

TOWN OF WELLESLEY
COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF REMOTE ONLINE MEETING
13 October 2022

Mr. Parker called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.

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, Dianne Sullivan, Kathy Trumbull, Kathleen Vogel. Cynthia Sibold joined the meeting at 4:05 pm.

Also Present: Interim Council on Aging Director Greg Wilson, Advisory Committee Member Bill Schauffler. Select Board Member Beth Sullivan Woods joined the meeting at 5:30 pm.

Tina Wang was absent.

CITIZEN SPEAK: None

MINUTES

1. Meeting dated July 21, 2022

Moved (Vogel) and seconded (Allen) to approve minutes dated July 21, 2022. Motion CARRIED unanimously on roll call vote: Parker, Allen, DeFazio, Ferrante, Rosefsky, Sullivan, Trumbull, Vogel

2. Meeting dated September 15, 2022

A correction was noted to cite Mr. Wilson as *Interim* Director, not *Acting* Director.

Moved (Vogel) and seconded (Rosefsky) to approve minutes dated September 15, 2022 as amended. Motion CARRIED unanimously on roll call vote: Parker, Allen, DeFazio, Ferrante, Rosefsky, Sibold, Sullivan, Trumbull, Vogel

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

GIFTS: Mr. Wilson recommended acceptance of

From Friends of Wellesley Council on Aging:

- \$500 for Fifth Anniversary Celebration Luncheon
- \$279.97 September coffee subsidy
- \$286 September lunch subsidy
- \$379 Simons free lunch fund

From various Council on Aging patrons:

- \$60 donations for coffee fund

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

FY23 BUDGET UPDATE

Mr. Wilson reported that the Council has thus far expended slightly more than \$71,000 in the current fiscal year, which is approximately 13% of the overall budget. This amount aligns with the budget plan and tracks similarly to expenditures made in prior years. Mr. Wilson also reported on expenditures by the Council thus far from funding received annually from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. At present 31.4% of the FY23 EOEA allocation remains.

PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES

- The Barbeque and Swinging 60's Music event was very successful.
- The evening lecture series offered a program on comets and meteors, which was recorded and formatted for coverage on Wellesley Media.
- 50 participants attended a presentation by FBI agents about fraud.
- Arts and crafts offerings are popular. A new instructor is well liked.
- The leaf peeping excursion to Quechee Gorge was successful, attracting 47 attendees.
- Friday movie offerings continue.
- The series of Barry Pell photo lectures has continued, most recently focusing on Saudi Arabia.

- September financial assistance requests were related to housing issues, property tax assistance, prescription medication costs, fuel costs.
- The social worker is assisting qualified applicants to apply for fuel assistance.
- The social connections group continues to meet.
- Coffee with a Cop remains a popular offering.
- Demand continues for the Men in Retirement group. This group welcomes women also.
- The Council continues to offer support for families coping with changing dynamics brought about by aging; queries about affordable in-home care; fall prevention; instances of alleged abuse or neglect.

BUILDING UPDATES

- FMD has approved the proposed DPW installation of chain link fencing to replace chicken wire behind the Tolles Parsons Center. Work will begin soon.

The ensuing discussion included concerns that the proposed chain link fence installation might obstruct access around the entire building for fire trucks and/or emergency vehicles and that a solution more durable than fencing might ultimately be necessary. Mr. Parker volunteered to obtain more information about these questions.

- A bid has been accepted for the IT closet project.

- Kitchen: On October 7 Messrs. Wilson and Parker presented the board's itemization of programming goals and outcomes for the kitchen jointly to FMD, Executive Director Meghan Jop, and the project consultant. Upon receipt of a ranked prioritization from COA, the consultant will develop recommendations for next steps. FMD also asked COA to consider certain administrative issues.

Members advocated developing a kitchen not limited by boilerplate design, but designed to serve COA program needs and the community.

ANNUAL TOWN REPORT

Mr. Wilson noted that a revised version of his original draft for the Annual Town Report incorporates feedback from the board. The submittal date is October 14. Mr. DeFazio requested a correction in the spelling of his name.

Moved (Vogel) and seconded (Allen) to approve the Council on Aging Report to the Town of Wellesley, amended to correctly spell Mr. DeFazio's first name. Motion CARRIED unanimously on roll call vote: Parker, Allen, DeFazio, Ferrante, Rosefsky, Sibold, Sullivan, Trumbull, Vogel.

PATRON LETTER

Mr. Wilson shared his response to a letter received recently from a patron about some recent COA programming.

