

Wellesley Council on Aging
Board Meeting
February 7, 2019

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

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

Call to Order: Kathleen Vogel called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

Citizens Speak: None.

Approval of January 17, 2019 meeting minutes: Penny Lawrence put forth a motion to approve the January 17 meeting minutes and Diane Campbell seconded. The motion to accept the minutes passed unanimously.

Gifts to the COA – Gayle Thieme

Gayle referenced the list of donations previously distributed. Kathleen asked if the donations earmarked for transportation are a result of the letters sent to bus passengers summarizing their rides for the previous month or are spontaneous. Gayle and Linda Clifford said they believe most of those donations are made in response to the monthly letters. Dianne Sullivan asked about the date range for this list of donations. Gayle said it covers donations made since the previous Board meeting on January 17. Diane Campbell put forth a motion to accept the gifts as presented at the February 7 Board meeting and Penny Lawrence seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

TPC updates – Beth Sullivan Woods, Kathleen Vogel & Gayle Thieme

Beth provided an update on the sewer line. There are four dips in the line causing back-ups. The contractor will replace the line and plans for this project are being finalized. Beth said her understanding is that the building will need to close while the work is performed. The exact schedule for the work is not yet determined and Gayle will be involved in the scheduling. The group discussed how closing the building will affect COA programming. Anne Marie Gross suggested speaking to partners in town see if there are opportunities. Diane Campbell asked if there would be an opportunity to submit questions about the project. Beth said Board members should send to Kathleen who will pass along to Beth.

Beth said the HVAC system has been malfunctioning on second floor. There have been ongoing communications with Johnson Controls and they think they have identified the piece of equipment that is not working. FMD is continuing to monitor the situation.

Transportation Report – Linda Clifford

Linda referenced the previously distributed transportation report which included information on the number of completed, canceled and abandoned rides and top destinations for the first two quarters of FY 19, and a comparison to the first two quarters of FY 18. Linda added the COA has issued \$469.00 in refunds to date to 42 individuals who returned unused bus tickets. Anne Marie Gross suggested formatting the report so that the quarterly comparison is side-by-side, which would make it easier to read. Kathleen Vogel asked if there are specific days of the week or times of day that are historically difficult to meet requests and if that skews the abandoned ride data. Frank Pinto asked how far in advance passengers cancel a reservation. Linda explained cancellations are categorized by how far in advance they are made, either more than one day in advance or less than one day in advance. Data has shown most cancellations are made less than one day in advance and a lot are due to poor weather conditions or passenger health. Often these trips are rescheduled for a later date.

Dianne Sullivan requested including the total number of special trips in the data. Dianne asked if the high number of cancellations affect the COA's ability to provide transportation for other people. Linda said as part of her transportation goal, she is going to take a closer look at abandoned rides to see if other passengers cancelling have had an effect. Tom Kealy asked if passengers cancelling VDP rides has negatively affected the volunteer drivers. Linda said not all of those rides had been assigned to a driver at the time of cancellation and generally drivers are understanding when a passenger cancels. Tom asked about bus trips to Roche Bros. Linda explained that Mondays are the designated grocery shopping day but that rides are allowed on other days provided the bus schedule can fit it in. Passengers going to Roche Bros. on days other than Monday may not have as much time to shop given the other rides scheduled on those days. Lisa Heyison asked if passengers who go to the Boston Sports Club know that TPC has a fitness room. Linda said she believes they do and that some passengers use the pool or meet with a trainer at the BSC.

TPC Fitness Room update – Gayle Thieme

Gayle said she is making a recommendation to the Board that membership fees to use the TPC fitness room be eliminated. Despite the fact that scholarship assistance is available, the COA will never know how many people would prefer to go without using the room rather than request financial assistance. Eliminating fees will provide seniors with more opportunities to meet their health and wellness goals. Lisa Heyison put forth a motion to eliminate membership fees for the fitness room and Tom Kealy seconded. Anne Marie asked about the plan to pay for equipment maintenance because previously membership fees were going to pay for ongoing maintenance. Gayle said she looked at the warranty information and most of the equipment has a 3-5 year warranty. Gayle said she also has a quote from Precision Fitness Equipment for an annual preventative maintenance contract for the room. Gayle noted the COA operating budget now has a line item for equipment/maintenance/repair/supplies and over time that line item could include funds to cover the costs. Gayle said approaching the Friends of the Wellesley COA (FWCOA) for financial support is a possibility. Anne Marie mentioned considering charging a one-time only fee, adding this type of question may be raised in the future. Kathleen Vogel said the New Era Fund has expressed interest in financially supporting the room.

