



Council on Aging

August 14, 2014 – 9:02 AM - **Minutes**

181 Hillman Street, Building 9

Board Members Present:

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

Also Present:

Debra Lee, COA Director
Cynthia Wallquist, Community Services Director
Pamela Amaral-Lema, COA Administrative Specialist
Debra Lee, COA Director
Naomi Carney- Councilor At Large
Dana Rebeiro, Ward 4 City Councilor

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 AM by the Chairman, Bruce Duarte

Secretary's Report

Mr. Duarte asked board members to read over the minutes and see if there were any objections, questions, comments or concerns from the minutes they received, and there were none.

A motion to approve the minutes from July 10th, 2014 meeting was made by Mr. Sylvia and seconded by Ms. Stott.

Old Business

We were expecting a client from the Downtown Senior Center to appear with concerns regarding the Downtown Senior Center, but she did not attend. John Lobo came to the meeting because he is aware of the situation with this particular client. Ms. Lee stated that the client called right after the last board meeting and asked to be special guest at the next meeting. She stated to Ms. Lee that she had some concerns that she would like to share with the Board. When Ms. Lee told her that the Board would not be meeting again until August 14th, and if there was anything that she could help her with rather than having her wait all that time, she would be happy to do that. The client stated that Ms. Lee would have to wait for the meeting to find out. This client as reported by both Mr. Lobo and Ms. Lee has been a problem at the hotel in the past. She had been subject to a barring by the Board when she threatened staff with bodily harm. This behavior has started again, she is a very strong personality according to Ms. Lee, there are some people she gets along very well with and others she does not. The client is now going to Brooklawn Senior Center to support Ms. Duarte. The client and Ms. Duarte have a very good rapport with one another. The Board recommended to send a letter to Steve Beauregard the Executive Director of the Housing Authority and Sam Aka the Security Director for the Hotel because according to Mr. Duarte this client is in violation of MA General Law 13919 which speaks to the zero tolerance of threatening people. This is also cause for eviction from a Housing Authority property. Mr. Duarte

said that the Board graciously let her come back, and now she has started this again. He stated that the room is the Council on Aging's space from 9:30 – 2:30, and because it's our space it is also our liability and our responsibility as a Board to address the issue. Mr. Duarte stated that she should be barred from all of our facilities including Brooklawn because it's just a matter of time before there is a problem there as well.

Mr. Ociesca then spoke about his latest visits to the centers. He stated that he went to the Downtown Senior Center and the door was locked at 11:20, someone came by and let me in. He stated that he came in and sat down with the Coordinator there, Ms. Coelho. He stated that the facility was "freezing." It's far too cold for the senior people. Mr. Ociesca stated that the Downtown Senior Center in the Hotel is a waste of money. There was no activity in the center other than two people who walked through while he was there. Mr. Ociesca stated that the location is hopeless. He stated that we should just close the facility and have the people go to Buttonwood instead. He stated that we should put people up at either Buttonwood or Hazelwood instead because there is far more happening there. Mr. Ociesca said that this would be a huge savings for us in terms of salary and expenses. Ms. Lee stated that when the electronic tags were made for the Downtown Senior Centers new electronic tracking system, there were only 15 tags. These tags were for only people that live at the hotel, there were no outsiders in the group. Ms. Lee stated that we just signed a new lease. The Board asked if we didn't try to close this once before. Mr. Duarte stated that in the past the former Mayor did not want to close it down. He also stated that the Board can recommend closure due to low attendance but that the ultimate decision is with the Mayor's office. Ms. Wallquist stated in response to the signed lease that in January, it will go out for bid, because the lease was only open to do this for two years. We cannot renew again without a bid, by December we need to decide what is going to be done, do we want to keep it or do we want to find an alternative to this site. If we want to close the site then we need to let the Mayor know what we want to do. Mr. Ociesca stated that we should just close it down and save the funding for something else and bus people to other sites instead. Mr. Duarte stated that he would abstain from voting on this issue because he works for the Housing Authority. He also stated that you can't compare Downtown Senior Center to any of the others, as they are totally different environments. Ms. Wallquist commented that the weather has a lot to do with the attendance there. Once the weather breaks and is better the numbers go down. Mr. Sylvia commented that when the center was in other places there was a bigger crowd and believes that there is a need. There was further discussion on the draw backs to the current location, named were the security of the building, parking, etc. Mr. Duarte asked if we are doing the leg work required to get people to participate. He was assured that this is being done. The other high rises have their own activities going on according to Mr. Ociesca and they are not interested in coming to the Hotel. Mr. Duarte stated that the low turnout may be attributed to the continued moving around of the center. Mr. Duarte talked about the change in staffing, so when you change people things happen. Ms. Lee stated in response to the question of outreach is that it is happening repeatedly, but to no avail. Ms. Lee stated that people in the Downtown Senior Center first opened people expressed concerns that the Housing Authority is onsite, and it makes people feel as though the "landlord is in their living room." Parking has always been an issue, Councilor Carney stated that she hates to see the center lost, she would like to see another location instead. She said that she would look into some free parking because she sits on the traffic commission and believes that there should be a specific amount of parking for the seniors. Ms. Carney said that she would speak with the traffic commission at their next meeting to make parking for seniors only during senior center hours. Mr. Lobo suggested that the spaces should be on Middle Street and directly in front of the Hotel so that the seniors don't have to cross the street. She also stated that busing was not in her opinion a good idea, that we stopped busing people years ago. Councilor Rebeiro stated that keeping something downtown was what she believed to be important. There was a motion to table the subject by Ms. Stott and seconded by Ms. Mello.

