



Council on Aging

August 8, 2013 – **Minutes**
181 Hillman Street, Bldg. 9

****View Agenda****

Board Members Present:

Bruce Duarte, Chair
Patricia Costa, Vice-Chair
Virginia Morrison, Secretary
Esperanza Alejandro-Berube
Inez Mello
Jane Stott
Joan Swain
Mary Sullivan
James Sylvia

Excused:

Stanley Ociesa

Also Present:

Debra Lee, COA Director
Cynthia Wallquist, Director of Community Services
Pamela Amaral-Lema, COA Administrative Specialist

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by the Chairman, Bruce Duarte

Secretary's Report

Mr. Duarte explained that he had been informed in a meeting with Debra Lee and Cynthia Wallquist that the minutes from the June meeting were missing. Mr. Duarte asked for a synopsis during that meeting to be presented to the board. Mrs. Lee presented that to the board for their review. Mr. Duarte went over the new hours at the senior centers (Ashley Center-M-F 10-4, Brooklawn M,Th, F 9-3, and Tues, and Wed 9-4, Buttonwood, M-F 9-5 starting the first week of September. Downtown center has no change in hours because of lease restrictions. The Hazelwood center hours will be M, T, Th 9-3, Wed, Fri 9-4). Mr. Duarte has asked Mrs. Lee to have all the senior center coordinators come to the next Board of Directors meeting on September 12th to individually give their reports on their centers and fill everyone in on the different events upcoming for the remainder of the calendar year. There is a meeting with SRTA on August 23, at Coastline Elderly to discuss their proposal and the registration/booking process going forward. Their proposal is to offer transportation once a week starting September 3rd to Boston on Tuesdays from New Bedford and on Thursday's from Fall River. The meeting will be attended by the Director, Administrative Specialist and the Dispatcher for the COA.

Approval of the synopsis of the June meeting and the new senior center hours was made by Ms. Costa and seconded by Mr. Sylvia

Old Business

Mr. Duarte spoke about the search for a new administrative specialist who would be replacing retiring Lorraine Payton. Ms. Lee introduced Pamela Amaral-Lema, the new administrative specialist. Mr. Duarte asked Ms. Amaral-Lema to introduce herself, and tell the board a little bit about herself and what her duties entail. Ms. Amaral-Lema will be overseeing the center coordinators, programming, and operations here at the Hillman Street Administrative office. She has many years of experience working with the elder population and has a great passion in helping and assisting them to the best of her abilities. Mr. Duarte stated that Ms. Lee was instrumental in hiring Ms. Amaral-Lema, and that her people skills are exceptional on reporting and assessing, and that she has a great rapport with seniors. Mr. Duarte and the rest of the board welcomed Ms. Amaral-Lema on board. Mr. Duarte brought up the new Buttonwood coordinator, Karen Main, and her new supervisory role

overseeing senior travel. Ms. Main's hours will increase to 40 hours a week due to the extended hours of at Buttonwood senior center and her new supervisory role. Ms. Main has brought new ideas and activities to the senior center. Mr. Duarte spoke about seniors' minds needing to stay active, and Ms. Lee said that we will be offering a computer classes at Hazelwood senior center. Mr. Duarte spoke about the Coastline Elderly Title III grant that Ms. Lee applied for in the amount of \$7,500 in hopes that we can provide free transportation to the senior centers. Ms. Lee will find out on August 22, 2013 the outcome of that grant proposal.

A motion of approval for the report was made by Ms. Stott and seconded by Mr. Sylvia.

Chairperson's Report- Bruce Duarte, Sr.

Coordinators at the next meeting- Mr. Duarte asked Ms. Lee if the coordinators can come to the next meeting and fill the board of directors in on what is happening in their centers regarding programming/events.

SRTA transportation to Boston – Mr. Duarte has been informed by Angela Azevedo that SRTA will be providing Boston transportation on Tuesdays starting September 3rd, 2013. Ms. Lee has a meeting with SRTA at Coastline Elderly on August 23rd to find out more details about Boston meeting.