The motion passed with eight votes. Diane Campbell abstained.

Gayle said the elimination of fees could result in more times when the room is at capacity. Gayle suggested monitoring use over the next several weeks and months to determine if changes to the systems currently in place are necessary. Potential changes include members scheduling use of the room in advance, limiting the number of times a member can access the room over the course of the week or month and expanding into the dance studio. Gayle proposed refunding the fees previously paid by individuals who have used the room to date and keeping eligibility to Wellesley residents age 60 and over.

Gayle reviewed the revised fitness center forms previously distributed. Gayle suggested adding a required Workout Specification Form completed by a physician. Gayle said COA staff who have conducted the trainings have expressed concern on the varying abilities of people who have undergone the trainings. Having the member's physician complete the Workout Specification Form provides the COA with an additional layer of protection. Penny Lawrence asked if Town Counsel is recommending use of this form. Kathleen Vogel said the form is modeled after the High School's fitness room forms, which were developed by the Town. Gayle said last year Town Counsel developed the release of liability also signed by participants, but he has not seen the COA's Workout Specification Form. Anne Marie Gross suggested Town Counsel review the proposed changes because the target population is different.

Beth suggested having the Board vote pending approval by Town Counsel. There was general discussion about the wording of the Workout Specification Form. Diane Campbell asked what would happen if a person doesn't follow physician recommendation. Gayle said the onus is on the member to follow physician's order. Diane suggested having the member sign the form as well.

Lisa Heyison put forth a motion to accept the changes made to the revised forms, as presented, provided they are also approved by the Town Counsel, and approve the implementation plan, which includes issuing refunds. Barbara Offenhartz seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Diane Campbell inquired about the written update provided to volunteer greeters concerning the elimination of membership fees. She said the wording about the rationale for the decision is unclear. Gayle said the recommendation aligns with the mission of the Simons Fund and the same update is going in the March/April newsletter.

Management Training – Kathleen Vogel & Beth Sullivan Woods

Beth Sullivan Woods referenced previous discussions, concerning providing Gayle with more support, adding it is the Town's responsibility to invest in its leadership. A trainer who specializes in municipal employees and has previously worked with DPW and Library is available to do a management training with both Gayle and Linda. The purpose is to provide them with the opportunity to refine their skills and become a stronger management team in terms of working with the Board and staff. Beth has worked on the proposal with Kathleen and the HR Director, while the specific mechanics of the training are developed between the trainer and the staff.

Frank Pinto asked about the trainer's experience and suggested Gayle and Linda have an informal meeting with him before beginning the training. Beth said in addition to working with DPW and the Library senior managers, the trainer has worked with staff in Belmont, Newton and Lexington. Beth has checked references. Kathleen added that he has worked with the Framingham and Weston COAs recently as well. Anne Marie Gross asked what the curriculum looks like and how it is administered. Beth said it is a leadership development curriculum including various effective management skills. Kathleen said the format is eight two-hour sessions with both Linda and Gayle, and they will set the schedule with the trainer. Lisa Heyison asked for Gayle's and Linda's opinions of the opportunity. Both said it seems to be a good opportunity to increase skills. Linda added she would like to see more detail about the specific curriculum, if possible. Diane Campbell asked if the curriculum is adjusted to the interest of the participants and how the goals of the program are aligned with the work of the Board. Beth said the training is personalized and it is not for the Board, it is for Gayle and Linda to be strong managers. Anne Marie Gross said it is important for the Board to support Gayle and Linda going forward, and for the Board understand what Gayle and Linda learn from the program.

