

Wellesley Council on Aging
Board Meeting
March 21, 2019

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

In Attendance: Kathleen Vogel, Lisa Heyison, Dianne Sullivan, Penelope Lawrence, Thomas Kealy, Anne Marie Gross, Barbara Offenhartz

Board of Selectmen (BOS): Beth Sullivan Woods

Staff: Gayle Thieme, Linda Clifford

Guest: Fred Keuthen, Friends of the Wellesley COA (FWCOA)

Absent: Diane Campbell, Frank Pinto

Call to Order: Kathleen Vogel called the meeting to order at 4:03pm.

Citizens Speak: None.

Approval of February 7, 2019 meeting minutes: Penny Lawrence put forth a motion to approve the February 7 meeting minutes and Lisa Heyison seconded. Minor corrections in the document were noted that Linda Clifford will fix. The motion to accept the amended minutes passed unanimously.

Gifts to the COA – Gayle Thieme

Gayle referenced the list of donations previously distributed. Lisa Heyison put forth a motion to accept the gifts as presented at the March 21 Board meeting and Anne Marie Gross seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Remarks – Kathleen Vogel

Kathleen said she received an email today from Anne Marie concerning the Board receiving an update on the Management Training. This item will be put on next month's agenda. The group discussed changing the April meeting date from April 18. Gayle will send a communication to the Board about this.

COA Lunch Program updates – Gayle Thieme

Gayle referenced the previously distributed summary report. Tom Kealy asked why historically Monday has had the lowest attendance. Gayle suggested other non-COA senior activities such as Friendship Circle and Wellesley-Weston Lifetime Learning also take place on Mondays but she is not sure if the same people attend. Lisa Heyison noted there were many 'other' answers provided by respondents and that 'N/A' should be an answer option. Penny Lawrence inquired about the meal ordering process. Gayle explained the monthly menus are developed in conjunction with newsletter timing staff call the headcount in to the restaurant the day before. People are added to the waitlist if someone signs up after the count is called in, and cancelations do occur. There was general discussion about the ordering process. Dianne Sullivan said she spoke to some participants before today's meeting who had some additional comments about menu selections. Gayle said she will share the survey results with the restaurants.

Anne Marie noted the comments about the room ambiance and suggestions to improve it. Kathleen Vogel said she feels strongly about providing nutritional information. The group discussed the possibility of doing this and the pros and cons of doing so. Lisa suggested possibly just providing information on sodium. Gayle said the restaurants have indicated they cannot provide detailed nutritional information. The COA would have to work with a dietician or nutritionist and possibly start with the most popular meals. Gayle mentioned meeting with the Sustainable Energy Committee (SEC) about the schools' initiative for surplus food rescue.

Gayle reviewed attendance on Mondays, which has remained low since March 2018, despite trying pairing it with musical entertainment and piggybacking with other programs. Gayle suggested scaling back to four

days/week beginning in May. Doing so will provide an opportunity for other programs in the Schuler Multipurpose room. Gayle said she is working on the detailed report to NEF, and will request funding for one day, Wednesday, instead of two. FWCOA will continue to fund three days per week (Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays).

Penny Lawrence put forth a motion to move the lunch program to four days per week, starting May 1, and Lisa Heyison seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Anne Marie put forth a motion to request NEF and FWCOA to fund the lunch program expansion through December 31, 2019. Lisa Heyison seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Director's Report – Gayle Thieme

Gayle referenced the previously distributed report. Kathleen Vogel asked about difference between the number of people who have completed a fitness room orientation, the number who have completed their paperwork to activate a membership and the number of fitness room users. Gayle noted the number of people participating in orientations is increasing. Staff are monitoring usage of the room. Kathleen asked about possibly continuing the personal training program. Gayle said there is a lot to evaluate, and taking a hiatus during the summer seems beneficial.

NEF grant applications – Gayle said the Board will receive the report on the lunch program that is going to NEF. Gayle said another application possibility is the 10-week Aging Mastery Program planned for this fall; more information to come at a future Board meeting. Other opportunities previously discussed include retrofitting room darkening shades for the American Legion room, however, the COA budget or a direct ask to FWCOA could potentially cover this cost. The COA needs to discuss with FMD options for additional storage in Schuler multipurpose room. Other ideas include purchasing additional fitness equipment and changing the flooring to expand the size of fitness area. Gayle mentioned her professional goal of further developing policies and procedures and the possibility of bringing in a consultant with expertise in this area. Anne Marie Gross suggested potentially asking for funding for a survey consultant as well. Kathleen asked if the Town retains anyone in particular. Beth Sullivan Woods said historically the Town has not done complicated surveys, but it may be worthwhile to retain someone with expertise, especially as the Board considers its long-term strategic plan.

