

**Council on Aging Minutes of April 15, 2021  
Online Remote Board Meeting**

*This meeting will be aired live on Comcast 8 and Verizon 40, and will be available on demand the following morning. When two meetings are being held simultaneously, the second meeting will be live on Channel 9 or Verizon 39. Also, meeting agendas are posted on [wellesley.ma.gov](http://wellesley.ma.gov) at least 48 hours prior to the meeting, and protocol for participating in Citizen's Speak is at the bottom of that agenda.*

**Members Present:** Marlene Allen, Chair; Tony Parker, Vice Chair; Susan Rosefsky, Secretary; Liz Becker (joined meeting at 4:18pm); Tory DeFazio; Lori Ferrante; Bob Ferrell (joined meeting at 4:09pm); Gerry Hume; Tom Kealy; Dianne Sullivan; and Kathleen Vogel

**Absent:** None

**Also Present:** Heather Munroe, Director of Senior Services; Gregory Wilson, Assistant Director of Senior Services; Tom Harrington, Town Counsel; and Maurica Miller, Counsel

**Meeting Documents:**

Agenda  
Minutes of February 25, 2021  
Minutes of March 18, 2021  
Minutes of December 17, 2020- Revised  
Minutes of January 21, 2021- Revised  
Director's Report including:  
    WHJWC 2021 Grant Application Form  
    Reopening Plan Survey Results

**I. Call to Order:**

Ms. Allen, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm. There was a Roll Call for attendance.

**II. Citizen Speak:**

The Board heard from Adele Langevin, Amy Ward, Elaine Elliot, and Marilyn Sherry, members of the public, relative to Tai Chi, LaBlast, Chair Yoga, and class cancellations.

Adele Langevin, 35 College Rd. Ms. Langevin spoke highly of the Tai Chi class and instructor, Jon Woodward, and expressed concerns about how the class was almost cancelled. She expressed that the decision making process was not student-centered, but was happy that the issue was favorably resolved.

Amy Ward, Natick. Ms. Ward spoke highly about the LaBlast class and the instructor, Karen Karten. She expressed concern about the class being cancelled, even with lower numbers, and she expressed support for continuing the program. Ms. Ward advised that the COA could offer the class again for free to gain more interest. She also expressed interest in the COA extending programs into the evening.

Elaine Elliot, 27 Forest St. Ms. Elliot explained that previously, a class was almost cancelled but was able to run since the instructor accepted reduced compensation. Additionally, she claimed that former students registered for the class without taking it on Zoom to keep the class running. Ms. Elliot also said that two other instructors faced a similar situation, and she expressed that she will no longer contribute to the New Era Fund because of these events. Ms. Elliot further expressed concerns about how donations are used, and she requested that her name be removed from view on the New Era Fund plaque in the front lobby of the Tolles Parsons Center (TPC).

Marilyn Sherry, 21 Russell Rd. Ms. Sherry spoke about the Chair Yoga class that was cancelled. She expressed concern about flexibility with scheduling and requested more flexibility with instructors moving forward. Ms. Sherry spoke highly of the class and the instructor, Cyndi Koss, and would like the COA to be able to accommodate if instructors cannot teach the full eight weeks in a cycle.

### III. Meeting Minutes:

Minutes of the March 18, 2021 meeting were reviewed.

**A motion was made by Dianne Sullivan and seconded by Bob Ferrell to accept the minutes of the March 18, 2021 meeting. In a Roll Call vote by Members Present named above, the motion passed, 10-0. Ms. Becker was not present at this time to vote.**

Minutes of the February 25, 2021 meeting were reviewed.

**A motion was made by Kathleen Vogel and seconded by Gerry Hume to accept the minutes of the February 25, 2021 meeting. In a Roll Call vote by Members Present named above, the motion passed unanimously, 11-0.**

Minutes of the revised January 21, 2021 minutes were reviewed. A discussion prompted by Mr. Kealy ensued, and Mr. Kealy expressed that he will not approve this version of the minutes, as he believes they do not accurately reflect the comments made by seniors during Citizen Speak. Mr. Kealy emailed his concerns, and Town Counsel advised Mr. Kealy to submit the amendments to the COA Board. Mr. Kealy declined to read through his referenced email, and suggested that the board delay the vote until they look at his request.

