



## ***Council on Aging***

April 10, 2014 – 9:00 AM - **Minutes**

181 Hillman Street, Building 9

**\*\*View Agenda\*\***

### **Board Members Present:**

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

### **Also Present:**

Debra Lee, COA Director  
Cynthia Wallquist, Director of Community Services  
Jordan Duarte, Downtown Senior Activities Coordinator  
Debbie Aguiar, Administrative Assistant of Community

### **Excused:**

Jane Stott  
Stanley Ociesa  
James Sylvia

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

### **Old Business**

**Electronic Tracking System-** Mr. Duarte asked Ms. Lee about the progress of the electronic tracking system. Ms. Lee stated the electronic tracking system is on the April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014 City Council agenda. Ms. Lee stated the electronic tracking system's cost is \$9,770 and it needs to be approved by the City Council. The approval from City Council is needed because the \$9,770 was not budgeted or listed in the FY14 budget plans. Ms. Lee stated hopefully the City Council will approve the transferring of the \$9,770 from the senior revolving fund monies brought in from senior travel fees to pay for the tracking system cost. Ms. Aguiar stated that the Council on Aging has brought in \$5,000 in the past year. Ms. Lee stated the electronic system will help with grant processing and make it feasible to apply for more yearly grants because the information needed is readily available. Ms. Lee said the electronic tracking system is a multi functional and will formulate transportation schedules, organize different demographic criteria for each senior and senior center and much more. Ms. Swain asked which centers will receive the touch screen monitor for seniors to sign in by using the device and Ms. Lee stated both Buttonwood and Hazelwood senior centers will be receiving the touch screen bases. Brooklawn and Downtown senior centers will receive the software licensing and will be able to calculate their daily attendance through the licensed website. Ms. Lee informed the board members there are over 170 senior centers in Massachusetts with the "My Senior Center" electronic system.

**EOEA Grant-** Mr. Duarte asked Ms. Lee about the EOEA incentive grant. Ms. Lee stated the Council on Aging received \$3,000 (\$1,500-resettlement fund, and \$1,500-training for at risk seniors). The resettlement program aids seniors in need of transitioning from one residence to another. Usually this takes place when an elder is downgraded from a home to an apartment or an apartment to senior housing and or assisted living.

### **New Business**

**A.R.A.W. - Aged Relief for Aged Woman-** Ms. Lee stated the New Bedford Council on Aging originally was

given \$2,000 to purchase gift cards from Market Basket to help women who needed assistance with food costs. Ms. Lee met with Ms. Randall from A.R.A.W and stated there was a high need with elderly women needing assisting to cover food costs. The gift cards are given on a one time allotment of \$50 to aide those in need. Ms. Lee stated she received another \$3,000 for the same cause from A.R.A.W. and will be able to assist many elderly women in the city.

### **Senior Center Participation Analysis**

**Downtown Senior Center-** Mr. Duarte asked Ms. Duarte to discuss how the Downtown Senior Center participation has been working out. Ms. Duarte stated she has added a few activities to the daily schedule to help increase participation. Ms. Duarte has added a cribbage group and is hoping attendance will improve with the impending summer months. Ms. Duarte stated that her lunch program has increased and now has over 10 seniors eating lunch at the center. Ms. Duarte is hoping to add a breakfast program in May or June. She also stated there are about 30 regular senior center patrons. She has received positive feedback from seniors. Ms. Duarte did state the heating issue and lack of parking does put a hindrance on the amount of patrons at the center. The board members thanked Ms. Duarte for a job well done.

Ms. Lee stated there is a yearly participant analysis chart of the five senior centers. In the month of July every patron is considered new and that is why the month of July has higher numbers. Ms. Lee stated Buttonwood senior center activity stays active with seniors and Hazelwood has been increasing since there has been new classes including, Zumba. Ashley senior center has on average around 24 patrons every month who play cards. The lunch program has been increasing at the Downtown senior center.

**A motion to continue the Downtown Senior Center was made by Ms. Mello and seconded Ms. Costa. It was unanimously approved.**

### **Director's Report- Ms. Lee**

Ms. Lee stated there were 154 free rides given in the month of March. She also stated the COA distributed flyers for donation stating that the free transportation is a great service, but there are many costs involved. She stated the COA received a \$10 donation.

Ms. Lee stated there have been many seniors coming to the Hillman Street Senior Support Center. All of the programs have had participants and seniors have commented on the welcoming and positive atmosphere of the new center. Ms. Lee stated the computer classes are running extremely well.

Ms. Lee said Veteran's services have used the Hillman St. space on Saturday mornings to have a PTSD support group. The Veteran's services have also used the Hillman St. administrative office on Tuesdays to help Veterans apply for additional benefits. A registered nurse comes in on every Tuesday to assist Veterans through the application process.

### **Director of Community Services- Ms. Wallquist**

Ms. Wallquist stated she is going to Milford, MA for a statewide meeting.

Ms. Wallquist stated the snow program has ended. She stated there is a small amount of funds left over from the snow removal program. Sixteen seniors involved in the project will receive clean up assistance in their yards from the \$1,000 left in funding. An additional \$3,000 has been added to the fund to assist with the repair work.

The fiscal budget has allotted \$25,000 in senior programs. Ms. Wallquist stated there are new classes added to

the senior centers. Additional programs will be added to the senior center schedule.

**A motion to accept the Director of Community Services report was made by Ms. Costa and seconded by Ms. Mello. It was unanimously approved.**

**Correspondence**

The next Council on Aging advisory board meeting will be on Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at 9:00AM.

**A motion to accept to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Swain and seconded by Ms. Mello.**