

TOWN OF WELLESLEY
COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF REMOTE ONLINE MEETING
15 September 2022

Mr. Parker called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm. Noting that the Council's inaugural meeting occurred September 20, 1972, he announced congratulations upon this 50th anniversary milestone. Celebrations this fall will mark both the COA's 50th anniversary and the 5th anniversary of the opening of the Tolles Parsons Center.

Ms. Rosefsky announced the meeting is aired live on Comcast channel 8 and Verizon channel 40 and will be available on demand the following morning. When two meetings are being held simultaneously, the second meeting will be live on Comcast channel 9 or Verizon channel 39. Meeting agendas are posted on wellesleyma.gov at least 48 hours prior to the meeting, and protocols for participating in Citizen Speak appear within the agenda.

PRESENT: Tony Parker, Marlene Allen, Tory DeFazio, Lori Ferrante, Susan Rosefsky, Cynthia Sibold, Dianne Sullivan, Kathy Trumbull, Kathleen Vogel.

Also Present: Council on Aging Interim Director Greg Wilson, Select Board Member Beth Sullivan Woods

Tina Wang was absent.

CITIZEN SPEAK: Mr. Wilson reported two citizens have requested to speak to the board and will be invited to offer remarks immediately prior to the agenda item Vaccine/Mask Policy Review.

MINUTES

Moved (Allen) and seconded (Sibold) to approve minutes dated August 25, 2022. Motion CARRIED on roll call vote: Parker, Allen, DeFazio, Ferrante, Rosefsky, Sibold, Sullivan, Trumbull, Vogel

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

FINANCES

Mr. Wilson recommended acceptance of monetary GIFTS as follows:

From Friends of Wellesley Council on Aging:

- \$2500 for Fall Foliage Trip
- \$197.77 August coffee subsidy
- \$255 August lunch subsidy
- \$467 Simon's free lunch, August

Moved (Vogel) and seconded (Rosefsky) to accept cited monetary gifts. Motion CARRIED on roll call vote: Parker, Allen, DeFazio, Ferrante, Rosefsky, Sibold, Sullivan, Trumbull, Vogel

Mr. Wilson requested authorization for EXPENDITURES

- Payable to Roche Bros. \$60.58 for refreshments, Board/Staff Get Together, August, 2022

Moved (Ferrante) and seconded (Vogel) to approve expenditure in the amount of \$60.58 from the general gift account as cited. Motion CARRIED on roll call vote: Parker, Allen, DeFazio, Ferrante, Rosefsky, Sibold, Sullivan, Trumbull, Vogel

- Five Year Anniversary Memento Coasters

A luncheon on Friday, October 21, will mark the fifth anniversary of the Tolles Parsons Center opening. The planning committee would like to offer attendees a keepsake custom designed wood coaster featuring unique imagery depicting the Tolles Parsons Center and/or Wellesley Council on Aging logo. A vendor quote has been obtained for two potential purchase quantities: \$297.42 (52 coasters) and \$461.21 (100 coasters). Each quote includes a flat \$55 custom design fee. Mr. Wilson recommended obtaining 100 coasters. The purchase would be charged to the Marketing Account. Given the short timeframe before the luncheon date, the board concurred with Mr. Wilson that staff should work with the vendor in selecting a final design from among several preliminary suggestions that have been prepared and shared with the board. Ms. Allen suggested the coaster might also incorporate a nod to the concurrent 50th anniversary milestone of CoA, but Mr. Parker added that the board itself might wish to confer separately about some other recognition of the 50th anniversary. Mr. Parker called for a motion.

Moved (Rosefsky) and seconded (Allen) to approve expenditure in the amount of \$461.21 from the marketing account for the purchase of 100 customized wood coasters. Motion CARRIED on roll call vote: Parker, Allen, DeFazio, Ferrante, Rosefsky, Sibold, Sullivan, Trumbull, Vogel

PROPOSED BOSTON POPS EXCURSION

Mr. Wilson reported that a discount offered by the transit company decreased by \$10 the projected cost to CoA patrons for this December 16 trip – from \$89 to \$79. The \$79 charge aligns well with charges for similar trips in past years. Registration for this event opened today, and 11 registrations have already been received.

PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

- Interesting program topics in August included costumes and film and a block printing workshop.
- Feedback about the two al fresco dinners, each fully attended, was enthusiastic and positive.
- The shoulder pain workshop was well attended.
- There was positive feedback about the online program attended by 54 seniors regarding cable, streaming services, and the like.

SOCIAL WORK OUTREACH

- There was one request for financial assistance to cover dental work.
- The Social Connections program and Coffee with a Cop remain strong.
- The Men in Retirement group meets regularly. While the size of the group is not increasing, a regular core of attendees remains enthusiastic about this opportunity.
- Concerns addressed by the social worker are consistent month to month and include issues around housing, downsizing, making the switch to assisted living, long term care placements, aging in place, in home care through Springwell.

Members discussed the Springwell Home Care Program, including the various services it may offer to citizens of Wellesley, how citizens might access information about this umbrella state agency, and how the Council might assist in publicizing this resource within the community, including perhaps at the health fair planned for later this fall. It was noted that Springwell, a regional service provider, recently merged with Bay Path.

FITNESS CENTER SURVEY

Mr. Wilson reported. One clear outcome of the survey was the desire by respondents for increased frequency and availability for drop in access options. Patrons perceive that requiring scheduled usage of the equipment on an appointment basis results in underutilization. Beginning October 3 the CoA will accommodate drop in usage each day of the week and will monitor for the next several weeks how this change impacts fitness center usage and activity.

Members spoke to the survey responses and discussed scheduling issues, equipment and room cleaning practices, the Town of Wellesley Council on Aging

Minutes of Board Meeting September 15, 2022

potential impact upon capacity of the drop in model, factors influencing patrons' choices to use or not use the facility, equipment repair, equity of access. It was noted that the Council's Policies and Procedures Manual includes an official policy requiring it to provide new users of the CoA fitness center proper orientation and training on the equipment by trained instructors.

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Wilson reported. From 30 responses to the recent survey, the three most requested destinations for day shopping trips were Stop & Shop (Natick), Market Basket (Waltham), and Trader Joe's (Needham). As an initial response to the survey requests, the CoA will offer a November trip and a December trip and will monitor response. The trips will be advertised in the November-December newsletter.

BUILDING UPDATES

Kitchen

Mr. Wilson and Mr. Parker met with representatives of FMD, Town Hall and the Health Department on September 7 to overview the process to plan for the kitchen project. In order to commence the feasibility study, CoA has been requested to produce a single page list by October 7 itemizing programming goals and outcomes for the kitchen. Mr. Parker charged the board with collecting ideas about the kinds of programs CoA might develop with a licensed commercial use kitchen. He will also invite patrons to submit ideas and will research what may be occurring in other communities. A return deadline of September 22 for all suggestions and ideas will allow the board time to streamline and synthesize all the collected information into a one-page list as requested for the feasibility study by the designers and architects. Mr. Parker further noted that if there is to be any FY23 budget request from CoA relative to the kitchen project, the request would cover only further analysis and study, and not rebuilding.

IT Closet

Mr. Wilson reported there is no new information from the project manager.

Outdoor Issues

Mr. Wilson reported he will obtain an update for report to the board in October.

Ms. Sibold left the meeting at 5:00 pm.

AGE/PARTICIPATION POLICY

Mr. Wilson reported. Revisions to the age and participation policy, which were approved by the board in August as a First Read vote, were described in the September-October Newsletter. A vote today on the revised policy thus will be the Second Read, although the agenda does not specifically cite the proposed action as the "Second Read." Approval of the revisions today will permit CoA to include official notice in the November-December Newsletter that a revised policy is in effect. Mr. Wilson noted again that the board may soon identify a working subcommittee to consider and propose edits to this, or other policies, as may be deemed necessary. Ms. Vogel expressed concern that the public may not know the board's action today will be "final" action to change the policy, but the group consensus favored proceeding, and Mr. Parker called for a motion.