Mr. Parker expressed that this is a continuing discussion that has been recognized by the Board and COA staff. He recommended that these minutes be approved but continue the class cancellation discussion in the future. Ms. Allen stated that the minutes conveyed the discontent of the seniors without being a transcript, allowing a reader to understand what happened at the meeting. It was also clarified that the minutes were revised by persons outside of the Board and should either be accepted or, if they need to be amended further, discussed at the end of the meeting.

Mr. Kealy expressed that he wanted his comments shared with the Board later for future discussion and amendments. Town Counsel advised that it is inappropriate for board members to share edits outside of a public meeting, and with a motion for approval made, further discussion or suggested amendments should be offered and voted on; otherwise, proceed with voting for approval. Mr. Kealy declined to offer his amendments at this time due to their length.

**A motion was made by Kathleen Vogel and seconded by Susan Rosefsky to accept the minutes of the revised January 21, 2021 meeting. In a Roll Call vote by Members Present named above, the motion passed, 10-1. Mr. Kealy voted against the motion.**

Minutes of the revised December 17, 2020 minutes were reviewed.

**A motion was made by Bob Ferrell and seconded by Kathleen Vogel to accept the minutes of the revised December 17, 2020 meeting. In a Roll Call vote by Members Present named above, the motion passed unanimously, 11-0.**

#### **IV. Director's Report:**

Highlights of the report included:

- FY21 Sponsorship tracking;
- Reopening Plans for the month of April;
- Department Assistant position;
- Programming updates;
- Social Work and Outreach updates;
- Transportation updates; and
- Volunteer updates.

#### **Gifts:**

A donation of \$50.00 was made by Maryellen Russell as a general gift with no specified purpose.

**A motion was made by Kathleen Vogel and seconded by Susan Rosefsky to accept this monetary gift given to the COA. In a Roll Call vote of Members Present named above, the motion passed unanimously, 11-0.**

#### **Reopening Plan Update:**

The COA released the reopening plan as it pertains to April in the late March Newsblast and an early April Townsman Senior Neighbors update. Major changes from March to April include:

- Movies;
- Patio usage and activities; and
- Additional one-on-one IT services.

A brief survey was also sent out to gauge reactions to the reopening plan and to each of the activities the COA is rolling out. The survey received 60 responses, 51 of which self-identified as Wellesley residents. Ms. Munroe clarified that, while the time to complete the survey shows "24:06," the actual time to complete the survey was likely under five minutes. The majority of the respondents believed the plan was on target.

Ms. Munroe explained that moving forward, lunch starts in May and June on Wednesdays, pending Health Department approval and any needed policy changes. Additionally, once financial costs are identified, Ms. Munroe will meet with the Friends to discuss funding. It was clarified that Mr. Wilson is going through the required food safety training with a goal to complete it by May.

### **Programming:**

The COA is attempting to offer easier sign-up options with Microsoft Forms. The COA uses Forms in weekly newsblasts and will try to use it for some program registration, as well. This would be for free programs, as Forms cannot handle financial transactions.

Fitness class updates on May and June were also provided. Ms. Munroe clarified that for the Tai Chi class, the COA spoke with Jon Woodward and will try running the program again in May and June for eight sessions with a revised description. La Blast will not run in May and June due to low attendance. The class was popular while in-person, and the instructor is flexible and happy to try out additional options in the future. Osteo will not run next cycle because the instructor is away for an entire month. A free program, SAIL, is running in its place next cycle. Chair Yoga will not run next cycle since the instructor is available for three out of eight classes. The COA will work with the instructor to see what we can do moving forward. Additionally, the COA is aiming to meet with all instructors in May to go over scheduling, consistency, and flexibility. For Mixed Yoga, not shown in the report, the COA spoke with the instructor and a compromise was reached to make sure the classes could continue and comply with the procurement laws; classes will run for one hour instead of 90 minutes.

May/June Newsletter updates were provided. In addition to a new table of all exercise classes, the COA added a 9:00am Saturday class, which is a pilot Mixed Bag exercise class. Each week will be a different class with a different instructor. Priority is given to Wellesley residents, and nonresidents can sign up three days in advance, space permitting.

