emailed to subscribers. Only a small number of people have opted out to date. COA staff manually remove the names of people who opt-out from the data file provided by the Town Clerk so that they are not mailed a copy.

*Transportation* – Kathleen said Ellen Korpi of the Sustainable Energy Committee (SEC) requested a meeting with the working group to learn more about the COA's transportation services. Ellen Gibbs also participated in the meeting. Something learned is that there are other transportation models used by other COAs including the MWRTA's Central Reservations system. Kathleen noted no decision needs to be made right away but it warrants further exploration. Anne Marie said prior to any recommendations coming to the full Board she would want reassurance that the quality of service would match the level currently provided by the COA, referencing the previous examples given during the Transportation Report. Anne Marie said she doesn't think that outsourcing is always the answer. Kathleen said she is not suggesting outsourcing; however, the Central Reservations system has a high success rate of completed rides, which warrants further exploration.

Beth Sullivan Woods said Ellen Korpi and the SEC is meeting with every department in Town involved in transportation, as an audit, and that they are only in the information-gathering phase. Kathleen added that Ellen Gibbs is putting together a Mobility group as part of the Unified Plan to begin discussing how transportation is connected to the stated goals in the Unified Plan. This did not come up in the meeting with the SEC, which was described as a listening session. Kathleen described how the MWRTA's Central Reservation components works. She added the COAs who use the Central Reservations receive funding for driver wages. Currently, Wellesley's assessment to the MWRTA only provides The Ride service. Kathleen said Transportation is a \$107,000 line item and the actual cost per ride is expensive. Anne Marie suggested a first initiative should be to increase ridership. Linda said if the working group is going to gather data from other COAs about their transportation services, it will be important to look at the scope of service. Many other COAs who operate larger buses or vans operate differently from Wellesley, i.e. generally, the destinations served are designated to certain days of the week. This may increase efficiency of the larger vehicles. Kathleen added Wellesley has a generous reservation policy, allowing request to be made 30 days in advance which should be compared to other COAs. An overall theme of a successful transportation program is connecting as many ride requests with completed rides as possible. Next steps are that Linda will provide the working group with a list of questions to ask other COAs.

*Strategic Plan Review* – no update at this time.

*Board Roles and Responsibilities* – this group is currently inactive.

### **Director's Report – Gayle Thieme**

Gayle provided an update on COAs who responded to the inquiry about extended schedules. 37 of 58 COA who responded have some form of extended hours. Another 11 COAs are considering extended hours. 10 COAs have no extended hours and for various reasons do not intend to offer such. The extended hours ranged from four nights and some Saturdays to only special occasions and scheduled weekends. In general, no additional staff were required as staffing for staff covered extended hours with flex time and/or volunteers are utilized. Many towns do not require a custodian to cover extended hours. There was a range of activities and programs offered during extended hours. In many communities, COA users during extended hours were also daytime

users. Gayle noted she has an additional dozen responses not yet included. Diane Campbell said it would be helpful to see the data separated with Wellesley's benchmark communities as well as those geographically closer to Wellesley. Beth Sullivan Woods said sorting by Town population could be helpful as well.

Gayle referenced the draft questionnaire on extended hours that was previously distributed. The group provided general feedback on the draft, including possibly adding a question about transportation. The group also discussed the target audience for the survey, and potential distribution methods, such as postal mail, email, the COA newsletter, the Townsman, the COA website and The Swellesley Report.

**Chair's Report – Kathleen Vogel**

Kathleen noted available volunteer slot is available for the Welcome Breakfast taking place on 11/19.

**New Business:** None.

**Meeting adjourned:** Kathleen Vogel adjourned the meeting at 6:20pm

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

- FY 20 Revised Operating Budget request
- Narrative to accompany FY 20 Operating Budget request
- FY 18 Transportation Closeout report
- Director of Senior Services Report

Minutes prepared by Linda Clifford