Moved (Allen) and seconded (DeFazio) to accept the amended Age and Participation policy as submitted. Motion CARRIED on roll call vote: Parker, Allen, DeFazio, Ferrante, Rosefsky, Sullivan, Trumbull, Vogel

FY22 ANNUAL TOWN REPORT

The board reviewed a draft version of the Council on Aging FY22 Annual Report, which Mr. Wilson has prepared in consultation with Ms. Hawkinson of the Select Board staff. Members recommended factual corrections to the content of the draft report as follows: (1) list the current roster of board members/positions; (2) cite accurately Wellesley's

population census. Mr. Wilson will revise the draft as recommended for final approval by the board prior to the submission due date of October 14.

VACCINE/MASK POLICY REVIEW

Mr. Wilson reported there were 198 survey responses (169 Wellesley/29 non-Wellesley resident). The results indicate continuing support for the existing policy requiring patrons to provide both proof of vaccination and to wear masks in the building. Several respondents did suggest separating consideration of the two requirements.

In the ensuing brief discussion, members considered how the survey might guide their decision making. Mr. Parker requested that each member speak individually to this topic after first hearing remarks from two citizens who have asked to address the board.

CITIZEN SPEAK:

TOM HOFFMAN, 141 Chestnut Street, Needham. The Council's policy combines the two issues of masking and vaccination, which ought to be separate issues. Masks should be optional. Regarding vaccines, I suggest you maintain the policy that requires proof of two original doses and two boosters. On a different topic, a Wednesday morning bridge group (9:00 – noon) has begun to meet and would welcome more members.

MARIAN PRUSLIN 20 Madison Road, Wellesley. Masks should be optional. Some activities (e.g. Hamlet readings and discussion groups) are unpleasant, unproductive, and unsatisfying for participants due to the mask requirement. Masking is optional at the Weston center.

MEMBER COMMENTS:

MARLENE ALLEN TPC should host a booster day -- no appointment needed. It is difficult to breathe, to speak, and to be engaged while wearing an N95 mask. Large group events are not the only source of transmission. In this new school year there are infections within families from school children. This is not the time to relax the mask policy when school has just resumed. In the future individuals will have to make their own responsible choices. I would be comfortable relaxing the mask requirement later in the year if there is no surge of cases due to the resumption of the school year.

TORY DeFAZIO Though the end of the pandemic may be near, we should maintain our present policy for another month at least, evaluating matters on a monthly basis until the end of 2022 before making any changes.

LORI FERRANTE Thanks to the large number of constituents for their survey responses, which provided valuable feedback. The survey did link mask wearing and vaccination, which we should consider as separate issues given the advances in testing and treatment of the virus since our policy was initially written. I encourage people to get the bivalent booster, which is the best protection to combat Covid. If people obtain that booster, I would feel confident about making masks optional. Perhaps the policy could be amended to permit optional masking concurrent with a requirement for proof of having had the bivalent booster.

DIANNE SULLIVAN I agree that masks could be optional for those who have had the bivalent booster, but I remain concerned about the transmission of this respiratory virus among our population this fall, some of whom may not have had boosters. Some of our programs are the high risk activities where transmission takes place easily. We should keep our mask policy in place now and reevaluate perhaps every month. Is it still our goal to provide an environment with the lowest risk possible for patrons to socialize and stay engaged? Some patrons will not attend events without masks; others are immune compromised or simply uncomfortable without masking.

KATHY TRUMBULL: We want to provide a safe environment for people. The survey results indicate almost an even split of opinion among attendees, but the comments indicate that immunocompromised and others are looking for us to provide a safe environment for all. I incline toward maintaining our mask mandate and continuing to evaluate matters as

things change. I do not want us to fluctuate our policy month by month. Maintaining the masking requirement makes sense right now.

KATHLEEN VOGEL The comments are compelling from those who would rather not wear masks but still attend events and from those who would not come to programs without a mask requirement. The flu – another risk for the demographic we serve -- is expected to be severe this year. I suggest leaving our policy in place. Initially we required that patrons receive two doses of the vaccine. Will we step up our inspection of documentation to be certain that people are fully vaxed and boosted?