New Administrative Specialist- Mr. Duarte announced Pamela Amaral-Lema as the new Administrative Specialist.

New Senior Center Hours- Starting the first week in September the new hours are as follows: Buttonwood 9-5, Brooklawn- M, TH, and F 9-3, and Wed and Thurs. 9-4, Hazelwood-M, T, TH 9-3, Wed and Fri. 9-4, Ashley Center 10-4, and Downtown 9-3.

Employee problems- Issues regarding an employee and hours has been taken care off.

Downtown Coordinator- Elaine Coelho is filling in as the Activities Coordinator until the new hire gets approval from the personnel office.

Friends of the Elderly- Professor from UMASS students and professor can help with the start up of the Friends of the Elderly. Once it is up and running it will be the responsibility of those in leadership positions to keep in going. Linda Morad offered her assistance in the jump start of the Friends of the Elderly. Maria Lawton also offered her services in assisting with the Friends of the Elderly project.

A motion of approval for Mr. Duarte's report was made by Ms. Stott and seconded by Ms. Swain.

Director's Report- Debra Lee

Ms. Lee stated that the Council on Aging has renewed their lease with the housing authority and signed the papers with Steve Beaurguard to stay at the Downtown Senior Center which is located in the community room in the New Bedford Hotel until June 30, 2013.

Ms. Lee said that they are still waiting for the results of the Title III Grant from Coastline Elderly. She stated that she asked for \$7,500 and last year they received \$3,000. If given the additional funding this would help with free transportation to the senior centers by adding additional drivers.

Ms. Lee stated that they are in the process of submitting the paperwork for the EOE (Executive Office of Elder Affairs) Grant which increase their amount per elder from \$7 from last year to this year's \$8 per elder. This would raise the amount from \$131,355 to \$150,120. She stated that enclosed in the folders given to each member of the board there was a breakdown of how the funds are distributed mainly in the salaries of

coordinators, outreach worker, dispatcher, clerk, and receptionist.

Ms. Lee brought the board up to date on all the senior centers activities and new activities since the centers are staying open later.

Ms. Lee has the board members to state their name for Ms. Amaral-Lema to get acquainted to each member.

Ms. Lee stated Elaine Coelho's new position as an Activities Liaison, which she will be trying to get more seniors from the high-rises in the cities into the senior centers and specialty events. She will be getting donations, and she is great at getting donations to fund bigger city wide events.

Ms. Lee stated starting in October the Council on Aging will be providing free transportation for the seniors who are unable to attend programs at the senior centers free of cost in hopes of getting more seniors active in the community.

Ms. Lee stated she is in the works of starting a newsletter for the Council on Aging displaying each event at all of the senior centers. We will still have Senior Scope, but the newsletter will be an additional tool with just the New Bedford senior activities.

Ms. Lee stated Hazelwood, Buttonwood, and Brooklawn senior centers will have open houses to display their activities and programs for the new extended hours.

Ms. Lee has recommended a new Activities Coordinator for the Downtown Senior Center.

Ms. Lee stated Walgreens' Pharmacy is sponsoring flu clinics in the beginning of September at each of the five center centers, and gave flyers of each clinic to the members of the board. RiteAid is also offering flu vaccinations and Shingles vaccinations later in September.

Ms. Lee will have a meeting with the Fire Department in helping seniors with fire safety and awareness.

Ms. Lee stated that the Recreational Department received a grant that they are sharing with us at the COA from the Arthritis Foundation, for a joint sponsored walking program to begin at Buttonwood and Taber Parks.

Ms. Lee stated that the Support Group is going well at Buttonwood Senior Center, and the two seniors who attend the group get a feeling of validation. Also, more programs are geared to the baby boomer generation to keep them active and social. The average senior is 60 years or older, but there are a few seniors who are younger than 60 years of age.

Ms. Lee spoke about their new office space is currently 75% finished.

Ms. Lee spoke about contacting Voc-Tech for volunteers to teach a class on small woodworking, and cake decorating.