Tom Kealy said in previous years, the COA did not have budget for professional development, but this has changed recently with the understanding that as the COA moved to a new building, both the Board and leadership staff would engage more with the Town. The group discussed the potential for follow up and refreshers with the trainer after the training program has concluded. Beth said in her experience with this trainer, he has a history of offering check-ins and follow up. Anne Marie said the Board has not received a concrete proposal to review and asked who has had the conversation to discuss the proposal. Beth said she and Kathleen met with the trainer. Anne Marie said it sounds like a lot of the training is developed after the first conversation with Gayle and Linda. Diane said she would like there to be a check-in after the first meeting and to see a budget. Lisa Heyison asked if it is possible for the Board to approve the training provided that Gayle and Linda would like to move forward after an introductory meeting. Dianne Sullivan asked if trainer would be able to meet with Gayle and Linda individually. Kathleen said yes, depending upon the topic. Dianne asked if there is an evaluation process at the end of the training. Anne Marie said one cannot be evaluated until they have had time to put what they've learned into practice and eight weeks is not enough time to expect a turnaround. Beth said the request to the Board is to reallocate the expense budget to pay for training. Anne Marie Gross put forth a motion to approve \$4,500 for the management training program contingent upon Gayle and Linda feeling it is a good match. Lisa Heyison seconded the motion. Gayle said the training would be charged to the operating expense budget, anticipating a surplus in other line items between now and the fiscal year end, reporting to the Board as needed. The motion passed unanimously.

Director's Report – Gayle Thieme

Extended hours community survey update – Gayle said paper surveys will go out with the February MLP bills to approximately 7,000 households. The cost of the survey and envelope printing is \$1,085. The COA is using FWCOA's business reply mail account. The survey will also be featured on the COAs website. People will have until March 15 to complete the survey and COA will publicize it using other methods as well.

Lunch survey update – there have been 118 responses to date (33% response rate). Gayle said she expects to start analysis soon. The timing is critical for a report to NEF for their potential approval of extending the grant of expansion to five days per week (March 31 expiration date). Gayle said FWCOA will cover the April subsidy if the NEF does not approve extending the grant.

Personal Trainer update – Gayle said the initial vision was to offer a four-week complimentary personal training session that would be funded through the EOEI formula grant. Gayle's weekly report on 1/15/19 then suggested a \$75 fee for the four-week session. Kathleen Vogel had suggested reaching out to EOEI for clarification. Gayle said Emmett Schmarsow at EOEI indicated formula grant funds are not permitted for personal training, despite the EOEI grant guide not explicitly stating it. Gayle said EOEI granted approval for a one time only offering in FY 19 at a 50% subsidy. This comes to a \$110 participant fee for the four-week session. If sessions are offered in March, April, May and June, 56 people would be able to participate. Current COA fitness instructors Lisa Wilkins and Dan Salerno will provide the personal training. Gayle said it is unknown how many participants will be willing to pay the \$110 fee but it is an opportunity to provide more exposure to the fitness room. Penny Lawrence asked about fitness room members using the room at the same time. Gayle said not everything the trainers do is machine based, so everyone should be able to coexist. The group then discussed registration logistics. Gayle said the trainers will provide the room orientation to participants who are not current fitness room members.

Transition Navigator update – Gayle will include in weekly report.

NEF grant ideas/priorities and timing – Gayle said some ideas includes room darkening shades and a ceiling mounted projector in the American Legion Room, retrofitting an underused coat closet in Schuler Room for additional storage, an ice machine in the kitchen, launching the Aging Mastery Program, continuation of the lunch program, possible renovation of the dance studio, and fitness equipment maintenance costs. Tom Kealy said NEF should be used to help fund extended hours.

Working Group updates

Gayle will send out updates in her weekly report.

New Business: None.

Meeting adjourned: Kathleen Vogel adjourned the meeting at 6:16pm

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

- List of donations to the COA requiring acceptance by COA Board
- Mid-year Transportation Report
- Director of Senior Services Report
- Revised Fitness Room documents (Letter to prospective members, Policies & Procedures, Registration form, and new Workout Specification form)

Minutes prepared by Linda Clifford