TONY PARKER People must take responsibility for their own actions, whether that means attaining a booster shot or wearing a mask. You can't protect everyone from everything. The survey indicates pretty clearly that the majority of respondents do not want change. I think we should leave our policy as is for now but continue to monitor or leave it as an open discussion item for the next couple of months. I am inclined to establish the beginning of 2023 as the time to let people be responsible for themselves.

SUSAN ROSEFSKY I would like all who come to the center to be boosted, but I am ambivalent about masking. I would prefer to revisit this issue next month, but to separate the two issues. Booster doses are not yet in full supply. Give people time to get their second or third booster. Until then, we should revisit this matter next month.

Mr. Parker recapped the board's collective support to maintain the mask policy for at least another month. Members also want to assess, in the next several weeks, the rate at which patrons receive the bivalent booster and evaluate whether a surge within the community emerges due to the resumption of the new school year. A Department of Health flu clinic will occur at the Tolles Parsons Center on October 20. Given the recent release, and currently limited supplies of the bivalent booster, the clinic will offer flu shots only. Members encouraged expanding the clinic to include Covid boosters, if and when adequate doses become available. Mr. Parker noted that maintaining the mask policy over the longer term will likely discourage expanded participation in the center's programs. Ms. Ferrante noted again that the bivalent booster will offer the strongest defense against the virus. There was general consensus that the board would be confident to relax the mask policy within the next couple months if a significant number of constituents have become bivalent boosted. Ms. Allen asked the Council to publicize news of the booster and encourage constituents to obtain the shot.

The board agreed to revisit its review of the current Mask and Vaccination Policy at its next meeting, when it will consider masking and vaccination as separate issues.

UPCOMING BOARD AND STAFF EVENTS

There will be a Retreat Meeting of the Board on Monday, October 3, 3:00 – 6:00 pm. The planning committee for that event is finalizing the proposed itinerary for distribution to all soon.

REPORTS AND UPDATES

DIRECTOR SEARCH

Ms. Allen reported. From a pool of 40 candidates, 7 were selected for preliminary interview. The search committee hopes to identify 2-3 finalist candidates, each of whom will meet for a final interview with the entire board. The search committee hopes to complete the process and appoint a new director by November 1. Town of Wellesley Human Resources has held preliminary discussions with, and has recommended to the search committee an outside consultant, whose work, for a fee of \$2,000, would assist the search through the development of a behavioral and achiever profile of 2-3 finalist candidates. The consultant's report would be completed and available to the entire board for discussion with the consultant before finalist interviews occur. In behalf of the search committee Ms. Allen asked the board to pre-approve an expenditure of \$2,000 for the consultant services herein described. Because the Council has not entered into a formal contract with the consultant, the funding request is characterized as a pre-approval.

Moved (Allen) and seconded (DeFazio) to preapprove an expenditure of \$2,000 for assessment services of two to three finalist candidates for the director position. Motion CARRIED on roll call vote: Parker, Allen, DeFazio, Ferrante, Rosefsky, Sullivan, Trumbull, Vogel

FINANCIAL WORKING GROUP

Mr. Wilson reported that there has not yet been official word about a guideline for FY23 budget development. In behalf of the Select Board Ms. Sullivan Woods noted that preliminary planning is underway to hold an inter board meeting in early October, perhaps October 3. The Select Board has begun consideration of possible guidelines ranging from 2-1/2% to 3% and is seeking feedback from town boards about anticipated needs that may exceed the guideline. Mr. Parker indicated that a working finance sub committee should be convened to develop the CoA response, and he is actively seeking candidates, especially individuals who have not been involved previously in such matters, to serve in this capacity.

NEW BUSINESS/OLD BUSINESS

There were no additional matters for consideration.

ADJOURN

Ms. Rosefskiy confirmed the date of next board meeting: Thursday, October 13, 4:00 pm

Moved (DeFazio) and seconded (Allen) to adjourn at 6:01 pm.

Motion CARRIED on roll call vote: Parker, Allen, DeFazio, Ferrante, Rosefsky, Sullivan, Trumbull, Vogel

Respectfully submitted,
Mary E. Wolf