Tom Kealy discussed the proposal for extended hours. He expressed concern about not hearing from seniors who are not currently participating and the need to do something different to attract these people. Tom said NEF at a relatively low cost could support an incentive program to offer fee-based programs during extended hours at no cost for new users. Anne Marie noted the NEF Advisory group would want to see a specific, concrete grant request, but that unique evening programs can attract new, younger seniors. Anne Marie added she sees dual pressure between having building open for meeting space and serving seniors. The COA has to educate the final approvers as to the 'why'. Kathleen said she and Gayle will be meeting with Beth to get a better understanding of what information the BOS wants when the COA returns to the BOS with a proposal on extended hours. Beth clarified the overtime custodial costs are in the FMD FY 20 budget with the plan it won't be released until a cohesive plan for extended hours is supported by the BOS.

Tom said when new ideas are tested, things often do not work perfectly and plans change over time. Beth said she agrees and the request from the BOS wasn't to come with a plan that wouldn't change. The request was for the COA to provide a plan, based on information, on how extended hours would be tested and vetted. The challenge in the Town is that there are limited resources in departments, and with so many pressing items, everything is scrutinized. Beth added the BOS is not expecting a road map plan until September. Kathleen said perhaps a Marketing & Communications working group should be formed to consider ways to reach out to non-users and look at the formal recommendations made by the Marketing & Branding consultants. There was general group discussion about ideas for various after-hours programs, including some currently underway, and

how they are being marketed.

Working Group updates

Past Retreats Review – Anne Marie Gross reviewed the recent work of the group and referenced the document previously distributed that summarizes the Board goals established after the previous years' retreats. Kathleen Vogel asked if anyone is looking at the other recommendations from the Marketing and Branding project. Anne Marie said many of the goals are continuing work, such as communication, transportation, and enrollment/program evaluation. Kathleen asked about the Board's interest in another retreat. Anne Marie suggested waiting until June, with a thought process concerning the status of the previous goals occurring between now and then. Beth Sullivan Woods agreed with this suggested timing. Anne Marie said other things are currently being studied that would be worthwhile to discuss more at the time of a retreat. Lisa Heyison asked about the two Board vacancies. Beth said additional applicants have come forward and it is likely appointments will happen prior to the retreat; within the next month or so. Beth said the normally occurring reappointments will take place in June. Penny asked Beth to explain the appointment process. Beth said the BOS advertises the opportunity on the Town website with an online application. Beth and Kathleen have been meeting with applicants and referring to the list of criteria Gayle and the Board developed. Beth said she and Kathleen will make a recommendation to the BOS for appointments. Kathleen said there have been delays with getting the appointments on the BOS agenda due to other recent pressing issues. Beth added she has been assured it the BOS will move forward with this in April.

Transportation – Linda provided an update of the working group's meeting with the MWRTA in February to learn more about their Central Reservation program and the possibility of obtaining a second smaller vehicle. The group also met in March to review next steps. Linda added she and Gayle had a conference call with the Carlisle COA to learn more about their pilot program with Lyft. Wellesley may also be able to partner with Lyft for a pilot program in FY 20. Beth Sullivan Woods said the SEC was asked to look at how to best allocate the funds generated by Uber/Lyft rides originating in Wellesley. Their interpretation of the legislation is that funds should be used to reduce the burden on infrastructure and improve bicycle safety. They made a recommendation to allocate 100% of the past year's funds to improving pedestrian safety at an intersection at Walnut St. and Damien Rd. Beth said her hope is that next year there will be a broader conversation about how those funds are allocated. The funds need to be approved by Town Meeting every year.

TPC Café/Lounge – Penny Lawrence said the group met on February 28 and discussed a plan to take photos of volunteers to display in the cafe. Penny said she spoke to the Needham COA about their library and the group is also discussing plans for shelving. The next meeting is on April 2.

Newsletter – Gayle reminded the group that previously, the Board approved an annual fee for non-residents who wish to have the newsletter mailed to them. Linda explained this change will go into effect July 1 and the May/June issue will be mailed to non-residents with a letter informing of the policy change and giving the opportunity for recipients to subscribe if they so choose. If non-residents do not want to subscribe, they may still pick up a newsletter at TPC or view online.

FWCOA updates – Fred Keuthen

Fred said starting with the May/June issue, FWCOA will be able to solicit donations via the COA newsletter. Needham, Natick and other COA newsletters have offered the same opportunity with good results. Fred said the NEF currently has over \$500K. The FWCOA bank account is in two parts, the Almira Simons Fund and general funds. Katie Brooks is raising funds for the FWCOA for the Boston Marathon. The Circle of Friends are annual business sponsorships. Fred said FWCOA wants to pursue a planned giving initiative, and added FWCOA recently received \$15,000 from Middlesex Savings Bank, who donated to three institutions in each of the towns in which they do business. Wellesley Bank is a contributor to NEF.

TPC Extended hours community survey update – Gayle Thieme and Kathleen Vogel

Gayle said the deadline has been extended to 3/31/19. Next steps include talking to Beth Sullivan about what is expected by the BOS when the COA presents its findings. Gayle said Kathleen, Tom and Penny volunteered to do data entry and the group consulted with Marketing and Branding consultant Joan Seamster, who provided some advice about how to proceed.

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
- Diner survey analysis
- Director of Senior Services Report
- COA Retreat Information – Recap/Status (distributed by Anne Marie Gross)

Minutes prepared by Linda Clifford