The tracking system is soon to be underway. Ms. Lee reported that it will be ready on September 2nd, 2014 immediately following Labor Day. Ms. Lee reported that this system not only can monitor attendance but has a phone calling feature where it can make 1200 calls, which are the amount of seniors in the system and inform them of any weather related emergencies that are going on. Ms. Lee reported that the Council on Aging is working with Emergency Management so that in the event of severe weather the system can contact a sizeable amount of people all at once. The system can also contact people who take certain activities when there is

another offer of an activity that they might be interested in. It allows us to record a message and with the push of a button notify as many people as we tell it to.

Increase in mileage cost letter was sent to the Mayor from the Board. The letter detailed the costs and was very extensive. In the meantime we were given additional funding that will make it so that we do not need to ask for an increase at the present time. The money is going to come from the temporary line to help pay for the costs. We are also because of this able to extend the appointment days for people. We were cutting off appointments at 1:00 but can now go until 2:00 in order to help people to make their appointments later.

Air Conditioning is in and Ms. Lee reported that eventually we will have central air once they replace the windows and re-point the brick. They gave us enough air conditioning to help us to be comfortable without investing a great deal into something that will not be here once the upgrades to the building are made.

Aging Mastery Grant – We were approved for the Aging Mastery Grant, which is a grant for \$4,000 that the Director applied for. The Program is an educational series and it involves 8 -12 weeks of a nutritious lunch and speaker. The program is a Health and Wellness program for people 55+. The money is allocated entirely to the program; there are rewards for active participation. The program will be run out of the Hillman Street Support Center; it will begin in September and end in December.

Open Houses The coordinators are in the process of planning their Open Houses for this activity year. It is an opportunity for them to invite people in and to show them what activities are taking place at their particular centers. Some of the coordinators are having little snippets of each activity so that people can get a taste of each activity.

Coordinators at the Board Meetings. The Board will begin to have a coordinator at each of their upcoming meetings so that the Board can ask questions and so that the coordinators can explain to the Board what is happening at each of the centers.

New Business

MCOA Conference is scheduled for the 8-10th of October at Sea Crest Resort in Falmouth. There are a number of interesting offerings there. If anyone is interested in any of the offerings please let the Director know so that she can register you for the Conference. Mr. Duarte said that he is interested in attending and will look at the website to see what is available.

Chairperson's Report- Bruce Duarte, Sr. All of the above has been the Chairperson's report. Mr. Duarte wanted to look at the budget with the Board. There were a few questions on the budget in terms of who people are in the budget. Mr. Duarte asked about the floater at the centers, Ms. Lee explained what it is that this person does. Mr. Duarte asked that the floater be at the next Board meeting with the Coordinator as well as the new outreach person. There was a question on snow removal that was answered by Ms. Wallquist. Ms. Wallquist also answered other questions as they pertained to the budget and contractors. Inez suggested that the budget be put on the agenda again next month because it gives them a chance to look at it before discussing it.

Director's Report- Debra Lee Ms. Lee reported on the Service Incentive Grant and the fact that this grant needs to be regional which would encompass area towns. The grant will look at helping to provide elders with much need services.

We did apply for a Home Depot Grant; we should have an answer by the next board meeting.

We put in for Director Certification, so an application has been submitted for that. It's a good thing to have the Director Certified.

We had 14 participants at the CPR class that Ms. Lee taught this month, we have just a few left to train and then all our staff will be CPR certified.

We have four SHINE Counselors now and we are already busy and it's still not open enrollment. We have told Taber Mill that two folks will go there to help out the people there with open enrollment. We are also willing to go anywhere else that might need us to provide this service.

Mr. Duarte mentioned going to Cable Access and on Phil Paleologos show so that we can get the word out. Mr. Marshall from Cable Access is excited to entertain the prospect of a show like this.

Ms. Lee also heard from a writer from a new periodical called Southcoast over 50 that is doing a write up for us on the Senior Centers in the City. Ms. Lee provided her with a great deal of information and she was thrilled with the information she received and said that it will be in the next issue. This will be good publicity for us.

C.A.R.E. will be a new group beginning in October. The two groups will run simultaneously, for folks affected by Alzheimer's. One group is for the Caregivers and the other is for the family members who are suffering from the ill effects of the disease. Hope Health will be providing two volunteers with training to work with the members with the disease and upon completion of the series these volunteers will be paid a stipend of \$100 each. They will provide us with a Social Worker to run the group for the caregivers.

A motion to accept the Directors' report was made by Ms. Swain and seconded by Ms. Sullivan.

Director of Community Services- Cynthia Wallquist

Cynthia provided a table that indicates the money that is being utilized to pay for programming. The funding is provided by the city. There was a woman who was providing Zumba Gold and she has a great following, she is teaching a number of classes. There is a man who is doing some strength and conditioning classes in a number of places. He also provides special exercise classes for special needs classes. The yoga instructor has a class of over 45 people that meet at the Synagogue. There is some Ballroom dancing now and other activities, we have coupled this with some lunch programs that encourage people to stay longer. Sunset Social is a great program for seniors with disabilities. We have a mental health professional contactor that helps with the resettlement project to help seniors who are downsizing from a larger house to something smaller.

A motion was made to accept Cynthia's report by Ms. Costa it was seconded by Mr. Sylvia.

Correspondence:

We received a card from Ms. Mello the receptionist thanking the Board for her lovely plant that she received following her surgery.

Next meeting will be Thursday, September 11th at 9:00 am

There was a motion made to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Sylvia and seconded by Ms. Swain.