During discussion, Mr. Kealy informed the rest of the Board that for March and April, both Mixed Yoga classes were full and successful, and the students are happy. Mr. Kealy expressed gratitude that the second class was set up.

### **Social Work/Outreach:**

Financial Assistance: The Senior Work Off (SWO) property tax relief program hours were submitted to the Assessor's office, and the Social Worker is exploring additional placement opportunities. Three out of eight participants are earning hours, with placements at the RDF and remotely through the COA. Almira Simons Funding continues to move forward with pending applications in the queue; a few of which are:

- Hearing aid(s);
- In-home respite care;
- Private case management support;
- Eye glasses; and
- Automobile repair.

Themes: Many residents are looking forward to getting back to normal and coming back to the TPC, and others are still much more cautious. There are some concerns about vaccinations not being mandatory.

Health Aging Programming: For the Healthy Aging program, there were 26 participants via Zoom on March 10 and 22 pre-registered participants for the April 7 session. For Friends for an Hour, there were three participants, with hopes to recruit more participants in April. In May, facilitated discussion groups will happen on the Patio every Tuesday at 11:00am. Health and Social Services

Administrator, Kate Burnham, is participating in a course on Group Work with Older Adults to help enhance her skills in facilitating meetings.

**V. Program Cycles Per Year Discussion:**

Ms. Allen noted the current process of having six registrations and six newsletters published each year and posed the idea of publishing four newsletters each year (one for Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall) with having 12 weeks per cycle. In a given cycle, ten weeks could be devoted to classes, and two weeks could be allotted for makeups, vacations, planning, etc. Benefits to this approach include a reduction in newsletter mailings each year, extra time between terms, and better synchronicity with residents' general schedules. Ms. Allen opened up the floor for further discussion and feedback.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Kealy supported the idea for cost and efficiency purposes. Ms. Vogel noted that the Wellesley COA was previously producing the least number of publications compared to other COAs and recommends obtaining feedback from the seniors. Ms. Vogel expressed concern about seniors potentially feeling less connected and is curious how other senior centers continue to produce more publications without it being burdensome. Additionally, Ms. Becker expressed concern for seniors that do not have email and believes we should publish as many as we can.

Mr. Parker prompted discussion on how programming cycles could be different from other types of publications with patron participation. Ms. Allen suggested one type of publication for programming with a supplemental monthly mailing that is interesting, current, and not difficult to produce. Ms. Vogel commented that programming at other some COAs are established and scheduled well in advance so that they only have to worry about some new content to insert each month, reducing the publication burden.

Ms. Sullivan supported the idea to produce separate types of publication, but wanted clarification on the pause between program cycles. Ms. Allen explained having a buffer between cycles to work on new registration, resolve any conflicts, offer makeups, or give the instructor a break, as some preliminary examples. Ms. Allen would also like to know what seniors think and how cycle shifting would impact them. Additionally, Ms. Allen clarified that this would affect classes, not other types of programming.

Ms. Munroe explained that currently, transitioning from one program cycle to the next depends on the class, and sometimes there is no break at all between cycles. Moving forward, the COA is trying to find a balance so that the instructors can be flexible and provide enough classes per cycle.

Ms. Ferrante supported the concept of separating communication types to not reduce overall communications and expressed the importance of utilizing feedback from the seniors and instructors to shape the structure. Additionally, Ms. Ferrante expressed concern about the financial impact of reduced publications, which would reduce revenue from advertisements.

Ms. Rosefsky expressed support for four programming publications with additional supplemental paper mailings. Ms. Rosefsky expressed concern about pauses in between fitness classes, and would like feedback from seniors before moving forward. Ms. Sullivan expressed interest in obtaining instructor feedback on this as well.

Mr. Ferrell expressed support of a poll for participants and community as well as instructors to ascertain what is best for them for programming structure. Mr. Ferrell also expressed support for a working group on communication.

Ms. Vogel expressed interest in understanding technological problems that may create program cycle obstacles. For example, due to current software, staff cannot work on multiple cycles at once, and participants cannot register for the next cycle until the current one is finished.