Ms. Lee spoke about a mural being done in the art room of the new office space. The board of directors stated about getting UMASS or BCC students on doing a mural for free. Ms. Lee spoke on how she would like each senior who participates in the new activity space to have them make an outline of their hand with their name on it.

Ms. Lee also stated there will be a new free breakfast program for the senior centers. It is a free program that to help elders with financial hardships especially since there will be federal cuts to their food stamps.

Ms. Lee spoke about a social day program. Steve Beauregard from housing authority stated he has a few

locations in the city that could be used, but due to privacy issues probably couldn't be utilized. It is a service that is being farmed out to the Fairhaven Council on Aging and Dartmouth Council on Aging when there is a need in New Bedford. Ms. Lee stated they are in the process of looking at different locations for a social day program that meet the requirements set by EOEA and the state.

Ms. Lee stated that outreach worker, Cynthia Edwards, hours has increased to 15hrs/wk starting the first week in September (Wed, Thurs, and Fri 9-12 then 1-3). There is a need for her service assisting seniors in getting Mass Health. In the month of July, Cynthia assisted with 25 seniors applying for Mass Health.

Ms. Lee would like to start an employee Pat on the Back program to give the incentive on coworkers appreciating what the other does. There will be a little prize for the person who receives and sends out the most Pat on the Backs.

Ms. Lee spoke about the Massachusetts Council on Aging's conference in Sturbridge, Ma from October 1st to October 4th. Ms. Lee put the information in the folders given to the board members if anyone is interested in attending the conference. Ms. Lee spoke about how she will be presenting on the first day regarding mental health with the elderly.

Motion to approve Ms. Lee's report was made by Mr. Sylvia and seconded by Ms. Costa.

Community Services Director's Report- Cynthia Wallquist

Ms. Wallquist encouraged the board members to attend even just one day of the conference in Sturbridge, MA. There will be many workshops on mental health, hoarding issues, and what senior centers should be offering as programming and much more.

Ms. Wallquist stated it has been busy putting the instructors contracts together. There are Tai Chi classes, Strength and Conditioning classes, and there is still more in the city budget to have a few more instructors.

Ms. Wallquist stated they are trying to increase the participation at the Hazelwood's strength and conditioning class to sign Larry Bigos to a contract. She also stated that the yoga class at Hazelwood is going very well.

Ms. Wallquist stated that Ms. Lee is still applying for the same grants that the previous director applied for. We still apply for the CBGB Block Grant, EOEA Grant, and the Coastline Grant Title III Grant.

Ms. Wallquist also stated that we have a necessity fund for elders in need of emergency: broken water heaters, gas assistance, bill assistance, or any other emergency up to \$500 dollars in assistance if the elder(s) meet the requirements. Ms. Lee has changed the previous criteria and broadened it to help more seniors to be eligible to receive this aid.

Ms. Wallquist stated the Coastline Grant was grant has been cut due to federal cutbacks.

Ms. Wallquist said she could give the board members a copy of the monthly report due to the Council on Aging so the members can get a snapshot in what is happening with work reports, grant application and notices, and activities to stay informed.

Ms. Wallquist stated that she and Ms. Lee are always on the lookout for more grants that might be available.

Motion to approve Ms. Wallquist's report was made by Ms. Swain and seconded by Ms. Sullivan

Correspondence

Mr. Duarte thanked Ms. Wallquist and Ms. Lee for her assisting in helping Bruce stay aware and informed on what is happening in the Council on Aging.

Ms. Mello came up with an idea to open up a Friends of the Elderly store at Buttonwood senior center. The only reservation is we have to find a secure area in the center for the centers' valuable belongings.

Council on Aging drivers are wearing new shirts with identification stating "New Bedford Council on Aging".

The next Board of Directors meeting will be on Thursday, September 12th, 2013 at 9:00AM.

There was a motion to adjourn made by Mr. Sylvia and seconded by Joan Swain

Meeting adjourned at

Respectfully submitted at 10:12AM

Virginia Morrison, Secretary