FITNESS ROOM POLICY

Acknowledging that there is likely little more for the board to discuss regarding the fitness room policy, Mr. Parker broadened the discussion of this agenda item to encompass all the council's policies. The imminent arrival of a newly appointed director warrants that the council aggregate all its policies together in one accessible locale. Currently, policies are scattered in several places. Ms. Sullivan and Ms. Vogel agreed to identify and list all existing policies. The board concurred to proceed in the next several months with a systematic, incremental review of all COA policies with a goal of keeping the information accurate, updated regarding approved changes, and comprehensively accessible to staff in one place.

MINUTES

Ms. Allen and Ms. Rosefsky agreed to work toward identifying an individual to record minutes of future board meetings.

MASK and VACCINATION POLICY

MOTION (Parker), Seconded (Allen): To rescind the Council on Aging Policy requiring patrons to provide proof of vaccination and wear masks, which policy was initiated and approved in February 2022.

The ensuing comprehensive discussion included the following:

- Patrons must assume personal responsibility for their health-related choices, including masking and vaccinating.
- COA messaging should be reassuring that the center is a mask friendly environment.
- Rescinding the policy requirement for masking and proof of vaccination would counter the council's goal to provide the lowest possible risk for patrons to socialize and engage in COA programming.
- Other communities do not have strict requirements as currently apply in Wellesley.
- Society in general has adjusted to the constant presence and continuing health threat of Covid.
- Significant numbers of patrons will not come to the center because of the mask and vaccination policy that is currently in place.
- The board should consider a revision that separates the two elements of masking and vaccination.
- Asking staff to check patrons for vaccination status is difficult. Many other organizations have entirely discontinued that practice.
- Masking is no longer required in Town of Wellesley buildings.
- In the event of a new surge the board will look to the Health Department for advice regarding masking.
- Masking primarily protects the mask wearer.

Mr. Parker called for a vote: Motion CARRIED (6-0-2) on roll call vote. YES: Parker, Allen, DeFazio, Ferrante, Sibold and Vogel. ABSTAIN: Sullivan, Trumbull

The board then continued discussion about masking:

- Debate regarding several options to delineate the Tolles Parsons Center for patrons: (a) "mask friendly," (b) "masks recommended," (c) "masks encouraged" (d) "masks strongly encouraged."
- Many variables impact individuals' masking decisions, including group size, room size, activity, air exchange.
- A mask mandate is not a viable option.
- Masking signage and recommendations for COA patrons does not apply to staff.
- The board should consider the needs of the greater community being served.
- It will be necessary to update signage and messaging regarding the policy change.
- The board will continue to seek and abide by future Health Department recommendations.

Mr. Parker called for a motion on language to address masking at the Tolles Parson Center.

MOTION (Allen), Seconded (Vogel): To declare the Tolles Parsons Center a “mask friendly” building.

Motion CARRIED (6-2-0) on roll call vote. YES: Parker, Allen, DeFazio, Ferrante, Sibold and Vogel. NO: Sullivan, Trumbull

REPORTS/UPDATES

1. Search Processes

Acknowledging the imminent departure of Interim director Greg Wilson for employment elsewhere, Mr. Parker thanked him and his entire staff for excellent service. He also noted that while the recruitment and selection of a new director has been completed, openings for assistant director and program manager require immediate attention. Mr. Parker recommended appointing a committee to focus on the assistant director and program manager searches prior to the arrival of the new director, while still updating and informing him as the processes develop. The searches will be conducted in coordination with Wellesley Human Resources personnel. It was noted the board might need to review position descriptions before postings are made and that an additional, special meeting might be necessary in order to advance this work.

2. Retreat

Mr. Parker noted as well the importance of proceeding with plans for a retreat meeting. His interviews with nearly all members of the Council on Aging staff have provided excellent feedback, and have confirmed that staff are satisfied in their work. In consideration of Special Town Meeting on October 24 and the next regularly scheduled COA board meeting on November 17, the board tentatively concurred to establish Monday, November 7, as a retreat date. Development of a strategic plan will be deferred until the new director has commenced his tenure.

3. FY24 Budget Update

At the recent interboard meeting a 3% budget increase guideline for FY24 was announced. Recommendations were also given regarding percentage salary increases -- 3% for Series 40 employees and 2% for Series 50 and 60 employees. There is not yet a recommended FY24 capital budget guideline.

4. Next Meetings

An in-person community session is scheduled November 15, 2022, at 1:00 pm.

The next regular meeting of the board, possibly remote, will be held November 17, 2022, at 4:00 pm.

FAREWELL AND THANKS TO MR. WILSON

Members acknowledged with thanks Mr. Wilson’s dedication, flexibility, and excellent work in a variety of roles during the past year and wished him well in his new employment.

ADJOURN

Moved (Vogel) and seconded (Ferrante) to adjourn at 5:45 pm.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Mary E. Wolf