Ms. Allen appreciated the distinction between communications and the normal newsletter and would like to look into this further, suggesting that Ms. Munroe and Mr. Wilson obtain feedback from staff. This can also be discussed at the next open session.

Further discussion ensued regarding ways to move forward, especially as programming transitions back to the TPC in-person, and it was reiterated that feedback from seniors, instructors, and staff must be gathered; technology and the registration process might need to be assessed; and the communications pieces should be defined. A working group was established, comprised of Ms. Vogel, Ms. Allen, Mr. Parker, and Ms. Becker.

## **VI. Reports/Updates:**

Ms. Allen reminded the Board that a Nominating Working Group must be established in the April meeting to determine the slate of Board officers for July 1, 2021. It was noted that the working group should have their recommendations ready for the May Board meeting, and determining the slate of officer candidates occurs in the June Board meeting. During a discussion prompted by Ms. Vogel, points were raised about the importance of every Board member considering these roles, as they provide growth and valuable experience. Gerry Hume, Kathleen Vogel, and Susan Rosefsky agreed to be part of the working group.

From the Transition and Reopening Working Group, Mr. Ferrell spoke about a phone survey being developed for seniors enrolled in the Phone Pal Program. The survey will evaluate current attitudes toward the program, the format of the program, and if participants wish to continue in the program. Ms. Munroe added that there are 27 volunteers in the program, and we need about three or four Board members to help out with the survey calls. Lori Ferrante, Dianne Sullivan, Liz Becker, and Susan Rosefsky offered to help, and the goal is to complete these calls by the end of May.

From the Transition and Reopening Working Group, Mr. Ferrell suggested a meeting for COA staff to discuss their thoughts and feelings about returning to the office. During a discussion about the meeting, support was expressed, and an idea was posed to hold pre-opening and post-opening sessions.

From the Transition and Reopening Working Group, Mr. Ferrell suggested developing a voluntary questionnaire to gauge patron health concerns or risks and better prepare staff to respond in case of emergency. During discussion it was clarified that while there is no current process to assess these types of items, the Director would also like all staff to be trained in First Aid and have scenario-based training over time. It was clarified that the data in the MySeniorCenter software is still being cleaned, and any missing items such as medical conditions, technology access, homebound status, and more can be included as a process for obtaining this information is developed. Additionally, a programming idea was raised that is meant to educate seniors on potential medical concerns. Newton Wellesley Hospital Speakers Bureau was identified as a potential resource.

**VII. Old Business/New Business:**

*Matters not anticipated by the Chair at the time of posting.*

Mr. DeFazio inquired about when the COA should hear back on the grant application for the Wellesley Hills Junior Women's Club. Ms. Munroe indicated that because of the pandemic, the process is slower, but we should know before July. Mr. DeFazio offered to assist staff in identifying appropriate speakers.

**VIII. Next meeting dates/time:**

COA Board Meeting Thursday, May 20, 2021 at 4pm

Community Outreach Session May 11, 2021 at 1pm

**IX. Executive Session:**

M.G.L. CH. 30A, § 21(a)(1). "To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual." Ms. Allen presented the single agenda item to approve the minutes from the Executive Session Minutes from April 1, 2021. Ms. Allen called for motion to go into executive session and only return to open session for the purpose of adjournment.

**A motion was made by Susan Rosefsky and seconded by Bob Ferrell to enter into Executive Session under Purpose 1 to discuss the minutes of the April 1, 2021 Executive Session, to invite Tom Harrington, Maurica Miller, Heather Munroe, and Gregory Wilson to attend the executive session, and to return to open session for the purposes of adjourning. In a Roll call vote by Members Present named above, the motion passed, 10-0. Mr. Kealy did not vote.**

Entered Executive Session at 5:46pm.

Returned to Open Session at 6:15pm.

**X. Adjourn:**

**A motion was made by Kathleen Vogel and seconded by Gerry Hume to adjourn the meeting. In a Roll Call vote of Members Present named above, the motion was passed unanimously, 8-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:17pm (Tom Kealy left the meeting at 5:46pm; Bob Ferrell left at 6:12pm, Tony Parker left at 6:10pm).**